POLICY PAPER ON EDUCATION

Building the future through quality education

Education International
Internationale de l'Education
Internacional de la Educación

PREAMBLE

- Education International (EI) is the voice of the education sector worldwide, representing teachers and education employees at all levels of education – from early childhood education to higher education. As the world's largest Global Union Federation (GUF), and the only one representing education employees in virtually every corner of the globe, EI unites all teachers[1] and other education employees and gives expression to their collective views on education policy, the profession, terms and conditions of employment, and related matters.

- EI is guided by the principles of democracy, human rights and social justice. It is independent of governments and international inter-governmental organisations. It is self-governing and free from influence or control by any political party or ideological or religious grouping. EI promotes and protects the rights of all teachers and education employees and campaigns for quality education for all.

- EI is a strong advocate for trade union rights and assists in the development of independent and democratic representative organizations for teachers, academic staff, higher education researchers and other education employees. EI fosters solidarity and mutual cooperation. EI combats negative discrimination in educational settings and in society as a whole, fostering good relations between education employees in all countries.

- EI has decided, after eighteen years of policy making through its Congresses and Conferences at the international and regional levels, to develop a comprehensive policy on education. This policy will encapsulate the very essence of what has made EI what it is today and reflect the goals which should underpin an education that is consistent with EI's traditions.

- This policy challenges explicitly the narrow, instrumentalist view of education as solely teaching students[2] to become skilled employees. Instead, it argues for a perspective on education that serves both the values of the society at local and global levels, as well as cultural, democratic, social, economic and environmental needs. It recognises that education is a human right and a public good in its own right, enabling people at all stages in their lives to achieve their maximum potential and to better understand themselves and their role and relationships. Education is also a key means for the transmission, analysis and application of knowledge and experience, and plays a central role in the creation of new knowledge through research and innovation. Its role is broader than the mechanistic and instrumental role that many proponents of market forces and "customer-provider" models acknowledge.

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[1]   For the purposes of this paper, the term 'teachers' will be used to refer to a broad category of educators, teachers, trainers, academic staff and researchers that are represented by EI affiliates. The term 'teaching' in this paper should be understood to include research, in the context of teaching in higher education.

[2]   Equally, this paper will use the term 'student' to depict a broad category of learners, including children and adults, from early childhood education up to higher education and lifelong learning.

- This policy statement is underpinned by concepts which are central to EI's philosophy and which represent the core values and demands of the education union movement. These include quality education as a human right, education provided by public authorities[3] and available freely to all, inclusive education and equality in education and society, and high professional status for teachers. The policy also refers to challenges that serve as a call to action to be addressed by concrete initiatives and strategies.

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3   The term 'public authorities' will be used to refer to the relevant level of authority at which education policy is made, whether at local, national or regional level.

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I: Promoting education as a human right and a public good

1. Quality education nurtures human talent and creativity, thereby contributing to the personal and professional development of the individual person, as well as to social, cultural, economic, political and environmental development of society at large. It promotes peace, democracy, creativity, solidarity, inclusion, a commitment to a sustainable environment, and international and intercultural understanding. It provides people with the critical knowledge, abilities and skills that are needed to conceptualise, question and solve problems that occur both locally and globally.

2. Democratically elected governments, whether at local, regional or national level, should be the guarantors and primary providers of education systems. Such public authorities have the key responsibility for ensuring that free, universally accessible education is well-resourced and constantly updated and developed. By raising funds through progressive taxation, they can and must invest a substantial proportion of the state budget in education, amounting to at least 6% of their Gross Domestic Product. Such investment should ensure the balanced development of all education sectors from early childhood education through to higher education and life-long learning. Public authorities, in cooperation with teachers, should oversee and regulate the education sector and aim to constantly improve its quality, establishing and implementing a legislative framework that ensures a high quality service, professional standards, access for all and a representative governance system. In sum, public authorities are responsible for the financing, provision and regulation of all education institutions.

3. The social values of education require public authorities to protect the education sector from the neo-liberal agenda of privatization and commercialisation. This negative agenda includes marketisation and trade in education and intellectual property, the casualisation of employment in the education sector, the application of private-sector management models on education institutions, the privatisation of provision, and the intrusion of for-profit motives or business interests in the governance of education institutions.

4. The emergence of a global "market" in education which began in higher education but which is now encroaching on most educational sectors, poses a number of potential risks for the teaching and research mission of educational institutions. The privatisation of education has been facilitated by trade and investment agreements like the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as well as a growing number of bilateral and regional treaties. These agreements have the effect of locking-in and intensifying the pressures of commercialisation and privatisation. EI believes that services provided in the public interest, like education, must not be subject to the commercial rules of trade treaties. Transnational education is to be governed by educational principles, not commercial imperatives. Public authorities need to ensure adequate recurrent and capital funding and agreed and adequate standards for teaching and research.

5. A strong bond of international solidarity is needed to support aid in situations where the state does not have the capacity to provide quality education for all. This is essential for

the achievement of the Dakar EFA Goals and the MDGs' education related Goals. States or territories with weak political systems, failed states, states afflicted with violence or natural disasters, contested territories or non-democratically governed regions require international aid and assistance to build comprehensive education systems vital to their social and economic development. Such aid must be developed in full cooperation with the appropriate local organisations and structures including trade unions and organisations representing education employees.

6. The responsibility of public authorities for education also includes the ratification, implementation and regular monitoring of international conventions and regulations relating to education. These include the following: the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948*; the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966*; the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979*; and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989*; the *ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966*; the *UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, 1997*.

7. This responsibility also extends to respecting the professional rights of education employees as envisaged in the *ILO Convention 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948*; the *ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949*; the *ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958*; the *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998*; and the *ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation, 2008*.

8. Consistent with these international obligations, public authorities must support the autonomy of higher education institutions in relation to academic policies, curriculum, staff appointments and internal management. Institutional autonomy, in these spheres, is a pre-condition for the existence of academic freedom which guarantees that independent research, teaching and scholarship can flourish, but it must not be confused with academic freedom. Institutions have an absolute obligation to ensure their autonomy facilitates the protection of academic freedom from a hostile external environment, and must not abuse their autonomy to undermine or suppress academic freedom internally. Further, it must be acknowledged that institutions operate in the public sphere and bear a general obligation to public accountability and the public good. A key element of academic freedom is the right of academic staff and researchers to be directly represented on all key decision-making bodies within universities and colleges that should be founded on the principle of collegiality. This principle includes guarantees of individual staff rights such as the freedom to determine teaching style, research priorities and the right to intellectual property.

II: Improving the quality of education

9. Every citizen of every state has the right to a quality education. Providing quality education that caters to students' aptitudes and needs will be a primary challenge for lifelong learning, from early childhood education through to further and higher education. EI defines quality education in terms of context and culture. Quality is neither one-dimensional nor straightforward. *Quality education* is defined by its *inputs* (including students' background, teachers' qualifications, working conditions, class-size and investment in education); by the *education process* (including teaching, parenting and related processes of learning) and by *projected outcomes* (including individual, social,

cultural, economic and environmental needs). A contextual approach to quality is never deterministic, as it is contingent upon creativity and constant development.

10. The importance of quality teaching for quality education cannot be underestimated. To this end, teachers at all levels of education must be appropriately trained and qualified. Teachers should continue their professional development upon recruitment through a period of induction into the profession with the support by a mentor and should have access throughout their careers to high quality continuous professional development and learning. These opportunities should be provided by the public authorities or other employers at no cost to individual teachers.

11. The teaching and learning environment should be designed in such a way that it supports teachers and education employees in their missions. Public authorities should provide the necessary infrastructure and resources to cater for this environment.

12. Quality education must be underpinned by credible educational research. The findings of such research should inform the theories and practice of teaching. Research should also draw on the actual professional experience of teachers and involve teachers in the process. This should culminate in an inseparable link between education and research which would help to generate new understandings and knowledge and improve pedagogical skills.

13. EI believes that teachers should maintain high professional standards and should be accountable to society. Professional standards should be established with the full involvement of the teaching profession in each country. Teachers should feel confident that both their professional standards and their professional development are relevant to their teaching.

14. Public authorities should ensure that education institutions have a broad and balanced framework curriculum which sets out common rights and responsibilities for all students. The framework should be sufficiently flexible to allow schools to adapt it to the needs of all of their students. Education institutions themselves should be responsible for adapting the curricular framework to the needs of the relevant societal context.

15. The purpose of evaluation should be clear to all those involved in education. The evaluation of education systems, of school and higher education communities, of teachers, and of students have different purposes and should be separate. When one form of evaluation designed for a particular purpose is used to serve a different purpose, the consequences can be unforeseen and damaging. Another damaging form of evaluation is imposed, high stakes evaluation. Imposed high stakes testing systems and punitive school inspection models, for example, lead to schools focusing mainly on what is tested and inspected, to the curbing of the capacity to innovate, to curricula being narrowed and to teachers' self confidence being undermined. This also poses the risk of increased demotivation and disaffection of students, who are less likely to progress and achieve. All forms of evaluation involving students, teachers, schools and higher education institutions, and education systems should be understood and be agreed with teachers and education unions. Indeed, the key principle which should be applied to all forms of evaluation, including teacher evaluation, is self-evaluation. Teacher review and appraisal should be based on trust and the active involvement of those being reviewed. Its outcomes should lead to teachers' professional development needs being identified and provided for. Such an approach means that teachers are more likely to be enthusiastic

and committed to such a process including to any professional standards involved in evaluation and to professional development outcomes.

16. All forms of evaluation should be formative, rather than punitive. In this respect, EI rejects instrumental approaches to the evaluation of education. EI believes that a widespread abuse of the notion of quality to justify standardised forms of testing is harmful to the education system as a whole, as it attempts to reduce the teaching and learning process to quantifiable indicators. It is the standardization and one-dimensional approach to testing and evaluation of the teaching and learning processes to which EI objects strongly. Moreover, if the stakes are too high in any given evaluation system then teaching will be directed to meeting the standardised external requirements - a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'teaching to the test'. This stifles innovation and creativity, narrows the curriculum and undermines professional autonomy. In other words, punitive, high-stakes evaluation undermines the effectiveness and confidence of education institutions.

17. One-dimensional tools focused on outcomes alone, such as standardised testing, league tables or rankings, are increasingly used as policy-making instruments. Public authorities should guard against the potential misuse of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the administration and planning of education systems. They should also avoid using the pilot study on the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) in the construction of potentially misleading comparisons between national higher education systems.

18. EI recognises the key role which professional leadership plays in contributing to quality education. The professional leader is important for the enhancement of teachers' professional autonomy and professional development. Pedagogical leadership requires high-level qualifications, including teacher education qualifications. Those in leadership positions in schools and other educational institutions must receive the support and specific training which their demanding role requires. Those responsible for the leadership of other teachers should be engaged regularly in those activities that promote effective teaching and learning in the classroom. They should also be provided with the appropriate support and resources which are required to carry out their duties effectively. Leadership should be founded on the principles of collegiality, teamwork, democratic decision-making processes and recognise the importance of dialogue and cooperation.

19. Higher education and research plays a key role in sustaining the education sector as a whole, particularly through teacher education and education research. In recent years the higher education and research sector has witnessed a series of attacks which have undermined the principles of academic freedom and collegiality, and the intrinsic value of knowledge acquisition, transmission and analysis. The global trends towards commercialisation and competition in the higher education sector threaten to compromise quality and equity. These trends must be reversed. The higher education and research sector has the potential of finding solutions to the most pressing scientific, environmental, economic, social and ethical challenges we face today. Higher education and research contributes to the development and well-being of individuals both through the personal development of students and through the development of society as a whole.

III: Promoting equality through inclusive education

20. It is the responsibility of public authorities to ensure that all citizens have access to high quality education appropriate to their needs. Supported by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and a series of international, multi-lateral instruments, EI maintains that all barriers to education must be removed in order to make it accessible for all persons, regardless of their gender, background or personal characteristics. EI therefore promotes the concept of equal opportunity and access to all levels of education. No one should be disadvantaged because of perceived differences, including those based upon gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, cultural or economic background, or personal characteristics. People with disabilities should be assisted to achieve their maximum potential.

21. Inclusive education means that all students should be educated together, to the same high standards, in so far as possible in the same education institution, irrespective of their gender, faith, ethnic, cultural or economic background or physical or intellectual capacities. However, EI recognises that in order to ensure the best opportunities for some students to develop to their maximum level, separate facilities and services may need to be provided. It is particularly important that a strong relationship exists between specialist and mainstream facilities which enables the sharing of pedagogic knowledge and skills and promotes institutional collaboration. The educational experience of students should instil in them concepts of equality, tolerance and respect for diversity.

22. Inclusive education is as crucial for developing countries as it is for developed countries. Complex processes of exclusion exacerbate inequalities in education worldwide. These inequalities are replicated in other areas of society. In an inclusive education setting, students are directly confronted by the challenges of diversity and learn how to be more caring and responsible citizens at an early age. Real inclusive education is challenging and demands a pro-active stance on the part of public authorities, teachers and education employees, students, parents and civil society to include students from different backgrounds and with different learning and physical abilities in the same educational facility.

23. The difficulties of implementing the Education for All agenda illustrate the developing world's problems in fulfilling the inclusive education agenda. Far too many children, adolescents and adults do not have access to even basic education and skills. The inadequacy of investment in education and of international development aid has impeded the achievement of the EFA goals. The lack of qualified teachers and other education employees, for marginalized groups, problems of gender inequality, continuing use of child labour and a lack of attention to all levels of learning have exacerbated the problem. EI believes that a fundamentally different and more inclusive funding and governance system for the EFA agenda would be more effective in meeting the needs of those without access to education.

24. EI believes that issues relating to gender are a central aspect of inclusive education, as these affect all participants in education. From the earliest stage possible, all forms of gender stereotyping should be challenged and eliminated from education. Public authorities should promote the full participation of girls and women, boys and men in education at all levels. They should also be sensitive to gender issues in relation to achievement, employment, recruitment and governance in education. Education institutions and unions should promote comprehensive gender-mainstreaming strategies.

25. Pre-service and in-service teacher education and training is also central to equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to provide appropriate services for students from different backgrounds, with different capabilities and orientations. Such teacher education and training and professional development should be fully funded by public authorities and targeted to help teachers embrace diversity and use it to enhance the learning experience, including through the use of new information and communication technologies in the classroom. Well-designed induction programmes are important for the retention of new entrants in the profession and to enable them to perform effectively.

26. Adequate numbers of qualified support staff are also necessary within learning environments, to cater effectively for students with special needs. Partnership and teamwork is necessary between the different education and support employees in education institutions in order to ensure that teachers, support staff and students have the best advice and guidance available to them when dealing with conflict situations which arise in relation to inclusiveness.

27. In order to promote the concept of inclusive educational settings, both in terms of students and teachers, leadership and governance of education institutions should be more inclusive and should also involve an active role for teachers, in cooperation with parents and students.

28. Access to higher education should be available to all those who meet relevant entry criteria and should not be limited by the financial means or social origins of potential students. Ideally this means higher education should be free of fees and charges.

IV: Promoting teaching as a profession

29. Teaching is a profession that lies at the heart of both the learning of children and young people and their social, cultural and economic development. It is crucial to transmitting and implanting social values, such as democracy, equality, tolerance, cultural understanding and respect for each person's fundamental freedoms. The profession should have a set of professional standards, ethics, conditions and rights. These should be similar to professional and ethical standards for other professional groups which require comparable qualifications. The professional standards in the teaching profession should be applied to teachers at all levels, in both the public and the private sector. The basis for such professional standards should be inculcated during teacher education programmes.

30. The attractiveness of the teaching profession needs to be urgently improved. The current generation of teachers is ageing and alarming numbers of new teachers are leaving the profession within the first years of employment. It is the responsibility of public authorities and leaders of education institutions to ensure that the teaching, academic and research professions remain attractive to both current and potential staff by ensuring that working conditions, social security arrangements, pension schemes and salaries are attractive and are comparable to those applicable to other professions requiring a similar level of qualifications. The professional commitment of teachers and academics to the education and welfare of their students should be recognised and respected. Enhancing the professional autonomy and self-confidence of teachers in their professional and pedagogic judgements and through the assertion of their right to academic freedom and to undertake research should be given the highest priority by governments and employers as this is essential to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. In this context,

job security is of enormous importance and casualisation of the teaching and research profession must be rejected as it is fundamentally harmful to the profession.

31. The status of young teachers, academic staff, researchers and education employees deserves particular attention. The young are often the first to face employment on short-term, casual contracts, without any clear future career paths. Career structures at all educational and research levels must have the clear potential for progression based on professional standards, qualifications and the acceptance of additional professional responsibilities. There should be no possibility of discrimination on any grounds in promotion processes.

32. Teachers are increasingly supported by a combination of professional, administrative, technical and general staff. This is a crucial development for quality education as well as for inclusion. EI affirms that support staff should have the same status, rights and conditions as other education employees with comparable academic and technical qualifications and experience.

33. Entry into the teaching profession and related roles must be inclusive without discrimination based on gender, race, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, political or religious beliefs, and economic or social conditions. Public authorities should support and monitor employment practices to ensure that discrimination does not occur.

34. Teacher education should be offered in higher education institutions up to a high qualification level, including opportunities for post-graduate level study and should be fully funded. Qualifications obtained upon completing a teacher education programme do not signify the end of a teacher's professional development, however. Structured induction programmes should be provided for newly qualified teachers on recruitment into the profession. Fully funded continuous professional development should be an entitlement for all teachers. If professional development is to be effective then teachers should be involved in identifying their professional development needs and owning the professional development which is provided. Every government should seek to agree with teacher unions strategies for the development of the teaching profession. EI recognises that many teacher unions provide good forms of professional development for their members and teachers in general and it urges governments and employers, therefore, to enhance and fund learning opportunities provided by unions. With such support teachers will be able to maintain high standards in their profession.

35. Codes of ethics and professional values assist and underpin teachers' professional judgments and teachers should be collectively responsible for developing such codes and for putting these codes into effect. Such codes help support the commitment of teachers to their profession, to students, colleagues, parents and to their school communities. They are crucial in maintaining high professional standards in any educational institution, and serve to raise professional job-satisfaction and instil a sense of self-worth among teachers. It is important that where any professional councils for teachers are established they are supported by the teaching profession and their unions.

36. As educational institutions aim to serve an increasing number of complex aims, the values of deliberation and partnership must be sustained and safeguarded despite trends to enhance effectiveness and efficiency above all else. An inclusive education environment, in and of itself, requires the different participants to work together but, especially, teachers, other education employees, students and parents, in a spirit of shared understanding of the educational process and a shared acceptance and openness to each others'

views. Collegial and democratic leadership in education institutions should therefore be strengthened.

V: Strengthening education trade unions as essential partners in civil society

37. The strength of a strategic, structured collaboration is evident among teaching professionals themselves. Organised, independent, democratic and representative trade unions are effective contributors to the development of educational policy at national, regional and international levels. In turn, they are also the key to ensuring that professional standards and ethics are respected. The freedom to associate and form representative democratic independent unions should apply to teachers and education employees in all territories, at all levels and in all education institutions, whether public or private. These trade union rights, including the right to strike, should be respected by public authorities.

38. Education unions play an important role in the process of dialogue in society between the employing authorities, public authorities and employees which aims to discuss constructively all work-related issues which arise in an educational setting. Social dialogue should be based upon respect for all partners, and should aim to improve the quality and status of education, professional standards and conditions. Unions must be equal partners in this social dialogue process. They also bargain collectively on behalf of teachers and other education employees. Education unions must be allowed to take traditional trade union actions if their members are being treated unjustly or their concerns are not being taken seriously. Salaries, working conditions and career structures of education employees must be negotiated with unions through a collective bargaining process.

39. During the last decade, EI has built up an important partnership with civil society organisations in the Global Campaign for Education. It has become clear that quality education benefits from strong links between unions and civil society. Moreover, cooperation with civil society strengthens the social values of education by contributing to peace, democracy, the environment and intercultural understanding.

VI: Promoting solidarity in education at the international level

40. International exchanges and contacts are an important contributor to education development in today's world. At whatever level these contacts and exchanges occur they should be encouraged and facilitated. The extent to which they improve international understanding and cooperation and mutual respect cannot be underestimated. In this context exchanges between schools and education institutions of students, teachers, academic staff and higher education researchers should be encouraged and facilitated, as well as exchanges between the governing authorities and other institutional bodies.

41. EI represents an international union movement that values partnership and solidarity and its principles remain unaffected by adversity or crisis. Experience shows that global links are strengthened over time as similar concerns among education employees throughout the world inspire joint strategies to deal with similar challenges. The strength of the international education union movement is also reinforced by expressions of solidarity through financial support or mutually supportive actions in times of crisis.

42. EI stresses that special attention must be paid to the needs of the African region. Such support is essential for the long-term development of the continent. This requires, among other things, significantly greater development assistance from the rest of the world to supporting the development of education in the region. There remains a need to build capacity in all sectors of education and to strengthen links between civil society organisations, including education unions, and public authorities within Africa, and to assist in establishing employment conditions and professional rights for teachers and other education employees which allow education and research to flourish.

43. Education is the key to uniting nations, bringing human beings closely together and guiding them towards humanity. In many parts of the world, civil society suffers because of situations of violent conflicts, repression and war. It is important to recognise the crucial role of education in contributing to building a culture of peace and condemning instances in which education is undermined in order to attack democracy and tolerance. EI stresses the importance of re-building education systems in post-conflict situations.

44. EI disagrees with the views of economic and financial inter-governmental organisations which view education purely as a commercial enterprise which is to be traded for private economic gain. EI works diligently within international organisations that operate in the field of education. These include UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, the Global Unions, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, among others. EI supports the educational mission of these organisations, which envisage the development of education as a fundamental pillar in society.

VII: Using technology for quality education

45. New information and communication technologies (ICT) provide exciting possibilities to enhance the quality of education. Interactive education software, open access digital libraries and new forms of interaction between students, teachers, education employees and the community are just a few ways in which education can be enriched by integrating such technologies into traditional classroom activities. These tools provide a rich and powerful resource for teachers to assist them with the teaching and learning processes. Teachers, academic staff, higher education researchers and other education employees play an increasingly important role in integrating technology into education as coaches or authorities in the technological and information-rich environment in which many students now live.

46. These new technologies are best used as supplements to, and not replacements for, in-class-instruction. The use of ICT in education therefore requires more reflection on and improvement of teacher training and development programs, curricula, teachers' workload and education institutions' infrastructure. It also demands that the issue of equity of access to such technologies across the globe is resolved. Unless it is harnessed effectively and made available widely it will contribute to the growing gap between the wealthier and poorer societies throughout the world. Moreover, technology should be harnessed as a tool for improving personal and professional development through the evolution of the relations between students themselves and between students and teachers and other education employees.

47. New social media present ways of communicating across different cultures. Teachers realise that these media are an important tool to build a world based on equality,

democracy and solidarity. In the classroom, social media can help humanity move forward by connecting students and teachers at different geographical locations. These tools should be used to teach students the value of different cultures, by stimulating language learning and intercultural exchange.

48. Social media have been harnessed to bring democracy to places previously ruled by dictatorship and corruption. Education unions embrace these as powerful means to connect with their members. Social media can strengthen democracy within unions, providing new forms of discussion and consultation. They can be important tools to strengthen involvement, as members can be more engaged directly in the development of the union's strategies, activities and services. Furthermore, they facilitate new forums of cooperation between unions and the wider civil society.

VIII: Promoting education for living and for Life

49. As the challenges facing citizens in societies worldwide grow ever-more wide-ranging and complex, one's educational experience cannot stop at the final year of compulsory education. Education systems must have a lifelong learning approach and provide opportunities for students of all ages. This is of crucial importance for adult women who have benefited less from education in previous generations. Lifelong learning deserves special attention in vocational and higher education as these sectors provide not only the skills for new occupations, but for continuing personal development and for equipping citizens to deal with new global challenges.

50. Education systems must adapt to social, cultural, economic, political and environmental challenges. In this respect, a well-resourced system of vocational education and training must form an essential part of any modern education system. Teachers and other education employees in this sector will require increased continuous professional development to enable them to keep up with the rapidly changing social and economic environment for which they prepare their students.

51. Education systems should also become more aware of the contribution they make to students' health. They should promote health awareness and life skills that enable students to be more responsible for their own health as well as the health of others around them. Catering facilities in education institutions should provide a healthy diet and curricula should include programs for improving personal hygiene and advising about sexual and reproductive behaviour.

52. Education systems have a responsibility to assist students in becoming aware of and confronting the challenges facing the modern world. This is particularly true with regard to the future of the planet and the need for sustainable development. Sustainable development education must now be an integral part of the curriculum in all educational institutions. As the citizens and consumers of tomorrow, students should be made aware of the impact which human beings have had on the environment and, in particular, of the implications of the continuation of a consumerist culture in society for the future of the planet. Sustainable development should be included in the core of any prescribed curricular framework.

SUMMARY

(I)   Education is a human right and a public good; it must be publicly funded and publicly regulated.

(II)   Public authorities must provide a legal framework for education in their countries which sets out the principles of fairness, equity and quality, which should underpin education.

(III)   Public authorities should respect and implement the international conventions on the rights of education employees to organise and bargain collectively and on the status of teachers and other education employees at all levels.

(IV)   Public authorities should spend at least 6% of their GDP on education.

(V)   Every person has a fundamental right to an appropriate education which will enable that person to achieve his or her own maximum potential and become a responsible citizen.

(VI)   Education should be of high quality for all.

(VII)   Every student should be entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum in their schools and educational institutions.

(VIII) Quality education is defined in terms of context and culture. Quality is neither one-dimensional nor straightforward. Quality education is defined by its inputs (including students' background, teachers' qualifications, working conditions, class-size and investment in education); by the education process (including teaching, parenting and related processes of learning); and by projected outcomes (including the extent to which it meets individual, social, cultural, economic and environmental needs). A contextual approach to quality is never deterministic, as it is contingent upon creativity and constant development. Quality education for all should be established and improved on the basis of best practices, professional experiences and relevant educational research.

(IX)   Teachers should maintain high professional standards and should be accountable to society. The evaluation of teachers should be undertaken in collaboration with peers and competent professionals. It should be based on trust and should help teachers identify their professional development needs.

(X)   The education of teachers should be of high quality and with opportunities to achieve post-graduate level. It should be followed by a period of structured induction into the profession with the support of a mentor. The teachers should be supported throughout their careers by an entitlement to fully funded, continuous, high quality professional development.

(XI)   Teachers should be accorded a high professional status in society commensurate with their professional responsibilities, qualifications and skills, and the contribution which their profession make to the development of society.

(XII)   The salaries, pension schemes and conditions of service for those working in education should be comparable with those available to other groups in society with similar qualifications.

(XIII) Education should be provided on the basis of equality of access and opportunity for all. There should be no discrimination, including that based on gender, disability, faith, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, cultural or economic background or personal characteristics.

(XIV)   Education should be inclusive and instil concepts of equality, tolerance and respect for diversity.

(XV)   Higher education must be accessible to all who meet entry required criteria without financial or social barriers. It must be protected from commercialisation and competition.

(XVI)   Education should pay particular attention to issues relating to gender, and, in particular, issues relating to gender-stereotyping and gender-based impediments to participation in education, since these affect all students and education employees.

(XVII) Teaching at all levels should be recognised as a professional activity and accorded the same respect and status as other similar professions in society.

(XVIII) Teachers should adhere to a code of professional ethics and values to enhance their status.

(XIX)   Education employees should share in the responsibility for the governance of their institutions and their professional development. They should engage in partnership with other stakeholders, such as parents and students, to improve and develop their educational institutions.

(XX)   Independent, democratic and representative education unions have a vital role to play in the development and provision of high quality education in society. They should be granted a full role in the debates on the provision and quality of education and should be recognised for the purposes of collective bargaining as the official representatives of teachers and other education employees.

(XXI)   International solidarity and partnership in EI with its own member organisations and globally with the inter-governmental institutions which develop education policies has a major contribution to make to the development and provision of quality Education for All.

(XXII) Modern technologies can be aids and supplements to teaching and learning in order to enhance the quality of education. They must be made accessible to all.

(XXIII) Education should be provided for people throughout their lives and should promote healthy and sustainable living.

ADDENDA

Addendum 1 to Education Policy Paper:
Privatisation of education services

1. EI is concerned that privatisation and commercialisation policies have the effect of undermining the right to free quality public education and may create, exacerbate and entrench inequalities in access and participation as well as erode teaching and learning conditions in schools.

2. Efforts to privatise and commercialise education are undermining labour relations and impacting negatively on teachers' and education support personnel's working conditions and rights. Such policies also dismantle democratic decision-making and public accountability crucial to education governance. Governments must not abdicate their responsibility to provide free, quality, publicly-funded education, and to promote education as a fundamental human right and public good at all levels of education.

3. EI is opposed to the implementation of privatisation policies, deregulation and the reduction of public services in the name of reducing government deficits and expanding education. EI defends communities' right to regulate education quality in the public interest, to include teachers in decision-making, and to protect against profit-driven corporate influence, or even dominance, in the education sector.

4. All providers of education must follow the same rules, regulations and procedures. These should require equitable access for all students to high quality education including highly trained and qualified teachers and academic staff, regardless of ability to pay and without discrimination. Teachers, academic staff and education support personnel's rights to decent working conditions, appropriate salaries, fair recruitment and employment and quality professional development must be guaranteed in all contexts. All education workers should have the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association. Teachers and academic staff should be given professional and academic freedom to use teaching methods and classroom approaches that best meet the democratically decided objectives of the education system, and should not be subject to performance-based pay schemes that rely on student learning outcomes measured through standardised tests.

5. Governments should establish mechanisms for social dialogue and education unions need to ensure that they are active participants in policy debates and policy formation, especially where privatisation and commercialisation of education services are being proposed.

6. The influence of corporations and other private actors in education, through the sale of education services and for-profit delivery of education services at all levels, must be counterbalanced by concerted action by Education International and its members, including through building strategic alliances with multilateral and partner organisations.

Addendum 2 to Education Policy Paper:
The role of education unions in the use of ICT

This addendum to the Education Policy Paper seeks to expand and clarify EI's policy position and the role of unions in the use of ICT in education.

Main principles

7. Information and communication technologies can be an important tool to improve teaching and learning. Interactive education software, open access digital libraries, and cheaper and more intuitive technology may facilitate new forms of interaction between students, teachers, education personnel and the community and enhance access to, and the quality of, education. ICT must be used as a tool to improve teaching and learning and make schools more effective.

1. EI rejects the notion that ICT can be used to address the lack of education funding due to the austerity measures as a result of the financial crisis. Education funding must be restored and expanded in order for ICT to play its proper role of supporting the goals of a fully and appropriately funded public education.

2. However, risks associated with the use of ICT such as the promotion of hatred, child pornography, cyberbullying, and the use of surveillance technologies, among others, must be highlighted and such abuses avoided to ensure the safety and well-being of all education personnel and students.

3. While EI believes that education may be enriched by integrating ICT into traditional educational activities, ICT can never replace the relationship and interaction between teacher and learner which is crucial to the learning and development process. Teachers remain central to the learning process, and introducing new technologies alone will not transform the teaching and learning process.

4. ICT must be used in education institutions under the supervision of qualified well-trained professionals with the expertise in pedagogy and in education to ensure that their impact does not damage or undermine the learning process or the development of learners.

5. Successful use and integration of ICT to deliver quality education to students depends largely on highly-qualified and motivated teachers, the availability of sufficient quality ICT tools and quality teaching and learning environments. Therefore, appropriate and thoughtfully designed teacher training programmes which foster collaboration among education professionals and well-resourced teaching and learning environments are crucial for the successful use of ICT in education and the successful implementation of ICT programmes.

6. ICT policies and plans should be developed with the full participation of teachers, education support personnel and their representative organisations. Educators must be involved every step of the way in the design and development of appropriate ICT policies for education purposes.

7. Governments should narrow the digital divide between rich and poor countries by ensuring the provision of ICT infrastructure, hardware and software, including Internet connectivity throughout every country, including in rural and remote areas.

8. While EI welcomes the use of ICTs in delivering quality education, including through appropriately designed distance education programmes, virtual schools and universities should be licenced and monitored to ensure quality. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) should be accredited and monitored for quality assurance purposes.

9. EI strongly opposes any effort to use ICT to make education, either in part or whole, a commodity to be sold for profit. ICT companies must operate in ways that enhance free public education for all. ICT companies must not develop systems that are meant to replace education systems for power or profit. Education services must not be part of any trade agreements that would in any way make education an international commodity and not a sovereign right in any country.

10. Where commercial ICT companies are engaged by governments or national education or school authorities to contribute to the provision of ICT in education or become voluntarily involved in such provision, that engagement should be subject to agreements based on terms agreed with education unions and rooted in best educational practice.

11. When engaging ICT companies, corporations or foundations to support the use of ICT in education, EI and education unions should ensure that education programmes are: a) inclusive, b) aimed at improving access to and the quality of education, c) support good pedagogical practice, d) do not worsen teachers' working conditions or employment security e) have a teachers' professional development component, and f) respect national curricula.

Measures which should be taken in order to promote and ensure the appropriate use of ICT in education include the following:

1. EI will build member organisations' capacity to advocate for inclusive and appropriate ICT policies at national level, and the capacity of union leaders and members to use ICT to enhance their union and education work, especially in relation to teaching and learning, and organising and online support systems for unions.

2. EI and its member organisations will develop and implement strategies to combat any forms of abuse with special emphasis on protecting students, teachers and education support personnel from cyberbullying and becoming targets for malicious content.

3. EI and education unions should undertake research into the use (and abuses) of ICT in education, including into criteria for evaluation of the quality of distance education programmes and Massive Open Online Courses.

4. Education unions should urge governments to develop national policies and plans for the use and promotion of ICT in education, in consultation with education unions.

5. Education unions should impress upon governments the necessity to allocate funds to ensure that every education institution has access to high quality ICT, both hardware and software, irrespective of where it is situated.

6. Education unions should encourage governments to allocate the necessary funds to provide training and continuous professional development in the use of ICT for teachers and other education professionals.

7. Education unions should advocate for the appropriate use of ICT in education as a key modern aid to teaching and learning and for free access to the appropriate high quality technology and to the internet for all teachers and learners, support professionals and leaders in education.

8. Education unions should monitor the implementation of any agreements entered into by governments, national education or school authorities for the provision of ICT by commercial companies and ensure that these agreements adhere to the principles enunciated above.

Addendum 3 to Education Policy Paper: Leadership in educational institutions

Key principles of EI education leadership policy

1. At the crossroads of national policies and local realities, educational leadership is the legal and moral authority which represents educational establishments and is responsible for their functioning. To that end, educational leadership should represent the state while guaranteeing the implementation of decisions of the education community;

2. Collaborative, collegial and co-operative leadership, involving leaders, administrators, teachers, education support personnel and the whole pedagogical community is the most effective form of leadership in education institutions;

3. Leaders, teachers and education support personnel should be supported and empowered to exercise leadership, through training, professional development, appropriate remuneration, the provision of necessary resources and other mechanisms. This should however not lead to new management layers, but to the recognition of leadership as part of the work of all professionals;

4. All leaders of education institutions should be formally trained, both as teachers and/or education professionals and in leadership skills and knowledge. Potential leaders should have access to accredited leadership training institutes that work according to international (recognized) standards. Leadership training should enhance both the acquisition of effective tools in economic management and pedagogical leadership capacity;

5. It is necessary to promote fair and equal access of men and women to leadership positions;

6. Leaders should be given the support necessary to enable them to exercise their pedagogical roles. Leaders should work with institution-based leadership teams to develop the necessary pedagogical skills in order for them to effectively contribute to quality teaching and learning;

7. Leaders should be accorded the right to exercise appropriately their professional autonomy when carrying out the management, administrative, pedagogical and related functions of the institution, while ensuring and promoting the professional autonomy of other categories of education personnel;

8. Leaders should work inclusively and co-operatively; they should actively promote collaboration among teachers and all education professionals, and foster good and positive relations between teachers and students, with parents and other members of the education institution's community;

9. Leaders must provide teachers and education support personnel with opportunities to experience and exercise leadership roles within the institution and their own groups, as well as the necessary support and resources required for them to carry out their duties effectively;

10. Leaders should respect and listen to teachers, education support personnel and students in the development, implementation and evaluation of the policies and programmes in their education institutions;

11. Leaders should acknowledge the significant contribution of education support personnel to quality leadership, through the provision of administrative, educational and other support services;

12. The salaries and working conditions of leaders in education institutions must be sufficient and appropriate to their level of responsibility, improved and comparable with those of leaders in other professions, in order to attract and retain a talented, knowledgeable and well-educated and skilled workforce;

13. The work-life balance of those in leadership positions should be respected and protected by their employers;

14. Leaders, like any other worker, have the right to exercise freedom of association and to organise, in accordance with international labour standards and will respect the rights of teachers and education support personnel in this regard. They have the right to join trade unions and professional associations in order to promote their interests;

15. Social dialogue in education institutions generally should be institutionalised and regulated by law or through collective agreements in which the parties have clarified which issues should be the subject of information sharing, consultation and collective bargaining; this would assist leaders in developing and maintaining relations with all of their colleagues;

16. Leaders and administrative staff, together with all education personnel should be involved in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education policy, and especially in the aspects of such policy relating to leadership itself, in their institutions, and should be represented in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such policy at national level.

Addendum 4 to Education Policy Paper: Financing of education
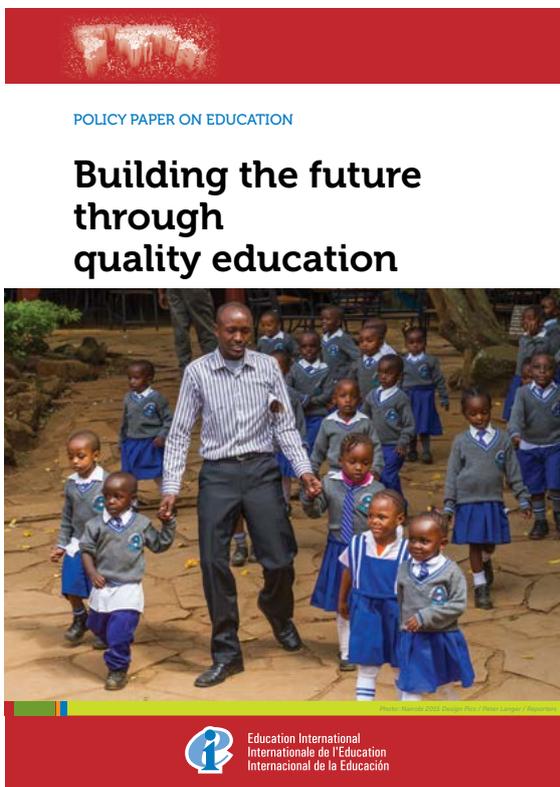
1. Public financing of education needs to be sufficient, predictable and sustainable to ensure the provision of quality education for all and the implementation and achievement of education development goals. States should take all necessary measures to ensure they have sufficient revenue to fund education. This includes closing tax havens, combatting corporate tax evasion, ensuring companies pay fair resource rents, and implementing financial transaction taxes both to limit financial speculation and to raise additional revenues.

2. The global commitment to education as a human right needs to be followed by a global commitment to financing education. EI considers it necessary to assess more accurately the financial needs in education, and for that reason, to identify the necessary percentage of GDP allocated to education in countries where the minimum allocation of 6% of GDP is not enough, based on appropriate methodology that takes into account the specific educational goals of each country, the evolution of the age pyramid, and other data, to ensure the desired quality of education.

3. In those countries where the specified amounts of allocating at least 6% of GDP to education are not feasible or do not provide sufficient resources for quality education for all, public spending should be supplemented by funding obtained externally for use in education. At least, 10% of global official development assistance should be directed towards educational development.

4. However, this should only be seen as a temporary solution. When a country is applying for external funds to finance the national education sector, local unions should demand that this strategy be temporary and that the government simultaneously increase the effort to find sustainable national solutions.

5. Supplementary funding from international and bilateral donors (including multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the private sector, including corporate, foundation and philanthropic contributions) must respect the right to free quality education for all citizens and residents of that country, and, the principles included in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, especially country ownership. In no way should such funding lead to privatisation and commercialisation of education, which EI strongly opposes.

6. All education in a country should be a public responsibility; that is, education should be publicly funded and regulated. Governments and public authorities, in cooperation with education unions and other civil society groups, should oversee the design and impact of education budgets against key indicators of equity in order to ensure that spending is progressive and that resources reach the most marginalised. Governments should support transparency and public scrutiny of education budgets, and enable civil society to track actual spending and analyse both budgeting and spending in order to assess the equitable distribution of financial resources.

7. Public financing should be designed to ensure that all citizens have equitable access to quality education that is fee-free at the point of delivery. Equitable access and completion of a full cycle of continuous fee-free quality education, including early childhood through to higher education, as well as adult education may require additional targeted public financing for the most disadvantaged.

8. Donor states must meet their commitment from the Monterrey Consensus to provide 0.7% of their Gross National Income to official development assistance. The international community should explore new mechanisms of educational and public funding, including a tax on cross-border currency transactions (like the Tobin Tax), or a global tax on wealth.

Addendum 5 to Education Policy Paper: Equitable and inclusive education

1. Millions of children worldwide are unable to access quality education, or successfully complete a full cycle of education due to the devastating impact of poverty and their low socio-economic status and position. Socio-economic status is a structural challenge to learning, which governments must address as a matter of priority if states are to meet their obligation to provide quality education that is equitable and inclusive of all.

2. In addition, the intersection of low socio-economic status with other inequalities such as age, disability, ethnicity or indigeneity, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, language, marital status, migratory status, political activism, religion, socio-economic status, trade union affiliation, among others, means that millions of children face exclusion from, or crushing discrimination and marginalisation within education. States must support, financially and otherwise, the collection of data that focuses on the issues affecting groups that are excluded from or marginalised within education as a result of multiple and intersecting inequalities. It is crucial for all actors in the education field to understand how and why inequalities multiply and intersect with each other, leading to the exclusion of already vulnerable children from quality education.

POLICY PAPER ON EDUCATION

POLICY PAPER ON EDUCATION

Building the future through quality education

Photo: Nairobi 2015 Design Pics / Peter Langer / Reporters

Education International
Internationale de l'Education
Internacional de la Educación

HUMAN & TRADE UNION RIGHTS POLICY PAPER

HUMAN & TRADE UNION RIGHTS POLICY PAPER

Strengthening rights through education unions

Photo: Italy, Rome, November 2015, Reporters / BARCROFT

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