On Education & Democracy

25 Lessons from the Teaching Profession

Susan Hopgood and Fred van Leeuwen

written with Jim Baker, Felisa Tibbitts and Jelmer Evers

with a foreword by Timothy Snyder

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Education International has developed a poster to give an overview of the 25 lessons and provide explanatory notes for each of them. Scan this QR code with your mobile device or download the poster by accessing this link: https://go.ei-ie.org/25lessonsposterEN

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"Democracy has to be born anew every generation,
and education is its midwife."

John Dewey

Foreword

Democracy depends upon a world of facts. If the people are to rule, they must believe in this world, and believe that they share it with others who feel the same way.

Democracy depends upon a world of numbers, where citizens can understand what it means when a small percentage of people control a large percentage of the wealth.

Democracy depends upon a world of experiment, where people grasp what it means for themselves and their descendants when the percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases.

Democracy depends upon a world of language, which allows people to see one another as equals with different experiences and values that they can share in speech and writing in a common public sphere.

Democracy depends upon a world of culture, in which people can share what they know and feel through symbols that are common and cherished and sustained.

Democracy depends upon a world of history, where the past instructs about dangers but also about possibilities, where we can see ourselves together making decisions that matter for the future.

Democracy depends upon a common world that we can all try to understand together. If the people are to rule, which is what democracy means, the people must see and grasp and share and improve the world around them.

All of this is possible, but none of it is automatic. Such a world can only be made by teachers and the schools and unions that support them.

If we want democracy we have to demand it, and we have to be able to educate children who will make and remake it. In this guidebook we can find the guidance we need to do so.

Timothy Snyder
Vienna, 17 May 2019

Preface

Trade unionists, educators and education trade unionists have always recognised democracy as a prerequisite for good societies and essential for the fulfilment of human rights. Trade union rights, the right to education and freedom of expression are all enabling rights that help to leverage other rights. The struggles to achieve these are fundamental to the history of Education International (EI). During the quarter century of the existence of EI, until recently, it was too easy to be comforted by the feeling that setbacks on democracy and rights were exceptions in an unhindered peaceful flow of progress towards democracy. However, we have now seen well established, deeply rooted democracies tremble in the face of a resurgence of authoritarianism. The origin of this book is that concern – that alarm – about the future of our freedoms and of our democracies.

The book is designed to be used flexibly. It can be read lesson-by-lesson or as a whole, used for teaching purposes by chapters or sections, and provide a basis for discussions among teachers and others in the education community. "On Education and Democracy" will also serve EI member organisations in their efforts to mobilise in support of democracy through education and through trade union action.

The purpose of this book is not to gather dust. It is, rather, to serve as a living document that will motivate and inform action and generate discussion. It will lead to the production and use of additional materials to address the issues raised in this publication.

There is a great deal of discussion about threats to democracy. However, we feel there is too little consideration, at both national and international levels, of the contributions that good quality education with professional educators can make to meeting the many challenges that democracy and our freedoms are facing. We hope that this book will help spark such a discussion. The principal force behind "On Education and Democracy" is EI General Secretary Emeritus Fred van Leeuwen. He and President Susan Hopgood have based this book on the current global situation but also on the history of EI and education trade unions. I would like to thank him for his continuing service to EI as well as co-author Susan Hopgood and those who helped them with this important book.

David Edwards,
General Secretary
Education International
Brussels, 1 June 2019

Introduction

We want our students to grow up in a democratic society. We want them to become active citizens able to make wise choices. We want to enable them to promote, protect and achieve the values which constitute the basis of democracy and its institutions. We believe that the real safeguard of democracy is education and that the ability of our schools and universities to fulfil that role will largely depend on the teaching profession. We know that educators around the world, whether they work in democratic, non-democratic or authoritarian environments, are ready to play their part.

Our democratic political systems are not alike. However, they are guided by the same core principles which include free elections, the right to vote, political equality, separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, the rule of law and judicial independence, freedom of expression and association, and other internationally recognised human and trade union rights.

Many of us have become all too familiar with the violation of those rights and with attacks on democracy in the form of authoritarian rule, assassinations, torture, discharges, exile and prison. Such brutality continues, but there are many more killers of democracy. In fact, in many democratic countries certain values of democracy seem to be fading or taking a backseat. Assaults on the free press, the impoverishment of public services, growing inequalities and elitism, the restriction of trade union rights and professional freedoms, the rise of populism and the resurgence of racism and xenophobia are posing threats to democratic societies everywhere.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Education International, which currently brings together the national education unions of 170 countries representing 32.5 million educators and education support staff, we have selected 25 lessons which educators and their organisations have learnt throughout history on education and democracy. The format and some of the lessons were inspired by the book by Timothy Snyder, "On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century" (2017). Snyder's book underlines direct assaults on democracy by totalitarian and authoritarian forces of the 20th century. We share his concerns about such sweeping dangers.

Our lessons serve as a set of recommendations to every classroom teacher working at all levels in our education systems and in their education unions. These lessons are an invitation to take a stand in favour of democracy and its institutions and to consider contributions that teachers, schools, universities and representative organisations can make to solidify and progress democratic life.

Susan Hopgood & Fred van Leeuwen
Brussels, 1 June 2019

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1

Educate for democracy

Democracy and human rights are not a gift of nature. Their underlying values are to be instilled in future generations. This is the unwritten clause in the assignment of the teaching profession globally. Pedagogy and didactic methods imbued with democratic values should inform all teaching, irrespective of the subject.

This is a formidable challenge, particularly in non-democratic countries, where educators are often required to pursue ideological or religious objectives set by the state. This challenge applies also in countries where school systems are expected to, first and foremost, serve the needs of markets and the economy – educating future workers and consumers and leaving educators little time or space to contribute to the development of well-rounded persons and active, responsible citizens.

> “I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws, and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. While it lies there, it needs no constitution, no law, no court to save it.”[1]

There are reasons why people are turned off by democracy. It is important to understand why democracy is threatened, not only by authoritarians, but through poor performance or perceived weaknesses that open opportunities for authoritarian populists to gain significant support. Many people feel alienated from the political process.

Several surveys have shown that trust in government has declined. Particularly alarming was a study that shows that in several “consolidated democracies” in Europe and North America, support for democracy has decreased (Foa & Mounk, 2016). The study argues that people have “become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system, less hopeful that anything they do might influence public policy, and more willing to express support for authoritarian alternatives” (p.7). Data is broken down by age group and it shows that the least support for democracy is among young people born after 1980 (p. 8).[2] The latest global survey on democracy by the Pew Research Centre, based on information gathered from thirty thousand individuals in 2018, shows that although people still support the idea of liberal democracy,

1 From a speech by U.S. federal judge Learned Hand to a 150,000 newly naturalised citizens in New York’s Central Park in 1944.

2 For example, in The Netherlands, only about one third of the young accord maximal importance to living in a democracy and in the United States, the figure is even lower; around 30 per cent. This study is based on data gathered by the World Values Survey. See http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp

"across 27 countries polled, a median of 51% are dissatisfied with how democracy is working in their country; just 45% are satisfied." The study links the dissatisfaction to support for national populists and shows that it is related to "economic frustration, the status of individual rights, as well as perceptions that political elites are corrupt and do not care about average citizens" (Wike, Silver & Castillo, 2019).

These trends indicate that working with young people must be a priority and that confidence must be restored in democracy, but also that it is a long-term challenge. It means that defence of democracy needs to include elements of what it should be and not only focus on what it is at any given moment. Discussion in classrooms should be open and look at reality, "warts and all".

19th century French philosopher Joseph de Maistre said, "every nation gets the government it deserves". It is important that young people understand that if they deserve better, they need to do something about it. Being passive or simply saying "no" leads nowhere.

Well-trained educators cannot make up or apologise for faults in democracy. However, they can help their students value and experience democracy in many ways.

For example, in Canada, an initiative called "Student Vote" provides youth under voting age with an opportunity to experience the voting process first-hand and build the habits of active and engaged citizenship. Students learn about government and the electoral process, and research the issues and candidates through classroom learning, campaign activities, media consumption and family dialogue. On "Student Vote Day", students take on the roles of election officials and coordinate a vote for the election of candidates running in their school's municipality. Student Vote, which began in

Alberta, is organised through the non-profit organisation CIVIX. Hundreds of thousands of students have participated since the inception of the program in 2003.[3]

Similar programs exist in other countries, such as in The Netherlands, where, since 1966, secondary schools organise "student elections" prior to the country's general elections, giving their students the opportunity to cast their votes.[4]

These programs illustrate how educators can facilitate a "teachable moment" out of democratic processes such as an election. Learning how democracy and democratic elections work is important. Even more important is that children are exposed to the standards and values underlying democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Education transmits values on behalf of society. This socialisation encourages respect for all human rights, builds tolerance, and furthers peace. Even in societies where such values are prevalent, they need to be renewed and carried forward dynamically with each new generation.

In societies where they are not prevalent, educators play a crucial role in presenting such values to students and encouraging their critical analysis so that they can become players in democracy and help move its practice closer to its values.

The failure to instil values of democracy, human rights and rule of law – accompanied by open discussion and critical thinking – is not an accident in dictatorships. As 20th century German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt said, "the aim of totalitarian education has never been to instil convictions, but to destroy the capacity to form any."

3 See http://studentvote.ca/

4 The "student elections" (*scholierenverkiezing*) in The Netherlands are organised in cooperation with ProDemos, a non-governmental organisation promoting democracy and the rule of law. See https://prodemos.nl/english/about-prodemos/

But it is not only tyranny that undermines human dignity. What about an unregulated free market with a tightening grip not only on practices, but also on culture and thought? Widening inequality is too often considered acceptable and too little questioned simply because it has been "normalised".

Exposing children to democratic and human rights standards means that there can be free discussion in the classroom. It is vital to be able to listen to others and try to understand how they see the world. The ability and habit of seeing things through one's own eyes and experiences, but also to see and understand the way others see the same things, is intrinsic to good education.

Human rights standards are constant and universal, but understanding their full meaning comes through their application in specific circumstances. This is essential if transitions to democracy and the resolution of conflicts in society are to be successful and sustainable. It is not automatic that understanding of human rights will be inculcated, but it is essential that this understanding is nurtured in schools. This depends on curriculum content but also teaching methods. Democratic values can imbue pedagogy through the fostering of open discussion, critical thinking, participation, inclusion and multi-perspectivity. Schools themselves should reflect and foster a democratic and human rights-friendly culture. Democratic and human rights values have an authority independent of the power of any government entity.

Education transmits values to the extent that educators can lead and ensure that it is happening. Teachers and school staff reflect and model values in their ways of working with students and all members of the school community. However, too much education in too many countries has become like industrial cuisine – pre-packaged and shoved into the microwave.

An examination of values requires looking at the autonomy and influence of professional teachers, and supporting their capacities to understand, cherish and foster democratic and human rights values and practices with their students. Are their competencies through education, including the empathy that they have developed "on the job" over the years, sufficiently supported to ensure that their classrooms embody democratic and human rights values?

In recent years, a global values struggle has emerged in which some treat education as a commodity. Different lines of conflict have sometimes emerged at national and local levels between educators, educational policymakers, education unions and families. What has become apparent is that while there are some who see education as enshrining common values and supporting democracy, there are others who instead view education as a huge market opportunity where monetary values, rather than humanistic values, are central. The untamed market doesn't have a face, a name, and can neither be elected nor removed from office. And yet, in many jurisdictions, entities with no direct mandate or democratic legitimacy to deliver public services are nevertheless entrusted by public authorities with something as precious as education. This is a particularly dangerous, if too common, practice in places where democracies are fragile or damaged by serious conflicts. Clearly, governments that subscribe to such "solutions" are, in fact, deepening and proliferating the problems of their countries.

2

Shape global citizens

The world is changing rapidly, and schools must evolve to prepare young people to understand the world in which they live, in all its complexity; to recognise the ways in which global and local affairs are intertwined; to understand globalisation and its consequences, including global risks; and to have the skills and the desire to contribute to improving the world.

Being "global citizens" does not mean abandoning national allegiances, ethnic identities or political beliefs. On the contrary, a global citizen is also an engaged "national citizen" who balances and integrates the local, the national and the international.

> Early in 2019, students from all over the world took to the streets to pressure their political leaders to address climate change. In addition to marching and speaking out, students in India, New Zealand, Kenya and the United Kingdom are simultaneously carrying out research projects on climate change.

We live in an interconnected and interdependent world. The conditions of globalisation have privileged certain countries and persons, yet increased the vulnerability of others. Fates are inextricably intertwined when it comes to challenges such as climate change, migration, and peace and security. Across the world, people find themselves in more diverse societies and increasingly competitive global labour markets. Working together to realise a sustainable, equitable and a peaceful world is imperative.

Since its founding, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has promoted education as a means to increase universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and the fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the United Nations Charter. In 1974, UNESCO passed the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. This milestone document recognised discrete approaches that would evolve into UNESCO programming with global dimensions: human rights education, peace education and environmental education (the latter becoming education for sustainable development). These are now incorporated within the UN's Global Citizenship Education initiative and linked with the Education 2030 Framework and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7.[5]

5 https://gem-report-2016.unesco.org/en/chapter/target-4-7-sustainable-development-and-global-citizenship/

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is based on the belief that globalisation is a new pattern of the world as an interconnected system that has influenced how citizenship operates. The global framework does not replace attention to national and local issues. It is a re-orientation of citizenship education so that learners become aware of the issues and actors at many levels that shape the world around them.

Being a global citizen means learning about and taking responsibility to care for our shared home, our planet. It means educators seeing each other as sisters and brothers, and youth and children as their collective wealth. This means standing up against injustice and acting when necessary.

All too often being internationally oriented is understood to be oriented towards economics, for example being familiar with tax havens, understanding the basics of currency manipulation or shifting funds to minimise taxes and maximise returns. However, being adept at profiting from globalisation is not the same as global citizenship. Identifying as global citizens is a question of values, of feeling part of a global community and of being open to other cultures, languages, histories and practices.

Oxfam, one of the organisations seeking to encourage ethical global citizenship education, speaks of an active global citizen as somebody who "takes an active role in their community, and works with others to make our planet more equal, fair and sustainable."

This formulation captures three elements of education for global citizenship.

One: It is necessary to understand how the world works and to recognise that our national circumstances are increasingly influenced, if not shaped, by global forces and the global environment. If one tries to develop responses to national

challenges as if nations exist in isolation from others, they will be both unrealistic and misguided. Global citizenship education should provide competencies that will build understanding of national situations and dilemmas based on understanding of global impact and connections.

Two: Although "outrage" can never be an educational goal, imparting the democratic and human rights values underpinning global citizenship, as well as addressing injustices and the problem of inequity are legitimate educational objectives. They can be pursued by educators everywhere, not only in democratic countries but also in countries where democracy and human rights have yet to be achieved.

Three: "Willing to act to make the world a sustainable place" links the three pillars of sustainable development – social justice, economic development and environmental protection – with active citizenship. It means dealing with the catastrophic effects of short-termism in financial market-driven globalisation. In and of itself, this form of globalisation creates problems related to the nature of economic growth, contributes to inequalities, and undermines long-term economic development, including possibilities for national and international industrial policy. It means addressing related short-termism on social issues such as the growth of precarious work and the unravelling of the relationships between work, economic security and well-being. It also means confronting a series of environmental issues, especially global warming, that threaten the sustainability of the planet as well as economic and social progress.

Teacher training programs should include global citizenship education and engage teachers in developing teaching methods and curricula that will incorporate critical thinking and make learning in this area interesting and challenging.

Online digital learning platforms can be leveraged as a resource for global citizenship education. There is a plethora of online learning platforms, which offer everything from readings, audio-visual aids, and activity ideas to opportunities for intercultural internet-based communication. The International Education and Resource Network (iEARN), for example, provides ongoing opportunities for classrooms across the world to collaborate on projects.[6] These online resources can be used to supplement global citizenship education in class or can be used on their own as a co-curricular activity.

According to Dr Fernando Reimers, director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative at Harvard University, global citizenship education could drive curriculum reform integrating twenty first century competencies, deeper learning and deploying pedagogies that cultivate student responsibility, imagination and creativity, such as project-based learning and design thinking. In 2016, Reimers and colleagues published a curriculum on global citizenship education designed to equip students with the competencies they need to thrive and contribute to sustainable development in an era of globalisation (Reimers et al, 2016).

Ideally, educators and students should have the opportunity to work and study in other countries. One of the most successful programs funded by the European Union is the Erasmus Program, which enables students from EU member states to follow further and higher education studies in other countries for a period of one year. In the past thirty years, hundreds of thousands of young people have been exposed to other (European) cultures and languages through this program, thus contributing to a climate of understanding, tolerance and cooperation.

6 See iEarn https://iearn.org/index.html.

In lieu of being able to work and study in other countries, co-curricular programs and clubs, for instance, are increasingly sites for developing global citizenship competencies. The Model United Nations program[7] is one such program, which assigns students or groups of students to represent Member States of the United Nations to debate and come up with resolutions to global issues and conflicts. These global learning programs simulate real-world situations and consequently help to develop communication and conflict resolution skills. Global citizenship is brought home to the classroom.

7 See h https://www.imuna.org/

3

Do not be the obedient servant of the state

Notwithstanding the responsibility of public authorities to finance education and to set education goals, educators must always use their professional discretion to interrogate and to reject curricular directives that defy facts, falsify history, lead to xenophobia and hate, or are otherwise at odds with international human rights standards.

There is a professional and ethical responsibility that may outweigh the authority of education employers, or even of governments, where they have abdicated democracy, rule of law and human rights.

> An environmental science teacher in the United States describes her experiences in promoting critical thinking in students in light of scepticism about climate change in the media: "I've started writing lessons with misleading claims about climate science in mind. I chose some common climate science denier talking points that covered everything from consensus to warming pauses and spent a few weeks teaching the unit by introducing misleading claims and using peer-reviewed research to rebut the claims. I think it is incredibly important to engage the sceptical mind-set I find in my students, but I also want to make sure they understand how scientists know what they know" (Harmon, 2017).

A critical element of democracy in education, anchored in international standards and good practice, is academic or professional freedom. It is important to ensure that schools are not intimidated by the herd instinct but are, to the greatest extent possible, liberty-friendly. Although there is more discussion of academic freedom at university level than in K-12, the lower grades are also vital. Part of developing democracy competencies is creating and maintaining an environment of free speech. And if academic freedom is effectively protected for teachers, it creates a good climate for learning about democracy for students.

Academic freedom is not just important in the classroom. It is relevant to what books are available in school libraries and to access to Internet content that might not reflect prevailing views. With academic freedom, like other freedoms, one may have the right "on paper" without having the effective right to exercise it. It is like self-censorship in the press. Fear and freedom do not mix.

Academic freedom is a right and also protects the integrity of education and its institutions. It is not, however, identical to freedom of speech. Professional educators, for example, are not free to substitute opinion for facts, whether it is denial of climate change, support for creationism or re-writing history. In some countries, universities have been pressured, in the name of freedom of expression, to teach non-evidence-based beliefs alongside verified, factual information. Defending academic freedom and professional freedom is not a purely individual responsibility. It must be supported collectively. Education unions can play an important role in the defence of that right.

Academic freedom in the context of developing democratic competences and experience can also be an international issue.

According to a *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, Chinese students were afraid to speak openly in class as they were convinced that what they said would be reported by other Chinese students to the embassy. A Chinese student at the University of Maryland in the US was attacked in the media at home when she spoke in her graduation address of "the fresh air of free speech" (Varrall, 2017).

Democracy requires teaching and learning in freedom: to be able to discuss freely, to think independently and to "get out of line". Teachers need to be able to develop those capabilities among their students. They also have a right to express themselves freely in the classroom, in the school and in the community. They must never be afraid to speak the truth.

In 2017 the Finnish teachers' organisation OAJ[8], working with an independent ethical panel, initiated a teachers' pledge called the "Comenius Oath", named after the 17th century education philosopher, Johan Comenius. That oath includes the following provision:

8 *Opetusalan Ammattijärjestö*

> I will endeavour to shield the children and young people in my care from political and economic exploitation and defend the rights of every individual to develop his or her own religious and political convictions (Carroué, 2017).

In other words, it may be the teacher's ethical responsibility to not comply with instructions from education authorities that imply ideological indoctrination or are not in accordance with international human rights standards.

We know the meaning of education in totalitarian countries. Joseph Stalin, the dictator of the Soviet Union from the mid–1920s until 1953, did not hide his understanding of the power of schooling: "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed" (Stalin & Wells, 1937). This approach was shared by Adolf Hitler, who forced education in Germany and in the occupied countries to be subservient to Nazi ideology. In some places, educators successfully resisted the Nazification of their schools.

In 1941, the Nazi Governor-General of occupied Poland, Hans Michael Frank, proclaimed that Polish schools should prepare young Poles to be a slave labour force. Reading, writing and arithmetic would suffice; history, geography and literature were to be stricken from the curriculum as "Poles are a nation that is not worthy of being counted among the cultured (European) peoples". In an effort to destroy Poland's cultural heritage, the occupying authorities closed many schools and universities. Books and archives were set ablaze, and many members of the country's intelligentsia, including educators and scientists, were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Thousands of educators went into hiding while continuing to secretly teach Polish youth. Most of them were

members of the Polish Teachers' Union ZNP[9], which used its trade union structures in the resistance. About one million primary school children, 100,000 students in secondary and vocational education and 7,000 university students benefitted from ZNP's "secret teaching", as it became known. More than 10,000 "secret educators" were killed by the Nazi rulers. Their role in the Polish Resistance is commemorated every year on 1 September at the Monument to the Secret Teaching Organisation in Warsaw.[10]

Educators resisted aslo in occupied Norway. They refused to allow their school system and their profession to be transformed into agencies of indoctrination to convert the Norwegian people to Nazi ideology. A "puppet teachers' association" was created by the Nazi-controlled collaborationist government headed by Vidkun Quisling. All educators were to join the new organisation. Encouraged by underground groups in Oslo, a vast majority of the Norwegian teaching profession refused to register. The authorities responded by detaining about 1,000 male educators and closing all schools. More than 200,000 parents wrote letters of protest to the government. Meanwhile, underground organisations paid the salaries of the detained educators. Efforts by the Gestapo to break their resistance failed.

In April 1942, the Quisling government transported 499 educators by train to a concentration camp near Kirkenes in the Arctic region. Students, parents and others gathered along the railroad tracks to offer food and to sing songs of encouragement as the train with the educator prisoners passed through their towns and villages on its long way north. The educators kept up morale by forming choirs and organising lectures.

9 *Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego*

10 Excerpts from "The Secret Teachers' Organisation" by Witold Salański, Głos Nauczycielski in the ZNP publication, Teacher's Voice, nos. 47 & 48.

The government finally gave up on the creation of the fascist teachers' organisation and in November 1942, after five months of detention, all educators were released.

The refusal of Norwegian educators to abide by Nazi rule, called the "paper-clip resistance", and the public support for their persistence prevented the occupying authorities from transforming the Norwegian schools into propaganda centres.[11]

Not in all occupied countries in Europe did educators collectively resist Nazi rule. In most cases they accepted, even if reluctantly, education "reforms" imposed by the occupation authorities. However, there are many examples of courageous teachers who refused to declare their allegiance to the new masters, to formally assert that they were of the Aryan race, or to deny Jewish students access to their schools and universities. Some felt compelled to give up their teaching positions rather than fall into line.

In Germany, teachers had to take an oath of loyalty to the Führer, Adolf Hitler, and were obliged to join the National Socialist Teachers League that was responsible for carrying out the educational goals of the Nazi Party. There were two basic educational ideas in Hitler's ideal state, according to Louis Leo Snyder, an American scholar who witnessed first-hand the Nazi mass rallies held from 1923:

> First, the sense of race would have to be burnt into the heart and brains of youth. Second, German youth had to be made ready for war and educated for victory or death. The ultimate purpose of education was to fashion citizens conscious of the glory of country and filled with fanatical devotion to the national cause (Snyder, 1994, p. 79) … Biology, along with political education, became compulsory.

11 Steffen Handal, President of the *Utdanningsforbundet*, Union of Teachers of Norway (UEN), provided the information on teachers' resistance during the Nazi occupation of Norway.

> Children learnt about "worthy" and "unworthy" races, about breeding and hereditary disease. They measured their heads with tape measures, checked the colour of their eyes and texture of their hair against charts of Aryan or Nordic types, and constructed their own family trees to establish their biological, not historical, ancestry... expanding also on the racial inferiority of the Jews (Haste, 2001, p. 101).

Educators who did not support these educational goals resigned, were dismissed or arrested and detained. However, some anti-Nazi teachers survived. Dr. Schuster, a geography teacher, wrote in 1938:

> I am trying through the teaching of geography to do everything in my power to give the boys knowledge and, I hope, later on, judgment, so that when, as they grow older, the Nazi fever dies down and it again becomes possible to offer some opposition they may be prepared. There are four or five teachers left in our school who are non-Nazis, and we all work on the same plan. If we leave, Nazis will come in and there will be no honest teaching in the whole school. But if I went to America and left others to do it, would that be honest, or are the only honest people those in prison cells? If only there could be some collective action amongst teachers.

The vast majority of the German teaching profession, however, followed more or less obediently the prescribed curriculum. By 1938, two-thirds of all elementary school teachers had been sent to special camps to follow compulsory, one-month training courses where they were instructed what to pass on to their students.

Among the educators who were dismissed by the Nazi authorities was Heinrich Rodenstein, an active member of the socialist workers party (SAP), one of the first who had publicly challenged the Nazification of Germany's school

system. To escape prosecution, he left his country in 1933 after his dismissal and lived in exile in The Netherlands and France. After the war, Rodenstein became Rector of the Pedagogical College of Braunschweig and a strong advocate for the reform of the German school system and the establishment of independent and democratic education unions. Never again should schools and educators be the prisoners of state ideology.

Rodenstein was one of the founders of the *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW)* in 1948. He led the education union from 1960 to 1968 and played an important role in promoting free teachers' trade unionism internationally – as President of the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions (IFFTU) from 1966 to 1972, one of the forerunners of Education International.

Throughout history, authoritarian regimes have tried to bend school systems, curricula and educators to their political and ideological will. Restricting teachers' professional freedoms, curtailing their organisations' rights or establishing new, state-controlled education unions has been a popular recipe among non-democratic rulers. The communist regimes in Europe before the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the dictatorships ruling Latin America during a large part of the 20th century, the authoritarian rulers in Asia and the Pacific, in Africa and in the Arab world, all tried to keep a firm grip on educators, on the professionals moulding their nation's youth.

In many countries, educators resisted being subject to authoritarian rule. Some went into exile, as many politically active educators did during Francisco Franco's rule of Spain (1939-1975) and during the Portuguese dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar (1926-1974). They took their teachers' organisations with

them or established new ones. In fact, the main education unions of Spain and Portugal, as well as the trade union confederations they belong to, were in exile for decades in France, which was their base to mobilise resistance and, with their global trade union organisations, exert pressure on the international community to help restore democracy in their countries.

Others, like Dr Schuster, the German geography teacher in 1938 mentioned earlier, did not leave their country but continued their work, following their consciences, teaching the truth, and hoping for better times. Some of them would create, join or support groups and organisations that openly or covertly challenged their totalitarian governments. Such activities were important factors leading to the downfall of the military dictatorships in Argentina (1983), Brazil (1985) and Chile (1990).

The establishment of the Polish trade union *NSZZ Solidarnosc* in 1980, and the subsequent creation of its education and science sections, contributed significantly to the ending of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe.

In South Africa, under intense pressure from the international community and from the anti-apartheid movement, which included teacher and student organisations, the White minority regime finally released Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 and began to dismantle the apartheid system, which had been in place since 1948. During that period, separate school systems for White, Indian, Coloured and African students were the government's main vehicle to propagate the principles of inequality and segregation (New Learning, n.d.).

Most educators working in authoritarian environments or in education systems that serve state or religious dogmas rather than the well-being of children are, quite understandably, reluctant to challenge education authorities and risk dismissal,

detention or worse. When they do defy government policy and directives, they do so silently and covertly, in small groups or through organisations that allow these initiatives.

There are still many places where educators are expected to obediently follow instructions about what and how to teach.

The president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, has stated that schools should teach the values from the period of martial law during President Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship (1972-1981), when most democratic rights were suspended. Education union representatives have said that they fear the ruthless methods Mr. Duterte uses to impose his will.

At an international education conference in Ottawa in 2017, a high official of the Turkish Ministry of Education was asked about the dismissal of thousands of educators following the failed coup d'état in 2016. He said that educators, as public servants, were obliged to support and carry out government policy and, if they did not, education authorities were entitled to dismiss them. At the beginning of the 2017 school year, the Turkish authorities declared that all public primary and secondary schools would cease teaching the theory of evolution.

On the Arab peninsula, with perhaps the exception of Kuwait, educators are kept on a very short leash. In Bahrain, the leader of the teachers' association, Mahdi Abu Dheeb, served a five-year prison sentence (2011-2016) for organising a teachers' demonstration calling for education reforms.

In Iran, religion is at the core of schools' educational assignments and educators have little choice but to conform. On 20 May 2018, teachers participating in a peaceful protest were arrested and held in detention. On 4 August, one of them, Mohammed Habibi, was sentenced to ten and a half years in prison. The sentence by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Court also

included prohibition of social and political activities for two years, a travel ban and 74 lashes.

Education, by itself, does not guarantee support for democracy. Some of the highest-ranking officials of the National Socialist government of Germany (1933-1945) were highly educated people, including several PhDs. Their skills and knowledge were applied to controlling, not liberating, minds. That was also true of Joseph Stalin's inner circle. In other words, it is not the level of education that counts, but rather whether that education incorporates democratic values and critical thinking.

Teacher Resistance – A Family Heritage

> During the Nazi occupation of Norway my grandfather was one of the teachers who was imprisoned at Kirkenes. He was arrested on my father's sixth birthday, the 25th of March. The family was not formally informed about the whereabouts of the arrested teachers but were kept up-to-date through secretly distributed information.
> While in Kirkenes, the teachers were engaged in forced labour like road building and unloading from boats supplies for the German army fighting in Russia. During their work, they were under close surveillance by German soldiers. They were housed in a stable and later in cardboard "tents", each housing 16 men.
> During the first months of autumn of 1942, rumours reached the families of a possible release of the imprisoned teachers. Waiting for the release to happen was particularly stressful for the families, who were uncertain about the fate of their loved ones after their return from Kirkenes…

When my grandfather finally returned, my father and a few friends arranged a secret welcoming ceremony with hidden Norwegian flags to celebrate their part in what was seen as a victory over the German invaders.

A short time after the teachers' return from the concentration camp, they were summoned to individual interviews with Gestapo and asked what they had learnt during their stay in Kirkenes. Most of the teachers answered in unprovocative ways and could go back to their previous positions in their schools. But some few – among them my grandfather – were fired from their jobs by the Gestapo, apparently because they hadn't "learnt" enough. For the remaining period of the war, my grandfather taught part time in a private school and wrote a textbook, which was subsequently used in schools for many years.

Steffen Handal, President of Union of Teachers of Norway UEN

4

Be aware of the thin line between patriotism and nationalism

Patriotism may be positive to the extent that it emphasises the positive values of a nation and is not based on division. However, the term has often been distorted and confused. The line between patriotism and nationalism can be difficult to define.

Nationalism tends to express itself as being in opposition to others and slips easily into chauvinism and nativism, which provide fertile ground for discrimination and other anti-democratic practices. In countries where right-wing populism is on the rise, schools and educators may be under pressure to have nationalistic sentiments reflected in the curriculum.

> "I have to hold nationalism up so my students can distinguish it from "patriotism" and also "unity" and "community." It is essentially a term of exclusion, a set of codes by which citizens must abide. Who is "truly" French? Or British? Is the English-speaking child of a Polish plumber, born in London, a member of the nation? Can the German "nation" hold close its refugees and accept them as Germans?"[12]

Along with concerns about the dangers of nationalism in the last part of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, an international consensus emerged on the right to "self-determination". It is seen as both a political and civil right and an economic, social, and cultural right and is enshrined in Articles I of both UN covenants.

The concept of self-determination has never been clearly defined. It was a basis for changes in borders after both world wars as well as for de-colonisation, and there continue to be disputes based on self-determination, sovereignty and national independence. Under these circumstances, it may be very difficult to cleanse teaching of all nationalism. However, to ensure that animosities are not passed on, it is important to try to avoid the most negative attacks on others that is often a characteristic of nationalism.

Preservation of the Nation State in the face of global forces undermining human rights or democratic decision-making is not to be confused with nationalism. It is not motivated by hostility to or bigotry against others, but to legitimate policy and national independence questions. There is a need for sensitivity, however, when there are risks of intolerance and fanning flames of division.

12 Blog by Pat Walsh https://bigpictureeducation.wordpress.com/2016/10/06/should-i-teach-about-nationalism-the-way-i-teach-about-racism/

For example, countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continue to be ripe with potential rifts across ethnic communities. Curriculum developers have tried to ensure that history education does not demonise border countries engaged in the earlier Balkan conflict to avoid hostility to members of associated ethnic groups who are living within the BiH borders.

It is important to bear in mind that there is often more than one history. History should not be propaganda and it should not pass on untruths. Standards that the best historians apply to their own research and writing are relevant to materials used in classrooms.

However, there are too many examples of curriculum being tainted by nationalist sentiments, ranging from omitting painful facts in a country's history to (worse) glorifying those facts. Even in democratic countries, there are sometimes public authorities that require educators to teach a distorted version of the national history and require the use of historically questionable teaching materials. For example, since 1947 there have been numerous conflicts between the Japan Teachers Union JTU[13] and conservative Liberal Democratic Party governments about history textbooks and history education in general. A clash that received much attention, nationally and internationally, was JTU's refusal to accept a history syllabus that omitted war crimes committed by Japan during its occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

Teaching in an honest way is often difficult as there may be pressures from authorities, local communities and parents to limit the exposure of students to different points of view. By stimulating full and fair discussions, educators help to overcome divisions based on nationalism and contribute to social cohesion. It is a vital part of the mission of education to build peace and understanding.

13 日本教職員組合 *Nihon Kyōshokuin Kumiai, NIKKYOSO, JTU*

5

Stimulate critical thinking

A fundamental capacity and competency for democracy is the ability to think critically. Without that ability one is subject to control and manipulation by others. This requires a broad curriculum and pedagogies that cultivate students' responsibility, imagination and creativity, as implied by UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, Target 4.7.

> "…Many unexamined lives together result in an uncritical, unjust, dangerous world."[14]

It is only education that can equip young people to process information in real time and make sound judgements. "I saw it on TV" or "I read it on Facebook so it must be true" has become an even more dangerous assumption than in the past. People are not born with the ability to sort out information and determine what is true and what is false, or what is fact and what is opinion. They must learn it. It is not realistic to ask children to turn off their screens so as not to be exposed to or corrupted by distortions and lies. Instead, they need to develop capacities to evaluate and judge information.

Critical thinking is a core intellectual skill as well as a disposition. When critical thinking takes place in schools, students are encouraged by their teachers to evaluate an issue or weigh different points of view in order to form a judgment. In addition, it can be a critical perspective – based on a normative framework such as human rights– that is applied to a particular environment. The latter is consistent with critical pedagogy. There are no shortcuts to critical thinking. It requires human interaction. Discussion develops the discipline of understanding, responding, and articulating thought. Critical thinking is far more than accumulating information or even ideas in one's brain. It is part of being somebody.

In post-war Germany, different approaches to civic and religious education had created discord within the education community. In 1976 educators came together in the small town of Beutelsbach to discuss their differences of view, and they reached consensus on three important principles:

14 Linda Elder, President of the Foundation for Critical Thinking https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/dr-linda-elder/819

> (1) Students should not be indoctrinated or hindered in the development of independent judgement; (2) matters that are controversial in intellectual and political affairs must also be taught as controversial in educational instruction; and (3) students should be equipped to analyse a political situation and assess how their interests are affected and seek means to influence the situation based on those interests.

One of the key messages of the *Beutelsbach Consensus*, which is still considered to be of great importance to education in Germany, is that controversy is a fundamental principle of classroom instruction (Reinhardt, 2016).[15]

Paolo Freire, a Brazilian educator, philosopher and a leading advocate of critical pedagogy, wrote in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) that problem-posing education affirms us in the very process of becoming. It is ironic that in the country of Paulo Freire an organisation has been created to presumably ban critical thinking from the classroom. In 2015, a lawyer from Sao Paulo, Miguel Nagib, established *Éscolas sem Partido* (Schools without political parties) after having been outraged by a history teacher who had compared Che Guevara to St. Francis of Assisi. Under the influence of Nagib's organisation, Roman Catholic and evangelical legislators from all over the country proposed laws forbidding educators to address political and moral issues in their classrooms. One such proposal, submitted to the Brazilian Senate in 2016 by the evangelical pastor Magnus Malta, obliged schools to fix posters on all classrooms' walls listing the duties of educators and the right of students not to be "indoctrinated". The education union of Brazil, CNTE[16], strongly protested the draft law, also

15 More info about Beutelsbach Consensus can be found at https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1118112.pdf and https://scholzandreas79.wordpress.com/2014/05/09/the-beutelsbacher-consensus-a-reasonable-guidline-for-political-education-in-germany/

16 *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação.*

known as the "Gag Bill", as did students and many academics. Although the proposal was defeated, *Éscolas sem Partido* continues its crusade. That crusade now appears to have been joined by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro who is known for his distaste for gay people, feminism, rainforests and the rule of law. One day after his election on 28 October 2018 representatives of his Social Liberal Party (PSL) called upon students around the country to make audio and video recordings of "indoctrinating teachers".

Bolsonaro is not the only populist leader blaming teachers for poisoning youth with leftist views. From Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, to Viktor Orbán of Hungary, to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, and to America's Donald Trump, they all have shown a special interest in the teaching profession as a potential threat to right wing, authoritarian rule.

Critical thinking is one of the important principles of the Enlightenment. It applies beyond education, but education has a special role in cultivating its practice. One expression consistent with the evolution of thought comes from the 17th century education philosopher Johan Comenius, sometimes called the father of modern education. He described what was needed from education:

- Proceed by stages (Omnia gradatim)
- Examine everything oneself, without submitting to authority
- Act on one's own impulsion: 'autopraxy'

This requires, "with reference to all that is presented to the intellect, the memory, the tongue and the hand, that the pupils shall themselves seek, discover, discuss, do and repeat, without slacking, by their own efforts – the teachers being left

merely with the task of seeing whether what is to be done is done, and done as it should be" (Piaget, 1993, p. 180).

Many years later, in 1996, a UNESCO report, prepared by the International Commission for the Twenty-first century and chaired by Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission from 1985 to 1995, identified four pillars of education:

- Learning to know – a broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects.
- Learning to do – to acquire not only occupational skills but also the competence to deal with many situations and to work in teams.
- Learning to be – to develop one's personality and to be able to act with growing autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility.
- Learning to live together – by developing and understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence (Delors, 1996).

In the last two decades there have been many attempts to do away with the central role of the professional teacher in the education process. With slogans like "personalised learning" and "a digital personalised learning environment", it is sometimes argued that students could easily learn by themselves digitally. Teachers know better. Education is all about human interaction and iteration. Teachers seek to incorporate elements of inquiry across the curriculum to foster deep learning. Students work through the phases of immersion, investigation, coalescence and demonstration of learning. Throughout these phases the students can wonder, build background knowledge, develop questions, search for new information, synthesise information, demonstrate understanding and share their learning with others. As they inquire, students tie everything together by questioning and probing for deeper meaning.

Open-ended questioning encourages collaboration and fosters the development of critical thinking skills. Questioning helps develop good habits and patterns for thinking and plays a vital role in developing deep learning and critical thinking. Similarly, problem solving enables students to apply the critical thinking strategies they have learned and above all to think for themselves.

The best learning environments are those which are varied and flexible enough to accommodate the needs of learners and which provide ongoing opportunities to build a collaborative community of students and staff. Such communities promote cooperative, individual, small and large group learning. In collaborative, flexible groups students learn how to communicate with others effectively, work as a team, practice self-discipline, and improve social and interpersonal skills. Through cooperation, students develop a better understanding of what they are learning and improve critical thinking skills.

In 1976 a group of American history teachers who were dissatisfied with how the Holocaust was being taught in American schools, founded "Facing History and Ourselves". They wanted history teaching to inform democratic citizenship and moral action. Today "Facing History and Ourselves" helps teachers around the world transform their teaching practices so that they are participatory and focus on critical thinking and reflection and action. Teaching for democracy can happen in any classroom, according to the group, regardless of subject matter, and it begins when teachers and students practice together certain skills and dispositions that foster engaged, democratic citizenship.

These include:[17]

- Self-reflection and awareness
- Perspective-taking
- Collaborative deliberation
- Compassion, empathy, and respect for differences
- Ethical awareness
- Critical thinking
- Equity and justice
- Civic agency

Critical thinking is vital for society, students, teachers and others in order to identify and respond to threats and weaknesses in democracy, so that it can be re-habilitated and re-invigorated. Without a full range of critical thinking competencies, functioning in a democracy – even to the extent of casting a vote – is difficult, and active citizenship impossible. It is critical thinking that has the power to prevent a crowd from becoming a mob.

Teachers need to be able to bring critical thinking into the public debate. Values and critical thinking go hand in hand. Reason without values and values without reason betray the Enlightenment. The two, together, show the distinction and difference between certainty and conviction.

17 See www.facing.org.

6

Build resilience when inequality muffles voice

Political equality, which is fundamental to democracy, involves a wide range of issues including eligibility to vote and run for office as well as access to the political process. It also encompasses trade union and civil society engagement, access to free media, and the exercise of basic rights.

Political equality may be undermined by socio-economic inequality. Free public education, accessible to all, provides the best opportunity to reduce those inequalities.

Schools and educators can build resilience with a broad curriculum, not only ensuring the delivery of the appropriate knowledge, skills and values, but also constituting a solid basis for lifelong learning.

> In the 2016 u.s. elections, almost 92 million eligible Americans did not vote. Participation was lower for people who were unemployed or with relatively low-income levels, those who did not complete high school, and members of the Asian and Latino communities (Root & Kennedy, 2018).

Political equality, or the extent to which citizens have an equal voice over governmental decisions, is essential for democracy to function. It is a very imperfect democracy that denies equal voting rights. Such a practice was common in many countries that restricted the franchise to those who owned property or that denied the right to vote to certain categories of persons (for example, women and slaves).

There have been other restrictions like burdensome procedures and requirements that have made voting more difficult and discouraged political participation. Those include difficult registration or qualification procedures; a limited number of polling places or the location of polling places at great distances from some communities; or excessive limits on voting hours. Poll taxes or fees that deliberately restrict the right to vote also undermine political equality.

There are other political inequalities that affect the fairness of elections. For example, some candidates may receive privileged access to the media. There may be a preference for incumbent candidates by media outlets, whether public or private. In the United States and a few other countries, access to the media is affected by the ability to purchase time in electronic media and printed publications. The "equal time" doctrine in the United States, which used to require a measure of balance in American television and radio, was abolished in 2010 by the Supreme Court. In another decision, the Court removed most restrictions on the ability of corporations

(considered to be legal persons) to spend money to support or oppose candidates in elections.[18]

In many countries, the participation level in elections is lower for poor people and lower income people than the rest of the population. There are many possible causes, including alienation from the political process by those who would seem to benefit least from the system. If people feel that the political system is fair, even if they lose on a candidate or issue, they know that they have the possibility to win in the future. However, if they think that there is a "stacked deck", it will discourage active citizenship.

In recent decades, there has been, in some countries, a growing perception that, on economic questions, the political process cannot produce change. This is reflected in polls showing loss of confidence in the ability of governments to improve social and economic conditions and, in general, less trust in government and democratic institutions.

This was clearly aggravated in some countries by, for example, the feeling of dissatisfaction with governments during the financial and economic crisis beginning in 2007, when taxpayers were forced to bail out banks and accept austerity programs without any fundamental restructuring of global economic governance to seriously limit the power of financial market actors.

Another, less measurable, factor is the fact that the most privileged often find civic participation (effective political voice) easier as they may have more experience and comfort in dealing with politicians and exerting influence.

One Swedish study argues persuasively that the expansion of mass education in the 1950s and 1960s contributed considerably to a reduction of inequalities that had helped to produce political inequality (Lindgren et al, 2017).

18 To learn about the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission Supreme Court case visit https://www.oyez.org/cases/2008/08-205

The research concludes that the reform reduced the effect of family background on the likelihood of seeking public office by up to 40 percent. Moreover, the study found that the results were most significant for the working class, as compared with the middle class.

One of the original purposes of universal, compulsory public education is to increase equality and to reduce the penalties that children may suffer because their parents are poor, are not educated, or do not speak the national language very well. In countries that have a strong tradition of immigration, education has been a key factor in the integration of new populations.

The first inter-sectoral trade union body in the United States was created in 1827 in Philadelphia. One of their first policy positions connected free public education with political equality. They wrote that they sought, "a system that will fit the children of the poor as well as the rich to become our future legislators, a system that will bring the children of the poor and the rich to mix tougher as a band of Republican brothers".

If education is to significantly reduce gaps in opportunity, it must, to the maximum degree possible, be equal. That means, for example, that extra efforts might be necessary to provide quality education in rural areas or in poor and diverse neighbourhoods with minority ethnic groups, nationalities or tribes. Inequalities in the quality of education re-enforce rather than reduce political inequalities.

For those who are relatively disadvantaged, including many working-class families, there is likely to be a greater need to develop democracy competencies. Therefore, teaching skills of active citizenship, including building confidence and aptitude for formulating and communicating arguments and plans of action, may be especially effective with those who are less likely to be provided those opportunities elsewhere.

In addition to giving special emphasis to critical thinking and other competencies needed for active citizenship, there are education approaches to address specific needs of those who have suffered from inequalities. These approaches cultivate "resilience" or "grit". Many of these elements are also of value to students who have not experienced those inequalities, but they are especially valuable for those who "need a boost".

7

Protect education for the common good

Education is both an individual and a collective right. It gives every person an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for a meaningful life. It is also a nation's most precious tool to achieve economic growth, social progress and democratic development.

Education is a basic social service and one of the cornerstones of democracy. It is one of the core responsibilities of governments to facilitate the delivery of quality education by building and funding strong public school systems.

> Over 95% of Finnish children and youth attend public schools. Citizenship and human rights form the overarching values that underpin all education and the school culture in Finland and are embedded in the national curriculum. Basic education promotes responsibility, sense of community, respect for the rights of others and freedom of the individual; it helps students obtain the knowledge and skills they need in life, for further study and as engaged citizens in order to develop a democratic society (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 18).

The globalisation of our economies, the need to successfully compete in global markets, and the crucial role our school systems play in responding to that need, have propelled education to the very top of the international agenda. There are reasons to be pleased about the interest shown in education, but if investments in our school systems are solely or predominantly driven by the desire to boost our economies and to satisfy markets, we need to be cautious.

Education is a common good. It is not just an instrument to promote economic growth. It is not a commodity. The values of public education are essentially the values that underpin democracy, as well as our prosperity. They encompass the principles of equity and equal opportunities, of non-discrimination and social justice. They embrace collective needs as well as individual liberty, solidarity as well as opportunity.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that in the past three decades the education agenda has not been set by the organisation that was established for that very purpose, UNESCO, but by the World Bank, the largest source of education loans, and by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), one of the most influential policy advisors for industrial countries.

International human rights legal documents establish the right of every person to education.[19] The broad mandate to education is directly related to the contribution of education to democracy. Education is not limited to the basics. It goes beyond the skills needed for employment to include the competencies, skills and aptitudes needed for life. The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) states:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms... Education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups.

The notion of education as a public good, as opposed to an economic good, spread rapidly in the decades following the Second World War. However, a discussion evolved within UNESCO as to how to approach the delivery of education through private support. UNESCO suggested approaching schooling as a common good rather than only a public good, with the understanding that all schooling is a "collective endeavour from a humanistic perspective" (Daviet, 2016, p.1). It is clear that "good" in neither expression is intended to treat schooling as something that is "for sale".

Whether delivered through public or private mechanisms, public or common goods are a sacred, if secular, charge for public authorities. Education is to be available for all. Nobody is excluded or shut out. That, by itself, makes it crucial to democracy.

It also implies that it is a service provided under the responsibility of public authorities. It should not be a creature of

19 71 governments have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) and all but one State has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Both treaties affirm the right to education.

the market or guided by private interests. It requires a strong commitment of public funds. Its value is to be measured in terms of the fairness and well-being of society and the quality of life rather than in pieces of silver.

Obviously, education also has tremendous value to the economy. It is an important, if not determining, factor for a nation's economic performance. In terms of their contribution to economic growth, social progress and democratic development, public education systems are probably the most successful public enterprises in history.

Improving education is a serious, long-term commitment, not a flash in the pan. From 2000 to 2015, the years devoted to the UN Millennium Development Goals[20], there was progress made on the number of children receiving free primary school education, but its quality was not always satisfactory, and funds were too often diverted away from the classroom. Quality public education depends on quality teaching, quality tools, and quality learning environments. It implies qualified, well-trained, motivated professionals who have the necessary resources and respect to do a good job.

There is hope for improved performance by governments on their pledges to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals[21] by 2030, although there are concerns about the voluntary nature of the goals and the fact that some private actors are already trying to distort their contents and meaning to develop and exploit their commercial value.

20 In 2000, the UN identified eight Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015, including universal primary education https://research.un.org/en/docs/dev/2000-2015

21 In 2015 the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300

8

Keep the market at a safe distance

In too many places, public school systems are being carved up and outsourced to private businesses. Some believe that education can be delivered more cheaply and efficiently by the market, preferably with fewer, less qualified staff and a liberal dose of "one-size-fits-all" online programs and standardised testing. This is an illusion. The simplistic transfer of ideas from the corporate world, the introduction of league tables, performance pay and school rankings will not advance education quality.

The market has an important role to play in the construction of school buildings, in manufacturing school equipment and in publishing teaching and learning materials. However, one should draw a line so that "for profit" corporations will not run schools causing social inequity or where they would invade teachers' professional space and tell educators what and how to teach.

> In 2017, the Liberian Ministry of Education began outsourcing public schooling to foreign education companies and charity providers. Rather than obtaining funds to reform public schooling, public funding was used to support services contracted to private, for-profit companies. The move to outsource Liberia's education system is referred to as a "Public-Private Partnership" and what began as an experiment is now expanding into a trend that can be seen in other African countries.
> What happens when such experiments prove to be unprofitable for private companies, or if there is insufficient monitoring by the government?[22]

Education is a fundamental human right. Providing free, universal, quality public education is a vital and a central responsibility of government. Contracting that task out to others is an attempt to shirk that responsibility. This is especially egregious when there is a lack of governmental monitoring and accountability.

A 2007 study undertaken by University of London professors Stephen Ball and Deborah Youdell found that there are two main types of privatisation. One is the introduction of private sector ideas, techniques and practices in our schools to have them operate like businesses, such as performance management, service contracting, competitive funding, market-driven notions of accountability, and performance pay.

22 An example of the damage that can be done to public education by private, for profit operators is the chaos and vicious cycle of declining quality that has hit the State of Michigan. See the New York Times article "Michigan Gambled on Charter Schools. Its Children Lost": https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/05/magazine/michigan-gambled-on-charter-schools-its-children-lost.html

The other type is the opening up of public education systems to private sector participation on a for-profit basis, using the private sector to design, deliver or manage education services (Ball et al, 2007).

Not only is sub-contracting education services likely to damage important aspects of education, but it may also break the direct link between citizens, communities and their schools, and the link with public service values. There may be ideological reasons to believe that the market would do a better job, but it is also a way to evade responsibility and hide behind market illusions. As the French writer Albert Camus said, “those who lack the courage will always find a philosophy to justify it”.

Delegation of education is particularly risky when it individualises education through school choice so that dissatisfaction can be addressed by simply changing schools rather than collectively changing the school system. It replaces real, electoral democracy with market processes. It can even reach the point of no return as the collective voice of the people becomes irrelevant and the mission of education becomes atomised for “consumers” and valued as a “bounty” (price per head) by commercial providers.

Advocates of Charter Schools in the United States, the Free Schools in Sweden and, more recently, the Academies in the United Kingdom, argue that applying the free-market principles of choice and competition to the running of schools will drive standards up across the system. Removing schools from state control and transferring public funds to private organisations to run them will see their results improve and compel state schools to work harder to keep up with them. Or so the argument goes. But can they substantiate that claim?

No, they cannot. On the contrary. Let's have a look at three important sets of findings.

One: The United States. A 2013 study by the Centre for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University, covering more than 95% of the students of Charter Schools (including 27 states), concluded that students in charter schools were not performing as well as students in traditional public schools 25% of the time. In 27% of the charter schools, achievement was higher than in public schools, while in 48% of the cases there was no significant difference (Cremata et al, 2013, p. 86).

Two: Sweden. Research from that country shows that since the introduction of the so-called Free Schools, educational attainment across the Swedish system declined, while segregation on the basis of students' social background and ethnicity went up (Butrymowitcz, 2018; Brandén & Bygren, 2018). In fact, Sweden lost its leading position on the PISA[23] scale as a result of their Free Schools. The story goes that the Swedish Education Minister even warned the UK government against plans to follow the Swedish model. They did it anyway.

Three: In 2013 the OECD issued a study concluding that competitive school markets may lead to greater segregation of students with severe effects on education outcomes. The highest-performing education systems across the industrialised nations are those that combine quality with equity (OECD, 2013, p. 3).

Many school reforms introduced in recent decades are modelled after private market theories and practices. Unfortunately, some of these so-called reforms are advocated

23 The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to evaluate educational systems by measuring 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance on mathematics, science, and reading.

by international bodies or development agencies, such as the World Bank, and sometimes even imposed on countries as conditions for grants or loans. They consider that competition, in all circumstances, is healthy and will ultimately bring about outcomes beneficial to all. This has been shown to be a sad and, at times, tragic distortion. In fact, collaboration is much more effective than destructive competition, both for teachers and students.

The simplistic transfer of ideas from the corporate world, as asserted earlier, will not work. What it definitely will do, however, is to produce angry teachers, frustrated principals and lots of paperwork.

The Polish case in the 1990s provides a remarkable example of how teachers and their unions resisted an over-exuberant government policy towards privatisation. After the re-birth of democracy in 1989, plans to transform the centralised, hierarchical education system of Poland, including the possibility for privatisation, fell on fertile ground. Since 2007, more than 2,000 schools were closed, while more than 500 were handed over to external operators: foundations, associations and partnerships, including for-profit operators. The Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) actively resisted these developments, which had begun to severely limit equal access to education services. They mounted a national campaign and took the government plans to the Constitutional Tribunal. Although the privatisation process could not be completely stopped, the government was forced to adjust its plans and introduce certain restrictions.[24]

24 Information provided by Dorota Obidniak, International Secretary of the Polish Education Union ZNP.

9

Don't let politicians interfere in the classroom

It is the responsibility of public authorities to set general objectives and targets for their education systems. Schools and educators, however, must be autonomous in applying educational methods and in selecting the teaching and learning materials that will help them reach those targets.

Politicians should not interfere in the work of professional educators by prescribing educational methods and content.

> In the United Kingdom in the late 1990s, education became an election issue. Politicians, rather than providing budgetary support and frameworks for education policy – their traditional roles – began proposing laws to manage the classroom. A heavy reliance on testing was imposed. This created enormous stress for students and teachers, and the quality and scope of education deteriorated as its results were judged based on limited and measurable criteria. The result of political meddling in education was that public support for the schools declined. It became difficult to recruit and retain teachers. Standards deteriorated and, as private schools assumed a greater role, schools became increasingly segregated, both ethnically and socio-economically.

As in so many policy areas in recent decades, many politicians have developed more trust in the market than in the public policy and infrastructure for which they are responsible. Unfortunately, many reforms, starting with those in the United States and the United Kingdom, have the effect of decentralising education to the school level while offering school choice and making education a matter between customers (parents) and education service providers.

The system can be damaged in a short period of time and become vulnerable to private hustlers who are better at flashy public relations and deceptive promises than at substance and real performance. In some cases, the "merchants of education" seem to do rather well when politicians invade the classroom (even if it is only for short photo opportunities). Cuts in public support for education and austerity programs adopted by these very same politicians, have created problems that, in turn, have prompted cheap and poor-quality solutions. More and more problems are caused by such solutions.

Education, by its very nature, is a long-term process. It requires consistency, solid democratic values and sustainability. It has worked best where its mission reflects a consensus in society and when it is firmly rooted in the community.

Politics are driven by an entirely different dynamic. Long-term is, normally and understandably, the next election. Results must be short term, which means that they are not likely to be real. Increasingly, politicians have become more preoccupied with slogans than substance. When these bad habits are imposed on education, the results are disastrous. In many countries, education policy has become polarising and short-term rather than unifying and long-term.

If politicians wake up and re-assume their responsibilities to ensure education as a common good that nurtures democratic society and human rights values, misguided education reforms can be reversed. However, in the current environment in many countries, it means that creating a coherent and workable system will be much more difficult. It will require democracy to return to education. It will also need politicians who are ready and willing to serve and further that democracy.

Although it is the purview of politicians and public authorities to take decisions – even unwise ones – on educational reforms and targets, direct interference in the classroom, telling teachers what and how to teach, is crossing the line. Chapter 4 briefly addresses the crusade against the teachers of Brazil by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro. He believes that Marxist ideology is being taught in schools and encourages students to videotape their teachers and shame them on social media. Once in office, his Education Minister instructed schools to have students sing the national anthem and recite Bolsonaro's campaign slogan every morning.

In Turkey, after the failed military coup in 2016, President Recip Erodgan fired 11,000 teachers and withdrew the teaching licences of 21,000, accusing them of being disloyal to his government. In addition, he removed the theory of evolution from the curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

In Hungary, president Orbán has taken control of school textbooks and they are increasingly showing a narrow nationalistic view. In 2018, he also forced the Central European University to close its doors.

In Italy, Mateo Salvini, the country's extreme right leader, wants to ban a university textbook in political science that brands his Lega Nord (Northern League) party as "far right". In May 2019, a teacher from Palermo was suspended for two weeks with half pay after her students had compiled a video in which they compared Salvini's migration laws with the racial laws promulgated by Italian dictator Mussolini in 1938. Francesco Sinopoli, General Secretary of the Italian education Union *Federazione Lavoratori della Conoscenza* CGIL wrote in the Italian Huffington Post (17 May 2019) that with the disciplinary measure taken against the teacher from Palermo the entire Italian school system had been punished, affecting "its freedom to educate and instruct, its freedom of thought, and its ability to teach the reality of the world.

In Germany and in The Netherlands, right-wing populist parties have established internet platforms where students are invited to report left wing "indoctrination" by their teachers. Although public opinion in these countries does not support these initiatives, they are intimidating, as well as a sign of weakening support for democratic and human rights values. The "Purple Friday movement", which promotes a safe space for LBGTI students in schools, has been labelled by some politicians as "indoctrination", as has been the case with teaching climate change.

In Canada, Ontario, populist leader Doug Ford went after student unions who were spreading "Marxist nonsense". He also suggested to parents that Ontario's schools' sex education was "too progressive".

And as the cherry on the cake, on 12 February 2019 at a campaign rally in El Paso, Texas, the son of the President of the United States, Donald Trump Jr. encouraged his young audience to "Keep up that fight, bring it to your schools. You don't have to be indoctrinated by these loser teachers that are trying to sell you on socialism from birth. You don't have to do it."

10

Question standardised testing

In a growing number of countries, the expansion and reliance on standardised testing and allied techniques has crowded out education processes needed to develop critical thinking and impart democratic values. They put a premium on scores rather than learning. Such practices tend to narrow the range of teaching and learning and turn school systems into competitive markets.

Testing is important but should be used as the diagnostic tool of educators helping students to improve their learning performance, not as government instruments to evaluate the performance of educators and schools and rank them.

> The Korean Teachers Union[25] (South Korea) reported, in 2015, that a competitive culture had been imposed on schools and the teaching profession by the introduction of (neoliberal-based) education policies such as merit pay, standardised testing and high-stake teacher evaluation methods. Those policies are undermining teachers' cooperative culture. Students' interest in learning has declined where teaching has been mainly focussed on the next test. Bad student behaviour, school violence and an increased burden on teachers have been other effects of the new government policy (Symeondisis, 2015)

The explosion of standardised testing in some countries poses fundamental questions about the mission of education. At the risk of being simplistic we ask ourselves the question: Is the standardised test a tool of the educator or is the educator a tool of the standardised test? Standardised tests are often linked to systems of measurement and evaluation that are more appropriate for widgets than for human beings. The abuse or inappropriate use of tests is a visible confusion of means and ends.

The consequences for policy development are that too many decisions are being made based on data that do not address the key competencies necessary for democracy. One competency that comes out on the short end is critical thinking. Critical thinking for democracy means not just being able to analyse a text in a book but being able to analyse one's own environment. Critical thinking for democracy requires human content, human contact and human dialogue. Teachers are central to this dynamic process.

There have been growing reservations about standardised testing and the measurement of students, but also teachers.

25 JeonGyoJo 전국교직원노동조합

The “opt out” movement in the United States resulted in hundreds of thousands of parents, teachers and students fighting back against “testing overkill” by exercising their right to opt out or refuse (FairTest, 2018). Nevertheless, there is still strong political support for such testing, and the World Bank is promoting more, not less, cross-national large-scale assessments in countries dependent on World Bank education funding.

Competition can motivate students. For example, the competition in debates make them fun rather than boring. Similarly, competition in sporting events may contribute to their value. However, standardised testing is a destructive form of competition that leads to stress and lack of confidence and little else.

Stress is an important impact of excessive use of standardised testing and other linked practices. Schools that teach to standardised tests are a lot less fun for students, and teaching is a lot less fun for teachers. Does the crushing of the joy of learning produce better education? Does boosting fear, stress and competition enhance education? Have psycho-social health problems for students and teachers been useful in encouraging performance? It would seem not. Rather, as Albert Einstein said, “It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge”.

Another concern associated with standardised testing is the massive volume of data, or “big data”, on students, classrooms, teachers and schools, which is collected in conjunction with test administration. In addition to concerns about the protection of privacy, there are worries about by whom and how this information is used.

Some information has revealed that some of the data is used as marketing information by private vendors (Carmel, 2016).[26]

Data is important, but the most important information is what is taught and how it is taught every day by professional teachers in the classroom. The human touch is not only better for teaching students, but also for judging what is happening and what changes might need to be made.[27]

26 The Carmel article "Regulating 'big data education' in Europe: lessons learned from the US" provides a helpful overview of these issues. https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/regulating-big-data-education-europe-lessons-learned-us

27 A comparison of the value of big data and small data is made by Pasi Sahlberg and Jonathan Hasak in "Next Big Thing in Education: Small Data" https://pasisahlberg.com/next-big-thing-education-small-data/

11

Keep schools safe sanctuaries of learning

Schools have been targets in warfare and of terrorism. In conflict areas around the world, students and teachers have been victims of violent attacks while in school. In other parts of the world, schools and universities have not always been safe sanctuaries either.

Tragic school shootings in the United States, Europe and other places have shown the vulnerability of educational institutions, particularly in countries without adequate arms control. But schools do not only require protection against violence coming from outside. Just as important are schools' own policies and measures to ban violence by students and to create a safe learning environment protecting students against bigotry and bullying.

> "Some men came to our village. I tried to escape, but they took me to jail. Except it wasn't a jail – it was my old school. It's ironic – they took me there to torture me, in the same place I used to go to school to learn… They had taken over the school and made it into a torture centre."[28]

It was the worst school massacre ever. It occurred on 1 September 2004. Islamic terrorists, demanding recognition of the independence of Chechnya, raided a school in Beslan, a small town in the Russian province of North Ossetia-Alania The school hostage crisis lasted three days. It involved the imprisonment of over 1,100 people as hostages, including 777 children. On the third day of the standoff, Russian security forces stormed the building with tanks, incendiary rockets and other heavy weapons. 334 people were killed, including 186 children, with 783 injured (CNN, 2018).

Another horrific event that shook the world community was the kidnapping of 276 female students from the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria. On the night of 14–15 April 2014, Boko Haram, an extremist terrorist organisation based in north-eastern Nigeria, abducted the girls, apparently hoping to use them as negotiating pawns in exchange for some of their commanders in jail. Fifty-seven of the schoolgirls managed to escape over the next few months. As of May 2018, 104 girls had been freed but more than 100 are still being held (Searcey & Akinwotu, 2018).

Between 2013 and 2017, there were more than 12,700 attacks, harming more than 21,000 students and educators in at least 70 countries, according to a study by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA, 2018).

28 Report by a 15-year-old student from Syria (GCPEA, 2015, p. 7).

Targeted killings, rape, abduction, child recruitment, intimidation, threats, military occupation, and destruction of property were just some of the ways in which education was being attacked. In 28 countries profiled in its report, at least 20 attacks on education occurred over the last 5 years (p. 8). In 2015, GCPEA developed the "Safe Schools Declaration" and "Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict". As of April 2019, 86 countries had endorsed the Declaration.[29]

The attacks recorded by GCPEA do not include school shootings, most of which are perpetrated by troubled individuals on suicide missions. On 14 February 2018, a 19-year-old youngster gunned down 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The shooting sparked nationwide student protests against inadequate gun laws. Although the protests attracted attention, including among politicians, they did not result in stricter gun regulations. In the twelve months since the Parkland shooting, there have been at least 31 incidents at K-12 schools in the United States in which someone was shot, according to CNN. "That averages a shooting every 11.8 days. In those shootings 19 people were killed and another 44 were injured" (Griggs & Walker, 2019).

School shootings have not just occurred in the US. There have also been serious school incidents in Russia, Germany, UK, Canada, Japan and in some other countries – with heavy death tolls. But there is no country where schools are as frequently hit by gunfire as in the United States. Strict gun laws, drastically restricting the availability and possession of firearms, would seem to be the only effective way to reduce the risk of harm to school children and education personnel.

29 See http://protectingeducation.org/safeschoolsdeclaration

Schools must be safe, and they must be free from fear. This implies much more than measures by public authorities protecting them from terrorism, warfare and shootings. In too many places, school buildings are poorly constructed or maintained, creating hazardous situations. Three examples.

One: Nigeria. On 14 March 2019, 20 people, most of them children, died when their school building in Lagos, Nigeria, collapsed. According to officials, the private school was operating illegally on the top two floors of a residential building.

Two: The Caribbean. Education unions reported in 2017 that the neglect of school building maintenance, inadequate sanitary facilities, mould-infested classrooms, crumbling asbestos rooftops, and unprotected power lines were creating serious health and safety hazards in their schools.

Three: USA. Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, warned in a mail to AFT's membership on 10 May 2019: "Across the country, too many students are trying to learn in cramped, overcrowded classrooms with mold and rodents. They're reading outdated textbooks and writing reports on broken computers. Their teachers are sinking their own insufficient paychecks into classroom supplies. Our communities need safe, strong, fully resourced schools so we can give every kid a fair shot."

Schools need to be sanctuaries, places where there is no tolerance for intolerance and where children can escape from difficult environments at home or on the streets. The environment must be one of respect, free from all forms of violence, harassment and bullying. Schools should provide a stress-free learning environment.

Stress is becoming a major health hazard for both students and teachers. High-pressure management methods and types

of competition that are destructive boost the stress for both. The school, after all, is one community of the learners and the teachers. Their interaction should lower, not raise, stress levels, make learning possible and make schools safer.

Regardless of the explanation for why schools are unsafe, whether it is the danger of physical attack and violence or bullying or a tense, contentious, and stressful environment, a climate of fear will, obviously, not be a good climate for learning. Widespread fear can also make it nearly impossible for democracy to function.

If education is to inculcate democratic values, encourage critical thinking, promote free dialogue and develop the competencies for active citizenship, education, like democracy itself, must take place in protected environments.

UNICEF and UNESCO jointly promote "rights-respecting schools", which includes a safe school culture.[30]

In the United States, the Department of Health and Human Services maintains an informational website that shows that every US state has laws, policies or regulations that require districts and schools to implement an anti-bullying policy and procedures to investigate and respond to bullying when it occurs.[31]

There are many other initiatives creating awareness in schools and communities about bullying and harassment prevention, which includes the "Stand 4 Change Day", when all school communities are invited to stand together for five minutes around noon to commit to create a safe teaching and learning environment. Another initiative is the "Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA)" which was established as a national

30 For more information about rights-respecting schools, visit https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school/

31 See https://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html

network of organisations working with school communities to create safer and more inclusive environments for LGTBI and gender diverse students, staff and families.

In India, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Kailash Satyarthi started the *Bharat Yatra*, a March to End Sexual Abuse and Trafficking of Children. The March, which covered more than 11,000 km across 22 States and Union Territories from 11 September to 16 October 2017, stopped at many schools and universities where, at the invitation of Kailash, hundreds of thousands of students and teachers made a solemn pledge to protect the safety of their peers. In that same year Kailash launched the "100 Million Campaign[32]" an international campaign encouraging groups of young citizens in schools, universities and local districts around the globe to act to ensure that every child in their community and the world is safe, free and educated. These groups are led by the young people themselves with support provided by educators. Groups have been established across the world from Ghana to Chile and from Liberia to India to campaign against injustices and exploitation of children locally and globally. 100 Million is aiming to become the largest youth campaign in the world by 2022.

32 To learn more about the 100 million campaign and how to get involved visit www.100million.org

12

Refuse to bear arms or wear police badges

Educators should not bear arms. The presence of arms in schools does not contribute to a safe learning environment. Neither do arms enhance mutual trust between students and educators, which is an important condition for successful teaching and learning.

Educators are not law enforcement agents. It is not their task to report information concerning their students to law enforcement agencies unless school safety is under threat.

> In the year 1703 the Council of the city of Nijmegen, one of the oldest cities in The Netherlands, adopted a resolution forbidding teachers of the city's Latin School to bear swords. The Council offered them a cloak and a cane, which would ensure that the authority of the educators could be upheld, but they were instructed to leave their weapons at home. Apparently, this measure had followed bloody skirmishes in the town centre involving teachers and students. The school, established in 1544, still exists as the municipal public grammar school (Stedelijk Gymnasium) of Nijmegen (Eillebrecht et al, 1995).

In 2018, following the Parkland schools shooting in Florida, President Trump suggested that it might help ensure security if teachers already trained in the use of guns could bring them into schools. The US Department of Education considered allowing federal funds to be used for that purpose but did not end up doing so. There is considerable opposition in Congress to teachers carrying guns. Nevertheless, according to the Crime Prevention Research Centre, at the end of 2018 teachers could carry arms in 30 states (AJC, 2018).

Checking the legal residence status of students is another area where those who work in education may be asked or ordered to cross the line between education and police work. In that case, not doing the work of the police may be necessary to ensure the right to education.

Despite opposition from teacher unions, the British Parliament adopted in 2011 the "anti-terrorism 'prevent' strategy" that requires education staff to help identify children whose behaviour suggests that they are being drawn into terrorism or extremism and refer them to relevant agencies. (HM, 2011, p. 69).

Alex Kenny of the National Union of Teachers, moving a motion on the UK government security legislation at a subsequent union's conference noted:

> It's leading to a situation where teachers are finding it more difficult to seize opportunities to discuss important issues. When that happens, we are in danger of abandoning young people to the dark places they can find somewhere else, on the Internet and elsewhere, without any hope of any mediation by us.

Developing and encouraging democracy competencies requires free debate. If educators are required to serve as arms of the police or are suspected of doing so, it will undermine the general feeling of liberty in a school, make it less of a safe place to be different and have different views.

In totalitarian countries, it was and remains common to require teachers and school authorities to report any speech critical of the government or supportive of its "enemies". Children are also encouraged to report their parents or teachers.

Obviously, teachers performing police functions may pose a serious threat to the comfortable, trusting, positive atmosphere in the school that is so important to make learning happen. Although schools need to have positive relations with other institutions in their communities, strict lines must be drawn between the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and their respective staff. If a student sees the teacher as an extension of law enforcement, this may permanently damage the relationship between them.

13

Open the school to the community

Schools are not islands. As the African proverb says, "it takes a village to raise a child." Preparing students to live in an inclusive democratic society is an educational challenge. It can be met successfully when schools invite parents, and the local communities in which they operate, to play their part.

Partnerships with community groups, businesses and local agencies may not only help achieving the school's educational targets, they may also strengthen the community's commitment to public schooling and enhance local democracy.

> “In pre-democracy South Africa, the school system was a tool to separate people and to instil values of superiority and inferiority. Blacks were taught to regard whites as superior. Schools represented what the white masters wanted to achieve. They were tools of oppression. Since 1994, when the goal was set to make schools part of a multi-racial community, parents have started to participate in school life as well as in the governing bodies. The notions of respect and hard work have changed since 1994. Students are now taught to respect all equally rather than respect only whites and hard work is about fulfilling your potential and serving your community rather than working for your master.”[33]

The principles and processes of education and democracy are intertwined. In places where the schooling system has been used to promote undemocratic and oppressive political agendas, a reshaping of schools to reflect human rights values is a clear imperative. Yet, these processes are important for all schools, regardless of the past.

Democracy in the school system needs to be reborn for every generation. Teachers are, every day, inculcating values of equality, participation and responsibility in their students. For students, but also for communities at large, schools can be a positive influence. Human rights values, although they are universal, thrive when they are deeply rooted in the community and sensitive to local cultures.

Schools where students learn and practice human rights values and democratic procedures require flexibility, professional autonomy and teacher agency. Too many reformers try

33 Nkosana Dolopi, Deputy General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union, describes a fundamental change in the relationship between schools and the community since his country abolished apartheid and became a democracy in 1994.

to create an education system based on management techniques and assumptions that do not necessarily incorporate those values and practices. The standardisation approach, which is capturing the thinking of policy makers looking for simple and cheap solutions, does often not respect local experience, including the experience of teachers and other education professionals.

The danger of "one-size-fits-all" education is not just that it does not respond to specific educational challenges, but that it risks uprooting education from local societies. To succeed, education must have ties to the community. Schools are part of the community and, as such, should live, grow and evolve with it.

In Europe, there are initiatives to bring schools closer to communities. One such initiative is the EU-funded "Open Schools for Open Societies" project.[34] The role of the three-year project (2018-2020) is "to facilitate the transformation of schools to innovative ecosystems… for which teachers, students and the local community share responsibility… and from which they all benefit through the increase of their communities' science capital and the development of responsible citizenship". Teachers are invited to work together with the community, parents, businesses and policy makers to transform their students into responsible citizens. One thousand primary and secondary schools forming hundreds of "hubs" in twelve countries participate in the Open Schools for Open Societies program.

In the United States, there is a fast-growing community school movement which seems to have found an effective approach for supporting students in communities with concentrated poverty. According to the National Coalition of Community Schools, "a Community School is a public school – the hub of its neighbourhood, uniting families, educators

34 See https://www.openschools.eu/

and community partners to provide all students with top quality academics, enrichment, health and social services, and opportunities to succeed in school and in life" (Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.). There are roughly 5,000 schools across the US that consider themselves to be community schools, and dozens of school districts have made the strategy systemwide.

These are very positive developments. In fact, all schools should be enabled to help their communities fight poverty, build resilience and educate for active citizenship. But that will be difficult to realise on a shoestring budget, without political support and highly qualified professionals.

Democracy must have roots. It cannot simply copy from other countries or cultures if it is to work. Public education, following the same approach through being local and not a standard global product, helps maintain those roots.

14

Embrace new technologies with prudence

New technologies provide valuable tools to improve teaching and learning. They can enhance education opportunities for students and may help educators improve learning processes. There are dangers also, including an aggressive technology market determining what should be learned and how it should be taught.

"Robotising" teaching is not just wishful thinking in some technology circles. Public authorities may be attracted to the idea for financial reasons. However, inculcating and developing democracy competencies, and motivating students and influencing their behaviours and attitudes depend to a large extent on interactions between student and educator. New technologies cannot replace the most vital functions of trained, professional teachers.

> “[My students] collaborate with children across the planet on projects to overcome inequities they identify. In the past four years, they have interviewed scientists in Antarctica, learned from astronauts on the International Space Station, and collaborated with people in over 90 countries. Each connection allows them to share a little of our community and themselves with the world and to internalize transformational experiences that only come with being exposed to different cultures.”[35]

We are at the beginning of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”. Artificial Intelligence, “big data”, gene editing, connectivity and cloud computing are all having profound impacts on how we live, work and learn (Schwab, 2016).

Technology has always been a part of a teacher’s work; a chalkboard is also technology. But whether technology is a chalkboard, an over-head projector, a computer, a robot or artificial intelligence, it is a means, not an end. It is part of the pedagogical repertoire. With modern technology, students can video conference with fellow students on another continent, they have a wealth of information at their disposal, they can produce videos themselves, or 3D-print prototypes.

Technology can be empowering by opening horizons and experiencing the power to create. That is true if all students have access to technology, which is often not the case.[36] It has also been empowering to teachers themselves. Not only are they sharing practices and resources and learning across boundaries, but it has facilitated teacher activism around the world.

35 Michael Soskil, Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year 2017-2018, speaks enthusiastically about how technology has empowered his students to be problem solvers.

36 See Pew Research Centre statistics on national access to technology: https://www.pewglobal.org/2016/02/22/internet-access-growing-worldwide-but-remains-higher-in-advanced-economies/

In several countries, online, networked teacher groups have helped kickstart teacher strikes to demand quality education for their students.

There has also been another strand in using technology to personalise learning: replacing teachers or, at the minimum, making learning teacher-proof. Already in 1924, Sydney Presser prototyped his "Automatic Teacher", an early standardised testing machine which he believed would "automate teaching and testing, invoking the coming 'industrial revolution' in education" (Watters, 2015). Again, technology can help underpin good pedagogies like formative assessment, where data can inform the teacher and student and move the educational process forward. However, we also see situations where the data is conflated with learning. Big tech companies have transformed the economy into what Shoshana Zuboff (2019) has called "surveillance capitalism".

Under the guise of personalised education, educational technology companies are increasingly trying to turn schools into a similar panopticon. This goes from test data, to computer use behaviour, to online tracking and even to real-time facial recognition. The same goes for workplace surveillance, which is increasingly common in the corporate world. These same technologies could be used to monitor and assess teachers. Such practices risk creating environments in which students and teachers feel ill at ease because of intrusion and surveillance. This is far removed from what we should value in education.

The abuse of new technology is often in connection with efforts to save money or offer market solutions to education or both. This is the case where the delivery of education has been entirely outsourced to market players, who are often selling "off-the-rack" education without any real connection with the community or even the country in which they operate.

For example, in Kenya and Uganda, Bridge International Academies, a US-based international education business, runs K-12 schools where they employ unqualified teachers, strictly directing their performance in the classroom through standardised scripts. They have these teachers read text prepared in the United States from tablets. The classroom teachers are not expected to use their own words or to alter or add to the text, and they are warned away from discussion in class.

The use of technology should enhance, not undermine, the profession of teaching. The effective exercise of that profession depends on having the capacity, support, and time to develop relationships with students as well as collaborative relationships with colleagues.

There are many ways teachers build positive relationships with their students. According to Gallagher (2013), these strategies include teaching with enthusiasm and passion, displaying a positive attitude, showing an interest in the lives of students outside the classroom and treating students with respect. Positive teacher-student relationships enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skills.

Studies show that the amount of time students spend with their teachers is more important than most other aspects of the learning experience. Evgeny Morozov, in his book *To Save Everything, Click Here* (2013), reports on a discussion with Adam Faulk, the President of Williams College, whose research showed that the best predictor of students' intellectual success in college is not their major or grade point average (GPA) but the amount of personal, face-to-face contact they have had with professors. Morozov cites a different, but similar point made by Pamela Hieronymi, a professor of philosophy at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). She states:

> Education is not the transmission of information or ideas. Education is the training needed to make use of information and ideas. As information breaks loose from bookstores and libraries and floods onto computers and mobile devices, that training becomes more important, not less (Morozov, 2013).

If one sees the brain as a human hard disc to store information, it may not make much difference what the source of that information is or the means by which it is transmitted. But education is not a simple storage process. Learning how to use information and deal with concepts and ideas requires personal contact and interaction with a professional teacher.

The competencies that equip students to understand the workings of democracy, its essential values, and the fundamentals of participation in it, are all in that intangible category. They are not easily measurable or quantifiable. Their presence is not easily felt, but its absence does more damage than we realise.

At the global level, there is a growing consensus that the quality of education depends on the competence of educators. They need to be highly qualified and motivated. However, as mentioned before, in several places modern management techniques are imported from the private sector reducing teaching to the orderly mechanical processes of Taylorism. "Dummying down" teaching, programming educators to perform repetitive tasks, requiring them to follow a script when communicating with students in class does not work. Good teaching will not come from robots or through morphing humans into robots.

A 2013 publication of the European Commission *Supporting teacher competency development for better learning outcomes* argued that "Common ground across different cultures on the nature of teaching, teacher learning, and teachers'

competences can be outlined in six broad paradigms, which should be integrated, complementary aspects of the profession":

> "the teacher as a reflective agent; as a knowledgeable expert; as a skilful expert; as a classroom actor; as a social agent, and as a lifelong learner" (Paquay & Wagner, 2001, as quoted in European Commission, 2013, p. 13).

John Dewey, the American educator and philosopher warned more than a century ago in *Democracy and Education* (1916) against "externally imposed aims... rendering the work of both teacher and pupil mechanical and slavish". Dewey also taught us that "no matter what the accepted precept and theory is, no matter what the legislation of the school board or the mandate of the school superintendent is, the reality of education is found in the personal and face-to-face contact of teacher and child".

15

Burst Internet bubbles and value privacy

The Internet offers enormous benefits, but it entails risks too. It makes true but also false information available instantly and globally. It is important for young people to learn how to use the Internet to benefit from it, but also to learn to filter out untruths and use it responsibly in social networks. In many schools, cyber-bullying has become a plague.

Furthermore, there are issues of privacy. Internet operations are dominated by a few giant corporations and there is little or no democratic control on the collection and use of data, while in some places, public authorities are eagerly collecting and storing personal data without much regard for privacy

> In big data analytics and the algorithm economy where data is simply treated as facts, important aspects are left out of the story. Intentions and meaning in context are not accounted for within the predictive analyses and tailored services. Thus, the analyses themselves risk being misleading and the services risk to miss the mark (Søe,2017).

Schools and teachers should protect their students and promote responsible use of the Internet. There have been several studies of the research habits of graduate students in US universities which have shown a near total dependence on Google. One study at Illinois Wesleyan showed that most students did not fully understand the logic of search engines and were not equipped to refine the search results (Shader, 2011).

Developing the capacity to use search engines competently will contribute greatly to strengthening the role of truth and reality in democracies. Doing research, at any age, needs to be done well, with information double-checked and verified. That has always been the case, but the Internet has facilitated sloppiness.

In other words, the information revolution provides access to much more information, but it has not invalidated traditional ways to determine whether information is reliable or the need to think independently. The tsunami of information needs to be filtered by human beings, so it is important that education adds to the capacity to process information and make sense of it. Internet literacy is needed to ensure that the web becomes a viable tool and not a source of deception.

There have been many cases in which fake news spreading through social media has had a profound impact on politics. Radical organisations, sovereign states and corporations have all "weaponised" social media to influence public discourse.

Social media platforms have been a catalyst in this process (Müller & Schwarz, 2018). Researcher Tufekci has called YouTube "the Great Radicaliser". Algorithms incentivise engagement – and, like clicks on advertisements – the platform can steer users to ever more radical content (Tufekci, 2018).

It is imperative that we equip students to discern what news is real and what is not, how news is produced, how news is spread, and who benefits or profits from spreading fake news.

Educators have been teaching their students information literacy for a long time. In social science and history classes, source analysis has been the bedrock of responsible pedagogy. Students need to learn basic facts, but only focusing on facts is not enough. Obtaining the necessary competencies is not easy, and they are definitely not learned and assessed through standardised testing. As a Stanford study has shown: "When it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels, they're easily duped" (McGrew et al, 2017, p. 5). We need pedagogical practices fit for the online age, such as teaching students to "read laterally".

> Fact checkers approached unfamiliar content in a completely different way. They read laterally, hopping off an unfamiliar site almost immediately, opening new tabs, and investigating outside the site itself. They left a site in order to learn more about it (McGrew et al, 2017, p. 8).

The Internet not only makes mountains of information available, it does so in less than a second. The high speed and wide dissemination of information can affect students adversely.

Persistent and extreme bullying on the Internet has caused young people to drop out of school and has been linked to suicides. Attacks are devastating, and reputations are ruined. The circulation of compromising photographs, mostly of girls, has become widespread. It takes a major effort to take

on cyber-harassment of students and of education personnel to ensure that the school environment is safe. Facebook and other social media are making changes, but private parties adjusting algorithms is not enough. There need to be public discussions in the context of democratic governance.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) developed cyber-bullying guidelines after a survey conducted by the union showed that 34% of students knew of cyber-bullying cases. In addition, they have developed, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), a national education program on cyberbullying. The 30–75 minute presentation is aimed at students in Grades 4–12 and is available through the RCMP Youth Officer Resource Centre. The RCMP youth website also includes a game called *Cyberbullying: The Dark Side of Technology*.[37]

Unlike other forms of communication such as the mail, electronic media and the telephone, the Internet did not begin as either a public service or a regulated monopoly. Commercial Internet service providers (ISPs) began to emerge in the very late 1980s. Today, control of the Internet is concentrated in only a handful of private corporations and is designed around earnings from the sale of advertising. A related "product" is the valuable, saleable data that they collect.

One of the consequences of the widespread use of the Internet and the growth of social networking has been invasions of the privacy rights of students and teachers. Issues include commercial exploitation and deception, tracking of student views or interests for commercial purposes or for other ends,

37 Cyberbullying: The Dark Side of Technology. https://www.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/ata%20news/Volume%2043/Number10/IntheNews/Pages/RCMPandCTFjoinforcestofightcyberbullying.aspx

exposure to pornography or hate speech, and use of big data gathered from students, including personal information.

Firms target potential customers as narrowly as possible by keeping track of the "likes", on-line purchases and other behaviour on the Internet. Information is being harvested from students from the time that they begin to use the Internet and are involved in social networks. From a very young age, very direct and targeted appeals are made to them to shape their consumer habits and attitudes. Their personal data is being "mined" and provided to commercial interests, often without student knowledge or approval, just as is happening with adults.

There are also privacy concerns related to Internet use in education itself, including by commercial or other bodies outside of education that influence the direction of policy. Students should be protected from violations of their privacy, in addition to learning how to safely deal with the dangers of the Internet.

Increasingly, schools – including public schools – are contracting out education services to for-profit corporations. Such firms often have access to student data. In addition, they may be able to access test scores and other data to gather information on individual student interests and performance. Parents and privacy advocates have begun to express concerns about the increased availability to third parties of big data. A recent survey examining the views of more than one thousand U.S. parents regarding the use of technology in classrooms found that 79% of the respondents were somewhat concerned or extremely/very concerned with privacy issues (Marketplace, 2015 as cited by Krueger & Moore, 2015).

Available student personal information may include any information about a student's identity, academics, medical conditions, or anything else that is collected, stored, and communicated by schools or technology vendors on

behalf of schools that is particular to that individual student. This includes name, address, names of parents or guardians, date of birth, grades, attendance, disciplinary records, eligibility for lunch programs, special needs, and other information necessary for basic administration and instruction.

It also includes the data created or generated by the student or teacher in the use of technology – email accounts, online bulletin boards, work performed with an educational program or application, anything that is by or about the individual student in the educational setting.

This data is, in turn, used to prepare textbooks and other educational materials and to provide advice on education policy. This work depends on algorithms and cannot be understood by those outside of the involved firms and, increasingly, even by the companies that are developing the processes and manipulating the data. In other words, policy is being influenced, if not made, based on machines that were designed to serve markets. Such contracting out often amounts to contracting education away from teachers and others in the education community.

Greater attention is being paid by policymakers to privacy issues, including by the EU and authorities in North America. In 2018, a major privacy measure went into effect in the European Union, the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR).[38] It is a good beginning for public regulation of the Internet.

However, while people and political leaders are becoming more aware of privacy risks, the handful of companies that play a leading role in the collection and control of data are becoming powerful lobbyists to protect their interests, "their data" and their professional secrets. Their business model

38 To learn more about GDPR see https://digitalguardian.com/blog/what-gdpr-general-data-protection-regulation-understanding-and-complying-gdpr-data-protection

does not depend on fees for use of services, but is “free”, meaning that they make their money from data. Politicians are sometimes not as concerned as they should be because they fear the power and money and influence of giant Internet and data firms.

The connection between people’s Internet competencies and the future of democracy is both clear and direct. In the United States, several investigations are ongoing into the foreign hacking of the accounts of political leaders that may have affected the outcome of the 2016 Presidential elections. It has already been established that in the period leading up to those same elections, a British public relations firm engaged in a very sophisticated micro-targeting of Facebook accounts, a technique successfully used by that same firm during the Brexit campaign in the United Kingdom and in the Presidential elections campaign in Kenya.

In the lives of children, social networking and the Internet are of great importance. That will probably continue to be the case. The Chinese case presented below, however, is a dire warning of the potential of the Internet to be used against human rights and democratic values and practices.

The government of China, in cooperation with some Chinese private companies, is applying the mechanics of the web, including algorithms and sophisticated data gathering and storage to create a modern, extremely comprehensive system of surveillance. The program is intended to provide detailed profiles of every Chinese citizen through the gathering of data from social media and online shopping, video-surveillance and use of facial recognition algorithms. The massive data operation will depend on the security organs of the Communist Party and the State.

According to public information, it will serve as the basis of a "citizen score". The system was already being used in 2019 to approve or deny visas for travel to Europe. If you are considered "untrustworthy", which may be based on making critical posts on the Internet or expressing un-approved political positions, your score will go down. Although there is nothing different in nature between this process and old-fashioned authoritarian measures, the scale and efficiency provided by the Internet and other technologies go beyond what even Orwell imagined in 1984.[39]

39 Nineteen Eighty-Four, often published as 1984, is a dystopian novel by English writer George Orwell published in June 1949. The novel is set in the year 1984 when most of the world population have become victims of perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance and propaganda.

16

Oppose segregation

A country that educates its children together has a better chance of being at ease with itself than one that, from an early age, separates and segregates different parts of the population.

Keeping children apart, unless for the purpose of giving extra attention to students with special needs, creates inequality and solidifies rather than overcomes barriers to social cohesion, and poses challenges to the achievement of democracy.

> Regardless of the causes of segregation, separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

In the southern United States, like in South Africa under apartheid, segregation was the law and was only overcome after decades of struggle. After the Civil War that took place from 1861 to 1865 there was a relatively brief period of integrated schools. However, the rise of the White Supremacy movement once again resulted in segregated education, a practice upheld in the Supreme Court ruling of 1896 that education might be separate but must be equal.

In 1954, the Supreme Court overturned that decision and unanimously ruled that, "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (History.com Editors, 2018). In 1957, nine black students were ordered to be admitted into Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The governor called out the National Guard to block their entry. President Eisenhower ordered the US army to accompany the black students. They entered school and went to class despite the crowd of a thousand hostile White supremacists spouting racist slogans.

Many trade unions participated in the civil rights demonstrations and provided at local, state and national levels solid support for the demands of the civil rights movement. The American national centre, the AFL-CIO, mobilised its ranks and made the passage of civil rights legislation its top priority in the 1960s. Segregation has returned to some states in the US. It is not enforced by troops but facilitated with vouchers and "school choice", which is a mostly American term, originated in the racist, historical context that White parents should be able to choose not to send their children to school with Black children.

It has evolved into a radical concept in the organisation of public education. Instead of education being a system governed by democratic processes that respond to the collective public will, parents make a "consumer choice" where to send their children to school. Schools, both public and private, compete for students. Some even run advertisements on television and radio. Although the argument has been made that "school choice" provides the same opportunities for poor children that exist for the children of the rich, in fact, education standards have generally deteriorated for children from poor neighbourhoods.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in 2016 that public charter schools, a key strategy in improving education for students in high poverty areas, often take minority and poor students from larger, more diverse public schools and enrol them into less diverse schools. The GAO found that from the 2000/2001 to the 2013/2014 school year, both the percentage of K-12 public schools in high poverty areas and the percentage comprised of mostly African American or Hispanic students grew significantly – more than doubling – from 7,000 to 15,000 schools. The percentage of all schools with so-called racial or socio-economic isolation grew from 9% to 16%" (Toppo, 2016).

In countries in which school choice programs have been established, segregation has increased, particularly, but not limited to those involving private schools.

According to the OECD publication *Equity and Quality in Education* (2012), "School choice can increase differences between schools in terms of performance and socio-economic background and in many countries these differences are significant" (p. 65).

The former Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe expressed his concern about growing segregation of schools in a report based on investigations in several countries.

The report focuses on segregation due to migrant or refugee status, disability and separation of Roma (European Roma Rights Centre, 2018). In another report, also on school segregation, the Commissioner of Human Rights, states:

> Segregation in schooling re-enforces, reproduces, and sustains divisions in society, whereas integrated schools serve to reduce those conflicts. As the exercise of democracy is the art of bringing diverse groups together around common values, learning to be, work, and study together at a young age paves the way for real and active citizenship based on understanding and tolerance (Council of Europe, 2017, p. 5).

Disagreements over the value of integrated schools somehow continue to repeat themselves. For example, in The Netherlands a political battle raged throughout the 19th century over the issue of the state monopoly on tuition-free education. It was opposed under the banner of "Freedom of Education" and the Separation of Church and State.[40] The Dutch called it *De Schoolstrijd* (The Battle of the Schools). Their solution was the separation of school and state by funding all schools equally, both public and private, from 1917 (Hooker, 2009).

The freedom of education resulted in a segregated public school system divided into public schools governed by or on behalf of the public authorities, and "Special schools" (*Bijzondere scholen*) run by groups supporting particular pedagogical methods or by religious groups finding their roots in the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities.

40 Freedom of education is the right for parents to have their children educated in accordance with their religious and other views, allowing groups to be able to educate children without being impeded by the nation state. It is a constitutional (legal) concept that has been included in the European Convention on Human Rights, Protocol 1, Article 2, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 13 and several national constitutions, e.g. the Belgian and Dutch constitutions.

This system kept The Netherlands for a very long time a country where children could be kept apart based on creed.

It was in the late sixties of the 20th century when churches, confronted with unfaithful flocks, could not prevent their schools watering down religious features, opening their doors to all children, and becoming almost undistinguishable from public schools. But nobody thought of consequently changing the funding system. As a result, after the influx of workers from Islamic countries, Islamic schools were introduced, again separating children of a particular creed from all others, and this time posing the additional challenge of bridging the values of the open and democratic Dutch society with those prevalent in conservative Islamic communities. Today, local communities, including existing local schools, are resisting the introduction of new schools based on Islamic values, for instance by delaying the procedure to find a location for a new school.

17

Fight discrimination on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social background, disability, and sexual orientation

Discrimination is often based on fear and bigotry. It is irrational and brings out the worst in human character.

It is to be addressed throughout the education system, beginning when people are young but still able to understand that discrimination is not just intellectually unsound, but also against the values of democracy and simple fairness.

> Raouia Ayachi is a Moroccan girl, age eleven. In the autumn of 2015, the education minister of Morocco visited her primary school located in a small village near Cassablanca. When he entered the classroom, his eyes fell on Raouia, who was a bit taller than the other children, and the minister asked her: "How old are you, girl." "Eleven, sir," she replied. "Are you not too old to still be in school," said the education minister. "At your age, you should be more concerned about finding a husband and getting married rather than attending class", the minister said, and he sent her home. Raouia, who comes from a very poor family, decided to stand up against the education minister and, with the support of the entire village and the local education union, she got her place back in the class. This time, the minister was sent home.

Although one case involved verbal violence and the other a gunshot, the same "principle" that affected Raouia Ayachi in Morocco applied to Malala Yousafzai. Malala is a girl from Pakistan who barely survived an attack by the Taliban on 9 October 2012, while on a bus in the Swat District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban had banned girls from attending school. They wanted to silence her so that she could no longer speak up for girls' education. These girls' stories are about courage, about empowerment, about equity. But above all, they are about the right to education and about standing up against discrimination.

Most groups suffering from discrimination are minorities, often small minorities. But that is not the case with gender discrimination. Their minority status and lack of power in society is not based on numbers, but on prejudice, religious conviction, and deep habits and practices, which continue in most countries even where legislation and

enforcement of gender anti-discrimination laws are adequate. Shocking figures on violence against women, for example, have shown up in some countries with progressive gender legislation.

Discrimination in any form is destructive to and for society. People should be accountable for what they do and how they carry out their work, but never for their identities. Various personal characteristics that serve as the excuse for discrimination should be totally irrelevant, not only in education but in society. In most of the world, however, we are light years away from achieving that goal.

There is persistent discrimination against persons because of their race or ethnicity in many countries, including democracies. Anti-Semitism too has not been rooted out. Even where legal progress has been made, racial and ethnic discrimination and stereotypes continue. The opposition to migrants and refugees that has been so dramatic in some countries, is a combination of fear of the unknown and religious bias. It is in combatting this "non-official" discrimination that education can be particularly effective.

There are groups that are often subject to extreme discrimination, historically and currently, that receive lesser attention at the global level because they do not occur in every country.

Indigenous peoples have been victims over the centuries of what are now called "crimes against humanity". Not only are they seeking equality but also to maintain cultural identity, languages and their way of life.

Another group subjected in some countries to severe discrimination from birth and for generations are persons from lower castes. Laws to eliminate such discrimination, although important, have failed to protect large numbers of lower caste persons.

There is also still considerable discrimination based on disability. If schools are to contribute to overcoming that discrimination, one way to do so is to ensure that equal and, to the extent possible, integrated education opportunities are provided for children with disabilities.

Few forms of discrimination have a deeper and more devastating impact on a person's life than discrimination based on sexual orientation. And yet there is no form of discrimination as deeply rooted and as difficult to fight as this one. Although there are positive signs of change, particularly in Western secular democracies, in 2017 LGBTI[41] relations were illegal in 74 countries and even subject to the death penalty in a dozen. There are countries where education authorities claim the right to refuse to appoint or to dismiss teachers whose sexual orientation is considered not in accordance with their religious standards. In large parts of the world, teachers are prohibited from addressing issues related to sexual orientation in the classroom. This would only encourage homosexual behaviour, according to the authorities. Not long ago, a Polish education minister claimed that allowing teachers to discuss homosexuality would undermine national morality and erode the foundations of the Polish state.

Standards on non-discrimination and equality for LGBTI persons have been adopted, further developed and reinforced by the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation of American States, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Teachers are not standing alone when advocating for better teaching methods and curricula that incorporate "state of the art" human rights standards. It is of great importance that students wrestling with sexual

41 LGTBI is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex.

orientation issues are supported by their schools and teachers and offered a safe environment free from bullying.

For teachers to actively address these and all other forms of discrimination and engage students, they need to have access to educational materials that are free of bias and stereotypes. At an international conference in Amsterdam in 1984, European and American education unions launched an anthology of literary work and teaching materials that would help "rouse in students respect towards those who are different, as the basis for education toward humanism and tolerance in a pluralistic society" (International Committee, 1984). Since then, an abundance of teaching material has been developed helping educators address human rights issues and democratic values. However, successfully inculcating those values also requires that children learn about the absence of those values, about the record of discrimination, suppression and extermination – about the brutality that is part of human history. The rise of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia in some Western democracies give extra reason to screen curricula so as to ensure that, for example, slavery, genocide, and the Holocaust are properly covered and addressed.

Racism and anti-Semitism are undoubtedly the oldest and cruellest expressions of hate against groups of people.

Anti-Semitism manifested itself first in Europe as early as the Rhineland massacres, also known as the persecutions of 1096, when mobs of German Christians perpetrated series of mass murders of Jews. According to the American historian David Nirenberg, the events of 1096 in the Rhineland "are often presented as the first instance of an anti-Semitism that would henceforth never be forgotten and whose climax was the Holocaust" (Nirenberg, 2015).

Surveys from 2019 show a rise in anti-Semitism in Europe with France reporting a 74% rise in offences against Jews, and Germany recording a 60% surge in violent attacks. The co-leader of the German Extreme Right party, AfD, Alexander Gauland, described the Holocaust as a "small bird dropping in over one thousand years of successful German history" (Henley, 2019).

In the United States, open, flagrant anti-Semitism seems to have returned with the White Supremacy movement. In the demonstrations in Charlottesville, Virginia on 11 and 12 August, 2017, young demonstrators in the "Unite the Right" rally, combined their anti-Black and anti-Muslim hatred with anti-Semitism. On 27 August 2018, the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history occurred at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Eleven people were killed and seven injured. Anti-Black, anti-Semitic, and anti-Muslim hatred seem to be connected in the same extremist groups.

On the 23th of March 2019, in Christchurch, New Zealand, there were two attacks on mosques. Fifty-one persons were killed and 50 were injured. The man arrested and charged with the shooting was a 28-year old Australian white supremacist from the "alt-right". He donated 2500 euros to the Identitarian Movement in Austria, a group having close ties to sections of the Extreme Right Freedom Party (FPÖ), which was part of the country's coalition government until May 2019. This is but one example of the fact that the Extreme Right, as in the past, is connected globally (Jordans, 2019).

Discrimination based on religion is as old as religion itself. So is the conviction of many that religious standards should not be subservient to the rule of law. Conflicts between religions are as common as fights within the faith groups themselves. The Catholic and Protestant churches and their

many camps and factions have divided the Christian world for centuries. Only with the emergence of secular democracy could religious conflicts be contained, – with some exceptions. Islam is also divided into many sects, branches and schools.[42] Sunni, Shia and their offspring have different geographical bases, homelands, where intolerance and authoritarian rule usually prevail.

Democracy is no guarantee against religious intolerance. The best it can do is to prevent religious rule.

In the Middle East, the Jewish religious extremists in settlements on the West bank and the Islamic extremists have more in common with each other than they do with their compatriots or with mainstream, liberal democracy and rule of law. After many decades, conflicts between Islamic and Hindu fundamentalists persist in the Indian peninsula. Buddhists attack Muslims in Myanmar. The list goes on and on.

Discrimination based on religion is sometimes linked with hostility to migration and the arrival of refugees in countries. Irresponsible political manipulators fan the fires of hate and intolerance rather than support peace and understanding.

Prime Minister Victor Orbán of Hungary was elected most recently (2018) by a landslide after having campaigned to preserve Hungary's security and "Christian culture". The Christianity rationale is rooted in Hungarian fascism and is conveniently being used against Jews, for example, in thinly-veiled anti-Semitic attacks on billionaire and democracy supporter George Soros and providing a religious raison d'être for attacks on migrants and refugees, many of whom are Muslim (Fagan, 2018).

42 https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/islamic-sects-schools-branches-movements/

In neighbouring Austria where right wing populists from FPÖ formed part of the government in 2018, Herbert Kickl, then FPÖ Minister of Home Affairs, proposed a curfew for asylum seekers and to incarcerate "dangerous" refugees without a court ruling. Kickl calls it *Sicherheitshaft*, a very charged term, because it recalls the *Schutzhaft* (protective custody), which the Nazis used to make unwanted people disappear. When asked whether the European Court of Justice could stop him, Kickl stated that "law must follow politics" rather than the other way around, showing contempt for the rule of law (Kruk, 2019).

These dark reminders of the past in their modern incarnations require responses in larger society but also in the classroom. Educating for democracy implies learning about its enemies too. So, educators must be vigilant. They must, while being sensitive to age groups, address the disastrous lows in world history and in national history and link them to present day inequality, discrimination and tyranny, so that history will not repeat itself.

18

Do not deny undocumented children access to schools

The right to free primary and secondary education is universal. No child should be denied that right, including undocumented minors. As with access to health care services, children should have access to schooling, irrespective of their legal status.

There have been efforts to exclude undocumented migrants from essential public services as part of anti-migrant nationalist populism in some countries. Such efforts to exclude children from education based on their legal status have no foundation in international human rights standards or international law.

> "Following the first major influx of refugees in Germany related to the conflicts in the Middle East, we visited a school in Berlin which hosted a large group of refugee children from Syria. "How many refugee students do you have?" I asked the principal. "I have no idea", she replied somewhat irritably. "We don't count them!" It then occurred to me that this is perhaps one of the characteristics, if not the very spirit of the teaching profession – the desire to build equity – in the classroom, in the school, and yes, in society at large".[43]

According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, an astounding 51% of refugees are under the age of 18, many of them undocumented. Without any access to education, a portion of an entire generation risks being lost, excluded from society. The repercussions for this missing generation cannot be underestimated. They go far beyond poverty and lawlessness to hopelessness and despair. And in too many cases, they become fertile ground for radicalisation.

Racism and xenophobia, fed by populist movements, are on the rise in many countries. Refugee and undocumented children and youth are the most vulnerable of all and they are easy victims of unscrupulous politicians. There have been efforts to exclude undocumented migrants from essential public services. Such efforts, including the exclusion of children from education based on their legal status, have no foundation in international human rights standards or international law.

A very famous case dates from many years ago when those standards were taken more seriously in the United States. In 1975 in Texas, the state legislature adopted a law to withhold state funds for educating students who had not been legally

43 Observation during a school visit by a teacher-delegate to the International Summit of the Teaching Profession in Berlin on 3-4 March 2016.

admitted to the United States. It allowed local school districts to exclude them. The U.S. Supreme Court, in Plyler v Doe (1982), judged in a 5-4 decision that the legislation was in violation of the U.S. Constitution. The Court ruled that the Texas law was "directed against children and impose[d] its discriminatory burden on the basis of a legal characteristic over which children can have little control" (Justia, n.d.) – namely, the fact they have been brought illegally into the United States by their parents. The Court majority refused to accept that any substantial state interest would be served by discrimination on this basis and it struck down the Texas law. The Court in the same decision also ruled that it was unconstitutional to charge a fee of one thousand dollars per year for undocumented students.

In general, the right to education is legally provided for undocumented children in Europe in line with international and European standards. Some countries have specific legal provisions to that effect. Such provisions also apply in much of the rest of the world. In practice, however, many undocumented children, often living in the shadows, do not receive the same treatment as others. That may be because requirements for identity documents discourage registration in schools. It may also stem from the fear that attendance in school will enable the authorities to trace undocumented families and expel them. In some cases, there are no possibilities for permanent or stable residence, which is also linked to school participation.

As the Council of Europe recognised, "Undocumented children are triply vulnerable, as migrants, as persons in an irregular situation and as children. The laws tend to tackle their situation from a migration and status standpoint, and not from a child viewpoint" (Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 2011).

For example, U.K. legislation on undocumented children and the right to education at primary and secondary levels is in conformity with international and European standards. However, problems with the effective implementation of those standards are manifold. A report by the Coram Children's Legal Centre (2013) entitled *Growing up in a hostile environment* shows that for many reasons, a considerable number of children in the United Kingdom cannot in fact exercise their right to education.

But things can be even worse. Australia intercepts all asylum seekers and refugees who try to reach its shores by boat. It insists they will never be able to resettle in Australia. Over the years many people, including children, were sent to privately run processing centres on the tiny island nation of Nauru and on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. BBC news reported in September 2018 that children held on Nauru "have given up on life" (Harrison, 2018). The article went on to share that according to the Australian Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), there were at least 30 children who were suffering from traumatic withdrawal syndrome – also known as resignation syndrome, which is a rare psychiatric condition where sufferers, as a response to severe trauma, effectively withdraw from life. Also, 15 children had either made repeated suicide attempts or were regularly self-harming. For many years, Australian human rights groups, medical and legal organisations, as well as the Australian Education Union, have condemned the public authorities for their harsh and inhumane refugee policy of deterring, detaining and deporting asylum seekers in violation of international law, and unworthy of a democratic nation. The Australian government finally gave in and decided that all children be removed from the island. In February 2019, the last group was sent to resettle

in the United States. Since 2013, more than 3,000 refugees and asylum seekers have been detained on Nauru and Manus Island. About 1,000 remain on the islands (Harrison, 2018).

But there are countries, Lebanon and Jordan, which, despite their small sizes, have made extraordinary efforts to be safe havens for refugee children, setting an example for rich countries like Australia. Lebanon, with a population of 4.5 million, welcomed more than 450,000 children from Syria.

Despite a fragile infrastructure and a lack of funding, the country and its teachers are doing everything they possibly can to see that at least 150,000 children have a seat in a classroom. Teachers have agreed to work "double shifts". In Jordan, a country without deep pockets, most of the refugees are housed in giant camps. It, too, is going to great lengths to get students into school, despite major burdens on its education budget.

19

Advocate gender equity, diversity and inclusive classrooms

Gender equality, diversity and inclusion start in schools and classrooms. The achievement of these values will boost democratic development. "Gender equality means", according to UNICEF, "that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike".

Diversity is about taking account of the differences between people and groups of people, and placing a positive value on those differences, while inclusion is to ensure that everybody irrespective of gender, race or background be enabled and given the opportunity to participate. If equality is the end goal, equity, which is defined as the quality of being fair and impartial, is the means to get there.

Although in many countries progress has been made towards equal access to resources and opportunities, there are still too many places where ignorance, bias or indifference hamper fair and impartial treatment of girls and minorities.

Public school systems, when adequately funded, are the single most effective social instruments to remove barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion, where professional educators can create a learning environment to achieve those same practices at the classroom level.

> "The intermingling in the school of youth of different races, differing religions, and unlike customs creates for all a new and broader environment."[44]

Respecting diversity means that one may have to be creative in finding ways to connect with students. That requires not just respect for but also understanding of cultural and other differences. Adapting to diverse classrooms is only possible when teachers have professional autonomy in terms of teaching methods and influence over curriculum and teaching materials. Teaching as a mechanical function determined centrally from above will not work. Diversity is the very opposite of segregation and must be promoted if we seek democracy.

Boys and girls learning together is diversity at ground level. Yet, enrolling girls in school does not ensure that girls will have the same educational opportunities as boys. Achieving equal rights also means dealing with issues that go beyond the school, for example, when boys are chosen over girls to attend school when family resources are scarce.

Gender equity requires more than abolishing segregation and discrimination. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the agency that helps low-income countries fund their school systems, supports "gender-responsive strategies for girls' education". The policies and practices that can positively influence girls' enrolment and success in schools include very basic measures to prevent school-related gender-based violence, provision of sex-segregated sanitary facilities and the removal of gender-based bias in textbooks (GPE, 2017). Schools can make an important difference and create opportunities for girls.

44 More than a century ago, long before the common use of the word "diversity", educator and philosopher John Dewey made this argument in "Democracy and Education" (1916).

Among other things, studies and changing of attitudes can help to open up professions that are traditionally male dominated.

Obviously, diversity means much more than girls and boys learning together in the same classroom. We speak of true diversity when these boys and girls would be from different ethnicities, religions and social backgrounds, and when their teachers would also reflect the diversity of the community in which the school operates. Teacher recruitment policy determines the composition of the profession for many years to come. Shifts in the composition of the school population may not be immediately reflected in the school's workforce but over time targeted teacher recruitment from under-represented groups can ensure that there is a larger number of teachers from groups that have traditionally suffered from discrimination.

With the mass migration of people from conflict areas in recent years, the education of migrant and refugee children has become the subject of heated debates in host and transit countries. While the right of these children to education is undisputable, opinions on where and how that right is to be realised vary. In principle, these children should find a place in their new country's national school system. Having a mix of students and teachers, both migrant and non-migrant, may accelerate the integration of migrant children in their new country of residence. However, there may also be good reasons for keeping them, for a limited period, in separate classes so they can learn the language and become familiar with the values of the host society.

But the target, situated just beyond fighting discrimination and recognising the value of diversity, is inclusion. It is to ensure that everybody is given the same opportunity with no exceptions. Diversity and inclusion in education will move societies towards greater equality and strengthen democracy.

20

Protect the right to learn in one's native language

Language, culture and ethnicity are deeply intertwined. They are also linked to inequity, discrimination and conflict. Anti-democratic forces often target linguistic minorities.

In 2007, the United Nations called upon Member States "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world". Ignoring that call and denying indigenous people, for example, the right to teach and learn in their own language is a form of oppression unbecoming democratic societies.

Moreover, children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or fail in early grades. Research has shown that children's first language is the optimal language for literacy and learning throughout primary school. However, learning and becoming proficient in the nation's official language, either as a primary or secondary language, should always remain a mandatory objective to be achieved upon completion of the school career.

> "My mother was from Cuba, and she didn't teach us Spanish... One day, I asked her "Mom, why didn't you teach me? I'm frustrated because now I'm older and my brain can't absorb the language as easily." I said it jokingly, but I looked over at her and she was crying. She said, "I didn't understand...I thought I had to protect you.
>
> When I moved here, I was 24 or 25 years old, and if I found someone who spoke Spanish, I was so happy, and then I looked around and saw people staring. They looked angry...
>
> So I decided not to teach you, and I also decided to stop speaking."
>
> I saw in her eyes that she was hurt, those were tears of shame and loss...I also started thinking about what I lost as the second generation. My children don't speak Spanish either."[45]

Too often there is social pressure exerted on people to give up their mother tongue, even when there is no pressure from the government. Apparently, people feel that newcomers need to reject their language and culture in order to integrate. This position reflects a narrow vision of what a culture is. In fact, most national characteristics are formed from combinations of different groups. Depriving children of the benefits of their family heritage is limiting, not expanding, their opportunities for self-confidence, self-esteem, and stable, happy lives.

There are several international standards that require governments to take appropriate measures, wherever possible, to make education available in one's mother tongue or native language.[46]

45 Lily Eskelsen-Garcia, President of the National Education Association at the time this book was written, relates a personal experience of the social pressure to speak English when she was growing up in the United States.

46 Those international instruments include the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990).

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers (1966) specifically stipulates that enough qualified teachers should be available to teach in mother tongues.

Refusal by public authorities to provide education in one's native language is a very old and persistent problem. It is often linked to violations of other rights and to such dangers as discrimination, bigotry and even ethnic cleansing and war – as was the case in Kosovo from 1991 through 1999.

In 1991, when the Yugoslav state started breaking up, the Serbian Government led by Slobodan Milošević decided that the Albanian language would no longer be the language of instruction in the secondary schools and universities of Serbia's autonomous province Kosovo. Kosovo is mainly inhabited by ethnic Albanians. In an apparent effort to silence irredentist voices advocating the independence of Kosovo, Albanian history and culture were largely stricken from the curriculum and all educators were required to teach in the Serbian language. Educators who defied the new rules were forcefully removed from the schoolgrounds and campuses and dismissed. Other sectors such as the media and healthcare were also "Serbianised".

In response, the Kosovar Albanians, supported by Albanian communities abroad, established their own parallel structures, including a parallel school system. Schools were set up clandestinely in private homes, restaurants and garages where educators continued to teach children in their mother tongue. They did not receive any pay for two years. Although Serbian police forces raided the illegal schools whenever they could, sometimes molesting educators right in front of their students, the authorities never succeeded to break the resistance of educators and parents.

In the spring of 1993, representatives of Education International and the Kosovar teachers' union SBASHK met with the Serbian government in Belgrade to protest the decision to forbid educators to teach in their students' native language. They also demanded that the authorities immediately stop detaining and torturing educators, evidence of which was presented in the meeting to three members of Milošević's cabinet. But these officials – the education minister, the labour minister and the minister for human rights – flatly denied any wrongdoing.

The repression continued, the resistance intensified, leading to the Kosovo War in February 1998. During this war, which was fought by the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), some 1.4 million people fled to neighbouring Albania and Macedonia. In March 1999, NATO intervened to prevent the Kosovar Albanians from being massacred by the Yugoslav and Serb forces. The war, during which more than thirteen thousand people were killed, ended on 11 June 1999 with Yugoslav and Serb forces agreeing to withdraw from Kosovo to make way for an international presence. The right of Kosovo's youth to learn in their native language was restored.[47]

Linguistic differences have prompted disputes and remain sources of conflicts in many countries. For example, the Turkish authorities have consistently denied the right of the Kurdish minority to learn in their native language. For decades the Turkish teachers' union *Egitim-Sen*, which is defending this right, has been the target of repression by the Turkish authorities.

47 The information about the struggle for the right to teach and learn in the Albanian language in Kosovo was provided by Mejreme Shema, President of the Kosovo Teachers' Union, *Sindikata e Bashkuar e Arsimit Shkencës dhe Kulturës* (SBASHK) during the Kosovo War.

At the same time, the Turkish President Erdogan has claimed that right for Turkish minorities in other countries, including some Western democracies.

Around the world, linguistic differences also signify cultural and ethnic differences. Disputes have often been centred on the rights of indigenous peoples where they became minorities in their home countries. The failure to provide education in indigenous languages and to ensure that there are enough qualified teachers has been understood as part of a larger problem of the suppression of indigenous customs and traditions.

A final challenge regarding the preservation of minority languages is linked with globalisation. Communication on the Internet has become very important in most parts of the world. The English language has an even more dominant position today than it had in the past. This can be considered a positive development as it is bringing more people together across borders. However, as the global community further develops and integrates, it is important not to lose the richness of other languages and cultures.

21

Stand up for your rights

Protecting our democratic systems means speaking out, engaging and standing up for rights and for those of colleagues and students.

The most effective and sustainable means to improve the fate of students, the profession and communities remain collective action through democratic, independent trade unions.

Why did the Arab Spring succeed in Tunisia, but fail in Egypt? There was an explosion of information available in both places, people went to the streets, and social networking exploded, but little significant change has occurred in Egypt. Why didn't that happen in Tunisia? There were historical factors, among them that the dictatorship in Tunisia had educated its people, had relatively progressive laws on women's rights, and was more secular than its neighbours.

The key difference was that in Tunisia workers had a legitimate, representative trade union organisation, the UGTT.[48] During all the years of repression, which included greater or lesser attacks on the UGTT leadership, internal trade union democracy was maintained. Members may not have known a political democracy, but they lived democracy in their trade unions. The UGTT was an actor in the economy, respected by employers, and had a large enough base and enough power that even autocrats had to negotiate with them.

When people went to the streets in Tunisia during the Arab Spring, region by region, they went to the UGTT regional structures. Their struggle was adopted by the regions and they provided structures and democratic legitimacy for the struggle. When the fight moved to Tunis, the UGTT national headquarters was prepared to take the lead, but it was not necessary. It was all over.

Later, when liberty was endangered by Islamic fundamentalists, the UGTT helped save democracy because it was a large, democratic organisation representing workers from all sectors and regions. It was, with its partners, recognised with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

There are so many stories of courageous teachers standing up for their rights and for democracy. Some have paid a very

48 Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail

high price for expressing their views, establishing independent organisations and mobilising their colleagues. From Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria to Djibouti, Iraq, Yemen and Bahrain at the time of the Arab Spring. From Cambodia to Indonesia, from the STAN countries to Turkey to the Balkans, from Chile to Brazil, to Venezuela, from South Africa and Zimbabwe to Sudan, Djibouti, and Ethiopia, it is a very long list of countries and places where teachers, despite repression, stood up in defence of a democratic future for their nations.

The trade union challenge to repression is different from that of others in civil society. For example, the government of Iran understands that free trade unions are a threat to authoritarian rule. When teachers, bus drivers, journalists and food workers formed independent unions, their leaders risked arrest, harassment, violence and years in prison. For more than a decade, leaders of the clandestine teachers' organisations have been arrested, tortured, sent to prison and some have even been sentenced to death. The repression by Iran's religious and military elite against trade union officers shows their understanding of the importance of legitimate trade unions, the appeal of democracy and the power of organised society. Five names not to be forgotten, from the records of Education International:

> **Farzad Kamangar**, one of the founders of the Iranian teachers' organisation, was charged with endangering national security and sentenced to death after a trial lasting less than 5 minutes. He was executed on 9 May 2010;

> **Abdolreza Ghanbari**, teacher activist, arrested on 4 January 2010 for allegedly belonging to an armed opposition group, first sentenced to death in 2012 after an unfair trial, then, in June 2013 sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but released in March 2016 after a global solidarity campaign;

> **Mahmoud Beheshti Langroudi**, teacher activist, arrested on 24 April 2010, tortured, denied urgent medical care, and sentenced to six-year imprisonment on 22 February 2016;
>
> **Mohammad Habibi**, teacher activist, sentenced to ten and a half years in prison on 4 August 2018; the sentence also included prohibition of social and political activities for two years, a travel ban and 74 lashes;
>
> **Mokhtar Asadi,** teacher activist, detained for sixty-six days in 2010, and again from September 2017 to July 2018 for "propaganda against the state"; arrested again on 14 February 2019 in Sanandaj, hours after he took part in a peaceful teachers' protest, released on bail in March 2019 and awaiting trial.

Trade unions, because they are representative organisations, are often privileged targets of attacks from dictatorial regimes. But democratic governments too sometimes deliberately weaken trade union organisations, thus undermining institutions that are vital to democracy.

Standing up for your rights is not only a matter of defending one's professional and trade union freedoms, but also about exposing weaknesses in democracy that undermine it. This can be risky and thankless.

An example is the struggle against the scourge of corruption. Corruption not only violates the fundamentals of democratic governance and basic transparency, but it creates understandable public cynicism and may make the public willing to sacrifice democracy.

Corruption does not only take the form of outright thievery. In many countries, money to finance campaigns and to lobby elected officials has purchased access and, on occasion, decisions by elected officials. This is a form of democracy theft.

The influence of private money in politics, for example, seriously compromises democracy in the United States.

In the Philippines and Venezuela, people were willing to elect strongmen because of corruption. The damage done to trade unions, the free press and other democratic institutions was enormous, but it was difficult to stand up against anti-democratic practices without looking like apologists for corruption. In Brazil, false corruption charges against former President and trade union leader Lula helped catapult corrupt right-wingers into power, which, in turn, led to the election of nationalist populist Jair Bolsonaro as President, a serious threat to education and trade unions. Corruption is also common in many countries in Asia and Africa. The defence of democracy requires finding ways to make sure that it is defensible, including fighting the diversion and misuse of public funds.

Governments that have steadily eroded rights and democratic institutions, like those in Hungary and Poland, were freely elected to power. The post-Cold War policy focus in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union on rapid movement to market economies often failed to put in place the necessary institutions to guard against corruption and arbitrary governance. They embraced market economies without the regulatory infrastructure for it to function properly or protect consumers, workers or the environment. In some countries, like Bulgaria and Romania, political parties campaigned against corruption, won and became corrupt themselves. The cycle repeats.

Countries that have mineral or fossil fuel wealth are particularly vulnerable. The "partnership" between public and private can be costly and dangerous. In fact, the liberalisation of the world economy, accommodated and facilitated

by national governments, is moving the balance of power to unelected corporations and undermining national sovereignty and democracy.

Serious damage also is done to democracy by a lack of transparency in government, which not only keeps abuses secret from the public and prevents public accountability but undermines confidence in government. For many decades, Transparency International[49] has documented such abuses.

Transparency is an important ingredient in democracy even beyond the misuse or possible misuse of public money. It also means open public meetings, hearings and other consultations instead of a few people discussing and making decisions in secrecy. As 18th century English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer Jeremy Bentham said, "Secrecy, being an instrument of conspiracy, ought never to be the system of a regular government". Transparency means that any policy, national or international, that affects the public is the business of the public. Shortcuts to traditional transparency procedures such as publishing documents on web sites and giving a deadline for public reactions by e-mail cannot replace social dialogue, proper consultations and public discussion.

Often the lack of transparency in public procedures links with complicity of government officials with vendors or other private parties.

The government of Liberia turned over so much of its public school system to an international private company, Bridge International Academies, that it became a governance scandal. It has also caused distressing experiences for students and parents. Students were pushed out of school due to enrolment caps and 74% of teachers lost positions in schools operated by that company.

49 See Transparency International – The Global Coalition Against Corruption https://www.transparency.org/

Throughout the entire process, the Liberian government refused to release one single memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the providers chosen as part of the school privatisation/outsourcing arrangements. They also refused to allow independent researchers to have access to the schools. In other words, the lack of transparency led directly to other undemocratic practices (Tyler, 2017, p. 24; Education International, 2017).

22

Defend and extend your collective bargaining rights

Collective bargaining is a right that is fundamental to democracy and to ensuring that societies, and not just elections, are democratic. Collective bargaining in education is closely linked with education quality. Making collective bargaining illegal or limiting its scope limits democracy.

In some countries, education unions, which are the guardians and representatives of the teaching profession, are no longer considered privileged partners for education policy discussions. In some situations, handpicked "experts" are substituted for educators' elected representatives which makes it much less likely that the experience of educators will inform education reform.

> A Malaysian teacher expressed a view shared by most teachers: "Classroom teachers with rich experience should be given the opportunity to share their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the present system before [governments start] planning changes" (Education International, 2015, p. 32).

Is it not odd that public authorities often need to be persuaded that they should consult with the teaching profession and their organisations on education reform matters? Not only is it odd, but it is also undemocratic.

The right of workers to form trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining is among the fundamental human rights recognised at the global level.[50] These rights are directly related to democracy because they enhance the process of democracy through expanded participation by those affected by decisions. Trade union rights are, like the right to education, enabling rights: they enable the exercise of other rights.

There are many countries where those rights are denied. In the public sector, including education, it is common to ban strikes and to limit the scope of bargaining.

Rights of workers do not expand in a continuous, irreversible process. There are also setbacks, and not only in undemocratic countries. For example, in the United States in recent years, there has been an unprecedented assault on the trade union rights of teachers. The recognition of the rights of education workers is the responsibility of individual states. Great progress was made in the 1970s and 1980s to the point

50 Trade union rights are included in the UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) and ILO Conventions 87 (1948) and 98 (1949). Specific issues related to the public sector are contained in ILO Convention 151 (1978). The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) cover standards pertaining to the teaching profession.

that rights to organise and bargain were accepted in most states. However, in recent years, in several states, rights have been reduced or removed for education workers. This is, in part, retaliation for the effective exercise by trade unions of their right to participate in the political process. In Wisconsin, collective bargaining rights for most public employees, including teachers, were eliminated in 2011. In Tennessee, collective bargaining by teachers has been replaced by "collaborative conferencing" (Wintour, 2013).A few states have reduced the scope of bargaining for teachers, taking many education and professional issues off the bargaining table. Limits on the scope of bargaining have included placement of teachers, discipline and dismissal procedures, teacher evaluation and hours of work and working days. There have been limitations on the scope of bargaining in many other countries as well.

In Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, unions were thrown out of government advisory committees the moment they started challenging the management of education funds (EFA report 2015).

In Denmark, teachers were even thrown out of their own schools! That happened in 2016 when they refused to accept that working time issues were to be decided exclusively by management without negotiations with their trade union. The President of the Danish education union DLF[51], Anders Bondo Christensen, says that his union was side-lined despite findings of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association which supported DLF's position. In 2018, an agreement was reached to establish a commission to look into teachers' working conditions, which, according to Christensen, could lead to a restoration of free collective bargaining in Denmark.

51 *Danmarks Lærerforening*

Such optimism does not exist in Argentina where, in 2015, all negotiations at the national level were broken off. The government insisted that, as of 1 January 2016, negotiations would be dealt with at provincial level. The teachers, afraid that this would lead to provinces under-cutting each other on teacher minimum wage, opposed these plans. Sonia Alesso, General Secretary of the largest teachers' union, CTERA[52], led several teachers' demonstrations, one of which in April 2017 was violently repressed by police forces leaving many teachers injured. "The government does everything to weaken our trade union movement," she says, "as if they want to silence all opposition and return to Argentina's undemocratic past."

In Japan, with a firmly established democratic system, teachers have been consistently denied the right to collective bargaining. "There is some consultation", says Masaki Okajima, President of the Japan Teachers' Union, Nykkioso, "but this is not an adequate tool to improve terms and conditions of employment". Okajima is particularly concerned about the government's neglect of the conditions of young, beginning teachers, who are strictly supervised, subject of high-stake evaluation and who are working very long days until late at night, under heavy stress, which is causing demotivation.

Bargaining is not only a right and a method to encourage wise, sound outcomes, but it is part of preserving the dignity of the profession and of educators. Bargaining is a process of mutual respect and recognition. Preserving the profession requires defending it. It also means being able to attract talented persons to teaching and retain them. Attacks on teaching professionals or their organisations often chill interest in serving as teachers.

52 *Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina*

Social dialogue, unlike collective bargaining, is not an internationally recognised human right. However, it can be very useful as a means of engaging trade unions with their employers beyond what is on the bargaining table. It is a common practice in Europe and recognised by the European Union (EU), but the term is rarely used in other parts of the world. Social dialogue between education unions and governments, including those processes meant to address teacher professional issues, is weakening in many countries, as revealed by surveys of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE, 2016).

Although the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the status of teachers (1966) provides that member states should involve teacher unions in the development of education and teacher policy, in some places it has become almost a common practice for governments to not invite representative unions to consultations on those matters, but to designate their own teacher "representatives". This also sometimes happens at the UN, where groups may be "represented" because of decisions from above and not from below, or because the designated representative "talks well and looks good on screen". Also, there are fabricated civil society organisations that, in fact, are corporate front groups. They include Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are mercenaries for companies or governments. Together with the experts of the many for-profit businesses circling around the education sector, they contribute to a cacophony of voices that obscure the representative voices of the professionals who make education happen every day. There are many useful and serious NGOs and networks that do valuable work, but they should not be confused with representative bodies and they may or may not be "civil society".

There seems to be a reluctance on the part of certain governments to accept that teachers' organisations are not just vehicles for bargaining wages and working conditions, but that they also represent the professional expertise that is needed to develop sound and responsible education policy. Teachers' organisations are – often more than education ministries – the country's institutional memory on the profession and on education. Moreover, education quality issues cannot be resolved without addressing teacher terms and working conditions: they are two sides of the same coin.

The respect of trade union rights, including the rights to bargain and strike, as well as the right of teachers' professional unions to be consulted on education and teacher policy, is an important measure of the health of democracy. If those rights are violated or restricted, alarm bells should ring, not just for trade unionists, but for all democrats.

23

Protect your democratic organisations and institutions

Democracy entails more than a democratically elected government. An independent trade union movement – like a free press, a vibrant civil society and a strong public school system – is one of the pillars on which democratic societies rest. In some countries, the right to form independent trade unions does not exist; in other countries, trade unions are under attack or their rights are restricted. Anti-democratic forces are often leery of representative democratic unions and their ability to mobilise their membership to exert pressure on governments and employers.

There are many ways to undermine the functioning of free trade unions, including portraying education unions as organisations that are against change and not representative of their members, not inviting representative unions to consultations of importance to their members or weakening them by establishing alternative associations.

The first trade unions were established in the United Kingdom in the 19th century during the first Industrial Revolution. Throughout modern history, unions have been the most formidable force behind social progress and democratic change in the Western democracies. From the abolishment of child labour, to the achievement of decent wages and working conditions, to the adoption of the right to vote for all men and women and the establishment of public health and education systems, the independent trade union movement has left its mark.

But like all democratic institutions, trade unions need to be protected and renewed. They must practice internal democracy, they must respect proper rules of governance and they must meet the present day needs of their members, earning their trust, loyalty and even pride, day after day. Otherwise, they risk losing legitimacy and credibility.

The first teachers' organisations, dating from the middle of the 19th century, were mostly professional associations, not trade unions. Many joined the trade union movement in the 20th century, firmly holding on, however, to their professional mission to improve the delivery of education services and to enhance the status of teachers. They became "professional unions", not only defending the material interests of their members but also serving as guardians of the teaching profession, actively contributing to the development of education and teachers' policy. Many successful education reforms bear the fingerprints of the teaching profession and their unions.

Ignoring trade unions, portraying them as an anachronism or even bashing them as some politicians do, is an attack on representative democracy itself. Institutions of democracy include political parties, trade unions and other representative civil society organisations. They cannot be ignored without

harming a nation's democratic character. Democracy requires structures and infrastructures. They cannot be replaced with social media, as a Minister of Education of a Latin American country seemed to believe when he said that he had 50,000 teachers "following" him on Twitter. There was no need to talk to the education unions, he explained, because he personally chatted with his teachers every day and they told him they were happy.

It is crucial that teachers are actively engaged in the life and work of their independent and democratic professional unions and associations, and that they protect them against government and employers' abuse. They are among the many institutions that make up democracy and keep governments accountable and honest.

The word "institution" may not seem very glamorous, but institutions are required for healthy democracies. Institutions are necessary for democratic processes to happen and work. One should never forget that democracy is a process. It is not a question of what outcomes are, but rather the way decisions are made, and outcomes are determined.

24

Insist on the application of international standards

In addition to the international human and trade union rights standards protected by the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), global standards exist for the teaching profession. These standards are laid down in the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997).

These Recommendations provide the most authoritative global standards for the teaching profession and are, perhaps, even more relevant now than they were at the time of their adoption.

> Graduate teaching assistants in the United States in private universities ten years ago were not considered to be employees by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the official body charged with regulating labour relations in the private sector. They were not allowed to form a union chapter at Brown University in 2014. The United Auto Workers' Union (UAW), the largest union representing teaching assistants in the United States, prepared a complaint that was submitted to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA).
> The CFA considered that NLRB should not have denied the right to organise to teaching assistants. In a subsequent, similar case, at Columbia University in 2016, the NLRB reversed its position and recognised the right of such workers to form and join trade unions and negotiate collective agreements. Since that decision, many thousands of teaching assistants in private universities have organised and are covered by agreements.[53]

International standards are universal and derived from democratic values. They hold industrial relations and decent societies together. If international standards and their application are understood, they can be used to leverage the respect of rights and standards at the national level. They are, as a minimum, an authoritative point of reference for human rights and democracy. For the teaching profession there are three important international instruments:

The 1966 ILO/UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers* covering K-12, sets standards for professional autonomy, terms and employment conditions, academic freedom, and many other issues.[54]

53 Case n° 2547 (USA), in the 381st report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association; paragraphs 34 et 35 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/

54 The 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers can be found at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000160495

The 1997 UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel* addresses many of the same issues but places particular emphasis on the protection of academic freedom. It also stresses the role of higher education teaching personnel in governance.[55]

Although early childhood education (ECE) teachers are not covered by either the 1966 or the 1997 Recommendations, similar protections are prescribed for ECE personnel in ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel (2013).[56]

All three instruments stress the importance of the participation of teachers' organisations in discussions and policy formation concerning their profession and sector of work. Unfortunately, the good practices included in these recommendations are often overlooked in the current debates about reform. It is in these political contexts that the recommendations are of special importance.

Even though it is scarcely more than 20 years since the adoption of the UNESCO higher education recommendation, decent conditions have deteriorated for many teaching personnel. In many countries, work has become less secure and more precarious. These conditions undermine the ability to exercise academic freedom and participate independently in governance activities. Even the exercise of fundamental trade union rights may be difficult if one is on a short-term contract and worried about getting it renewed.

55 The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel can be found at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

56 The ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel can be found at https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/codes-of-practice-and-guidelines/WCMS_236528/lang--en/index.htm

The 1996 and 1997 Recommendations are monitored by a joint ILO/UNESCO group of experts. This monitoring body is unprecedented for Recommendations, giving them greater status and providing an opportunity to submit complaints as well as to make submissions every three years to the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) reviewing concerns related to the provisions of the Recommendations.

There is another set of international standards that are fundamental to the freedom of teachers. They are the human rights standards that protect the rights of workers to form and join trade unions and engage in collective bargaining. They are supervised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Organisations such as Education International, but also national education unions and national centres, file complaints to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) concerning any rights violation related to the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining, commonly referred to as "trade union rights".

Those rights enable people to exercise a wide range of other rights. By exercising trade union rights, teachers can defend their profession and, therefore, the right to education. Trade union rights are the basis of action at the workplace and in society. They are fundamental to the existence of democracy and provide space for the creation of other civil society organisations.

However, standards are not limited to the ILO and UNESCO. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights plays a vital role in defending human rights and focusing public attention on abuses by governments. It also seeks to protect human rights defenders. It has a system of independent Special Rapporteurs who have gone where others fear to tread.

One such rapporteur, for example, provided a remarkable insight into the human cost of totalitarianism in North Korea. An extensive UN human rights operation in Burma, now Myanmar, tracked human rights violations, provided vital information to the world and helped nurture change in that country.

Children's rights is another area that is being actively pursued by human rights bodies and is of relevance to teachers and others in education. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted in 1989, provides the most detailed and comprehensive explanation and protection for the rights of children. It is a remarkable example of human progress in the recognition and better defence of the rights of children. It belongs in every community and in every classroom.

There are many more human rights standards that are important for teachers and other education workers. They are too often imperfectly enforced, but nevertheless they are agreed upon standards that represent the best aspirations of humankind. The institutions charged with their defence are important and go beyond governments and the UN system. One of the most far-reaching and effective defenders of human, including workers', rights is the regional human rights institution, the Council of Europe.[57]

The fight for the freedom of workers, as well as for education and the education profession, are intimately linked to international legal standards and principles. Unfortunately, many international standards for labour and for education are not well known, even by those in the education sector. Even when known, international standards are often ignored or attacked by governments. Education unions and others have a stake in those standards.

57 See https://www.coe.int

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Be proud of your profession

The teaching profession was once described as the noblest of professions. Around the world, with some notable exceptions, educators are increasingly working on limited term contracts, their workload is increasing, their professional space is shrinking, their autonomy is challenged and their access to professional development limited. They earn salaries that are often below the average wage and, in some countries, they even lack the qualifications, skills, support and learning materials to teach and teach well. It is part of "de-professionalisation".

Governments that allow the teaching profession to erode put the future of their nations at risk. But educators, proud of their profession and organisations, will not abandon their place on the frontlines of democracy.

> French writer Albert Camus and his mother and brother escaped war-time France and went to Algeria. His father, who returned to France, was killed in World War I. His mother was illiterate, and the family was very poor. But a teacher, Louis Germain, gave young Camus a chance. After receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, Camus expressed his appreciation in a letter to his former teacher:
> "When I heard the news, my first thought, after my mother, was of you. Without you, without the affectionate hand you extended to the small poor child that I was, without your teaching and example, none of all this would have happened…It gives me the opportunity to tell you what you have been and still are for me, and to assure you that your efforts, your work, and the generous heart you put into it still lives on in one of your little schoolchildren who, although older, has never ceased to be your grateful pupil."

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) is one of the few teachers' organisations that is entitled to confer degrees of Honorary Fellow. This practice is a remnant of the past, a relic, a reminder of the important role teachers' associations once played in shaping the teaching profession, in setting and maintaining educational standards.

Some historians of education maintain that, over the past hundred years, education became a mass production exercise, that teachers became workers, their professional associations turned into labour unions, and along the way something was lost. Not teachers' professional ambitions and ideals, but some of their professional authority, and perhaps the confidence placed in teachers to realise them.

In fact, the deterioration of the status of the profession is not because of trade unions, but despite them. In recent

decades, professional issues have become major trade union priorities. It may not have been necessary before to include the defence of the profession in union demands. Those were the days of consensus about the value of teaching and teachers. It is now teachers, through their organisations, who must establish a new consensus around the profession – for themselves, for their students, and for the larger community.

The main characteristic of any profession is that its standards, principles and objectives are determined by its members. Doctors, architects, journalists, to give some examples, set their own professional standards within legal frameworks defined by the public authorities. However, teachers seem to be gradually losing their grip on their work.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, UNESCO and the ILO set international standards for our profession in 1966. Few countries live up to those standards.

Millions of teachers, even in some industrialised countries, live close to or even beneath the poverty line. They need a second job to make ends meet. Moreover, in too many countries, teachers' professional freedoms and civil rights are restricted and they are not allowed to establish their own independent organisations. These dramatic changes have contributed to de-professionalisation – one of the main challenges that the education sector is facing today.

If talented and motivated persons are no longer attracted to the teaching profession because their work has been rendered routine or they have been limited in their contributions, they will work elsewhere. In many countries, teachers are leaving the profession after a year or two of service due to a high level of stress and a low level of control and satisfaction. It is in this critical challenge of defending the profession of teaching that the professional pride and capacities of teachers come together in their organisations.

Being a teacher means belonging to the most honourable of professions. Teaching is a skill, a science and an art. As Dr Mary Futrell, one of the Founding Presidents of Education International, put it: "When the untapped potential of a child meets the creative imagination of a teacher, a miracle occurs." A miracle, yes, and every single teacher on this planet has experienced that miracle. It is the source of most teachers' passion. Many politicians and economists must be horrified because miracles cannot be measured and have a price tag attached to them.

But the relationship described by Camus in the letter to his former teacher, who was so important in his life, would not have been remembered if his teacher simply had been administering tests designed by others or performing tasks by remote control.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said: "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." Indeed, investing in education is the best investment any nation can make in its own democratic future, and the key to quality education lies with present and future generations of qualified and dedicated teachers.

Teachers must regain control over their profession, and education unions must reclaim their role as the profession's guardians. And as a profession, they need to take leadership and confront the crisis of democracy, the very basis of our civic rights, our freedoms, in our classrooms, in our schools, in our organisations, in our societies.

"On that morning, my life changed"

"Not so long ago I received an email message. "Are you the same person who was my teacher in the 4th grade in 1976? I have tried to find you for many years". I confirmed my identity. Then I received a long message informing me of what had happened since he had left my class. That note brought back memories of a small, 10-year white South African boy, Jacques, who had moved to The Netherlands with his parents. His father was a visiting scholar at the university.

One day, a distraught Jacques came to my desk. He told me that another teacher had told the class the day before that he came from a "country where white people did evil things to people of other races", and that the attitude of the other children towards him consequently changed and made him feel unsafe.

Anger about the colleague's insensitivity prompted me to spend the rest of the morning talking about apartheid and that children could not be held responsible for it.

"On that morning my life changed," Jacques writes me 30 years later. "I decided that apartheid could, and should be opposed, regardless of my own race."

Jacques completed his secondary education in South Africa's whites-only system that he resented. At university, he was elected to the leadership of the South African white anti-apartheid student union, which became a small but unexpectedly significant source of opposition to the minority regime of De Klerk, contributing to the release of Nelson Mandela, the end of apartheid and the creation of a non-racial democracy.

> Five years ago, at a UN meeting here in NY, I received a text message: “Look behind the South African Minister”. I looked and saw Jacques waving and laughing. Today, he leads one of the South African government’s largest transformation policy programs.
> This story is not about me or my student, Jacques. Many of my colleagues are able to share these kinds of experiences. It is about the professional space, and autonomy teachers need to motivate, enlighten and inspire their students, and it is about the pride we all have in our profession[58].

58 This story is excerpted from remarks by Fred van Leeuwen on 21 September 2016, then-General Secretary of EI, at a gala event in New York marking the 50th anniversary of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers. For the purposes of the occasion, the story illustrated the contributions of teachers who are free to exercise their profession.

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Teaching and Learning Resources

Below is a sampling of teaching resources available online that support education for democracy. Feel free to contact Education International with additional suggestions.

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Bob Chase (USA),
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Fatima Da Silva (Brasil),
Nkosana Dolopi (South Africa),
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Bob Harris (Switzerland),
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Timothy Snyder, who contributed the Foreword to "On Education and Democracy" is an American author and historian, specialising in Central and Eastern Europe and the Holocaust. He is the Richard D. Levin Professor of History at Yale University and a Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. His books Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin (Basic Books, 2010), Thinking the Twentieth Century with Tony Judt. (Penguin, 2012) and Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning (Penguin, 2015). His most recent books, On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century (Penguin, 2017) and The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America (Penguin, 2018), focus on authoritarian threats to democracy.