ON THE GLOBAL STAGE
2013
International Work of the NUT
www.teachers.org.uk
Endorsement

The extraordinary courage of Malala Yousafzai sends a powerful message of the importance of education to help us all to fulfill our potential. Malala’s story is a reminder too of the capacity and commitment that young people themselves have to recognize and assert their rights. In Amnesty International we are proud to have made common cause with the NUT and other teaching unions at home and abroad to defend children’s rights, to protect academic freedoms and the right to education, and to promote the right of teachers to organize at work.

International solidarity is key to our success; we are campaigning together with you to support Jallal al-Salman and Mahdi Abu-Dheeb, the brave Bahraini teachers’ leaders. We are coordinating our activism with Education International in defence of the independent Iran teachers’ associations, and we are mobilizing with you to defend workers’ rights here at home.

Our TeachRights network of 7,000 primary and secondary educators – many of them NUT members – is bringing human rights to the curriculum, with lesson plans, activities and solidarity actions designed for the classroom, backed up by accredited professional development training and a schools’ speakers programme.

Amnesty’s 500 school groups are playing their part: recently an Amnesty school group from Dorset handed in an 11,400 strong petition to the Tanzanian High Commission asking them to support violence-free elections in Zimbabwe. I was proud to accompany a delegation of young Amnesty supporters on their visit to Parliament to urge the UK government to take a lead in defending women’s and girls’ rights in Afghanistan. Our young people have the energy, enthusiasm and idealism to fight for their causes and ours.

I would like to pay tribute to the role that the NUT plays day-in-day-out in putting human and workers’ rights and international solidarity at the heart of what you do.

Kate Allen
Director
Amnesty International UK Section
Foreword

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has a proud tradition of internationalism.

We are always pleased to work with colleagues from teacher trade unions around the world and to learn from their struggles and successes.

Sadly, many teachers around the world are unable to carry out their vocation as they languish in prison simply because they are trade unionists. We continue to campaign alongside organisations seeking justice wherever teachers suffer repression and imprisonment. We welcome the new policy agreed by delegates at our Annual Conference that sets solidarity firmly at the centre of the NUT’s international programme.

Globally, 57 million children are still out of school and 1.7 million more teachers are needed worldwide. In the NUT, we want to make sure that those teachers are well-trained, well-supported and given appropriate conditions to carry out their classroom role effectively and professionally. This is why we are taking an active role in Education International’s global campaign Mobilising for Quality Education.

We hope you enjoy reading about the NUT’s international solidarity work in this edition of On the Global Stage which includes articles from the NUT’s partners.

To quote from the famous Labour movement song of 1915:

Solidarity forever
For the Union makes us strong

Christine Blower
NUT General Secretary

Beth Davies
NUT President
The four pillars of the NUT’s international solidarity work

1. Working for:
   - teachers’ trade union and human rights
   - peace and disarmament

2. Campaigning for public quality education for all

3. Supporting the professional development and global awareness of NUT members

4. Strengthening the NUT by learning from the struggles of other unions worldwide
Karen Lewis, President of the Chicago Teachers’ Union (CTU), describes their fight for education.

When the Chicago Teachers’ Union officers and I took our positions, in June 2010, none of us had experience in union leadership. But we were elected to lead a union in a city where strife and discord in education have been a way of life for decades. Our mission was to overturn this status quo.

In fall 2012, we went on strike over issues of vital importance to our members, such as class size, merit pay and inadequate staffing levels. We restored many of the threatened basic protections in our contracts, preserved our health care benefits with no increase in rates, guaranteed future pay rises, eliminated the unpaid suspension of paraprofessionals and teachers, and secured the ability to arbitrate in discipline cases.

The mayor wanted to increase teaching days by two hours without compensation. We negotiated a day that did not increase teaching time, but increased student learning time with the addition of art, music and world language education. We were well organised, and secured a contract that makes our teachers among the best-rewarded nationwide for their tremendous contributions inside – and outside – the classroom.

This approach has united the CTU as we demand the respect teachers deserve. CTU membership involvement is at its highest in 25 years and is at the forefront of a revitalised US labour movement. Our community partnerships make us one of the most trusted advocates in Chicago for teacher and student interests. We found funds to develop a media strategy and dynamic organising and research departments. We have shown our collective power and our ability to organise, energise and politicise our members.

People worldwide supported us because many had lost faith that the voices of true education reform could be heard over those of corporate interests and advocates for privatisation. Attacks on our profession, schools and students had gone unchecked for decades. We sought to change the narrative of destruction and decay and began discussing equality and the conditions in which many children live and learn. Our union of teachers, paraprofessionals and clinicians, and the community of parents, students and education allies, were the 30,000 who were marching in the streets.

No other profession has responsibility as great as those of us who teach, inspire, and motivate young people, some of whose lives are rooted in poverty. This is why we have added another component to our mission – social justice. This is our greatest need, and perhaps our greatest strength as a union. The solidarity and democracy within our union empowers us for both today’s battles and the battles that lie ahead.

This is an edited version of an article which first appeared in the July/August 2013 edition of The Teacher, the NUT’s magazine.
Bankside says, ‘Send my friend to school’

Bankside Primary School in Leeds is a model of good practice in global education. As part of the NUT-backed Send my Friend to School campaign, members of the school council led meetings and assemblies to raise awareness and understanding about the inequalities in the world and the importance of world leaders fulfilling their millennium promises.

With a focus on the 2013 campaign theme, Every Child Needs a Teacher, each member of staff (over 80) and each child from nursery upwards (about 700) identified what made a good teacher and signed a petition.

The world leaders made a promise to make sure all children around the world have equal access to learning – they should make sure they fulfil their promise.

(Riyadh Ali, aged 11)
Bankside’s school council then liaised with school council representatives from a cluster of local schools, holding assemblies and cascading information. An additional 1,600 signatures were added to the petition which was presented to Leeds East MP, George Mudie.

Kauser Jan, NUT member and advanced skills teacher, says, “The most powerful advocates of universal primary education are children themselves. I am proud that my school is working to address global issues in order to make a difference to the world. We need more schools to join in raising their voices for those who are not heard.”

Involve your school. Start by visiting: www.sendmyfriend.org/take-action

Why should a girl not be given a chance to go to school when boys in her village can? That is so unfair.
(Ameera Sadiq, aged 10)

Why should children around the world miss out on education? It’s not right.
(Aleena Khan, aged 8)

We have to be the voice of the children who are not heard.
(Aneesha Ali, aged 11)
Sam Tiwari of the Steve Sinnott Foundation reports.

On 21 June 2013, over fifty schools in the UK celebrated *Education for All Day* (EFA Day) organised by the Steve Sinnott Foundation. The day was part of the Foundation’s worldwide campaign to promote understanding and awareness of the millennium development goal for education (MDG); its aim being to involve young people and teachers in advocating for change. Through a range of creative activities, schools raised awareness about the fact that there are 57 million primary school age children who do not have access to education and, a further 200 million who cannot read or write, despite going to school, due to lack of resources and trained teachers.

The Foundation aims for EFA Day to be an annual day of activities in Britain’s schools. Schools will also have the opportunity to set up worldwide links with young people and teachers in developing countries, thus enabling practical understanding of cultural diversity and global interdependence. It is hoped that the EFA Day will encourage young people to appreciate the significance of their role in tackling poverty, inequality and social injustice.

The Steve Sinnott Foundation was established to continue the legacy of the late General Secretary of the NUT who was a passionate believer in the right to education for all children. The Foundation contributes to the achievement of the millennium development goal of universal primary education through a range of projects in developing countries and by linking educators, volunteers and young people around the world.

To participate in EFA Day 2014, please contact the Foundation’s Project Coordinator Jasmine Jones jasmine.jones@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk or go to www.educationforallday.org and www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk
Solidarity in action

The NUT works alongside other organisations to protect the rights of teachers, trade unionists and children. Below are some examples of our work.

Peace and justice in Colombia

The sister of jailed teacher, Omar Combita, thanked NUT members for their “magnificent” support and urged them to “keep speaking up for justice, dignity and the right to education.”

Dora Combita told us: “My brother is not guilty. He is a teacher. They want to silence him because he defends education and human rights.”

Bahrain teachers in struggle

The NUT added its voice to the worldwide demand for the release of Mahdi Abu Dheeb, President of the Bahrain Teachers’ Association (BTA).

He was convicted with Jalila al-Salman, Vice-President of the BTA, for using their positions to call for a strike by teachers.

After spending nearly six months in jail, Jalila was released and we had the privilege to welcome her to NUT Annual Conference where she told delegates about her struggles in Bahrain.

Palestinian child prisoners denied basic rights

In 2009, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimated that there were around 1.1 million children deprived of their freedom by criminal courts worldwide.

The NUT has been particularly concerned about the plight of Palestinian children who are routinely illegally detained by the Israeli armed forces. According to the Defence of Children International (DCI) in April 2013, a total of 238 Palestinian children were imprisoned and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. This is the same number of children as March, which registered the highest number of Palestinian children imprisoned and prosecuted in the system since October 2010. The number of children between the ages of 12 and 15 climbed to 44, an increase of 12.8 per cent and the highest number since 2011.

In the vast majority of cases globally, such detentions are contrary to international law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The NUT has pledged to continue to fight for the rights of children illegally detained across the world.

For more information go to: www.defenceforchildren.org
EI mission to the Middle East

Christine Blower, NUT General Secretary, reports on the Education International high level mission to the Middle East.

“Education is a fundamental right of every child all over the world, serving as a bridge between all people for better, more peaceful lives.”

This powerful statement on Israel and Palestine was made by Education International’s 6th World Congress. Congress also called on the Israel Teachers’ Union (ITU) and the General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT) “to encourage their governments to take every step necessary to reduce sources of conflict and cease violence in order to lay the ground for a negotiated settlement”.

This policy provided the basis, in July 2013, for the Education International (EI) high level political mission to Jerusalem and Ramallah that I was privileged to join. Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of EI, led the delegation.

Education for peace was a focus of discussion with both the GUPT and the ITU.

Following the mission, EI is working through its Middle East Committee to facilitate discussion between teacher trade unions and other organisations working for peace and equality.

Solidarity in Europe

The NUT is proud that our General Secretary, Christine Blower, is President of the European Trade Union Committee for Education. On behalf of ETUCE, Christine sent a message of solidarity to teachers in Greece.

“The ETUCE stands in solidarity with the Federation of Secondary School Teachers of Greece (OLME) in their struggle against the erosion of basic civil liberties and democratic rights resulting from recent governmental decisions. The ETUCE wishes to express its support to all who call for trade union rights to be upheld in Greece.

Austerity is not working. The time has come to restore public confidence by reversing austerity and boosting public investment, including investment in education.”

Stop drones now!

Delegates at NUT Annual Conference 2013 made impassioned speeches about the deaths of children that have resulted from drone attacks.

As a result of the Conference debate, the NUT General Secretary, Christine Blower, wrote to Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International Development, urging the Government to act to stop drones as they impact on communities and prevent children receiving education and in some cases threaten their lives.
Migrants’ rights

NUT joins the EI delegation at the UN to call for the protection of migrants’ rights.

Samidha Garg, NUT International Relations Officer, reports.

In July 2013, I was pleased to join the Education International (EI) delegation attending the Informal Interactive Hearings on International Migration and Development at the United Nations (UN), which called for the protection and promotion of migrant workers’ rights.

The hearings took place at UN Headquarters in New York in advance of the Second High-level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development in October 2013.

The hearings were attended by 440 organisations, including NGOs, trade unions, migrant diaspora, academics and member states.

At the opening session, UN General Assembly (UNGA) President, Vuk Jeremić, acknowledged the contribution of migrant workers to the development of their countries of origin and host countries.

In his opening remarks, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, said the recommendations of civil society provided through the Interactive Hearings would contribute to a five-year action agenda, with benchmarks and indicators.

In his remarks, Chairperson of the Council of Global Unions and General Secretary of Building and Wood Workers International, Ambet Yuson, stressed the importance of addressing migration issues in all sectors and keeping migration governance within the UN system.

The EI delegation noted that, despite their well-documented positive contributions to society, migrant workers are quite often victims of discrimination, abuse and violation of their rights. Inequality, xenophobia, exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking were on the rise. Reversing this problematic trend required courageous political action.

The EI delegation called on governments to better regulate and monitor recruitment and employment practices by promoting ethical recruitment policies and practices.
Working through the International Labour Conference

Amanda Brown, NUT Assistant Secretary, Employment Conditions and Rights, reports.

The NUT has been a regular visitor to the International Labour Conference that takes place in Geneva in June each year, bringing together delegates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) member states of the United Nations.

Sometimes seen as an international parliament of labour, the Conference establishes and adopts international labour standards and provides a forum for discussion of key international social and labour questions.

Each member state is represented by a tripartite delegation representing governments, workers and employers, with every delegate having the same rights to express themselves freely and vote as they wish.

The TUC arranges the UK’s worker delegation, and for some years I have represented the TUC at the Committee on the Application of Standards. This Committee has the task of considering Governments’ compliance with ILO Conventions and Recommendations – the internationally agreed labour standards ratified by ILO Governments – discussing in detail a list of 25 cases of particular concern.

In June 2013, special attention was paid to Belarus, Fiji and Uzbekistan. Belarus and Fiji both have long-standing failures to allow trade unions the freedom to organise, required by Convention 87. In Fiji, teachers have been amongst those at the forefront of resistance to government restrictions, arrest and harassment of trade unionists. Child labour came under the spotlight in the discussion on Uzbekistan, where there is systematic exploitation of children and young people by the state during the cotton harvest.

It is striking how many teacher trade unionists participate in the Committee. Teacher trade unions play a key role, alongside Education International, showing solidarity and fighting human and labour rights abuses both in their home countries and across the world.

For more information about the 2013 ILO, see: www.ilo.org/actrav/what/events/WCMS_217140/lang--en/index.htm
Transformational teaching with *Internationalising Learning*

*Internationalising Learning* is part of the NUT’s Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme which sets out to enhance teacher knowledge and skills related to teaching and learning about the key concepts of global citizenship. Themes include interdependence, diversity, human rights, peace and conflict, development and sustainability. The successful programme, which was originally funded by DFID, forms part of the NUT’s core CPD programme and is available to both primary and secondary teachers.

The shift in international development work from charity to social justice is a focus of the programme. Teachers attending the course are able to explore strategies for tackling controversial issues.
They can experience a range of ways to challenge pupil assumptions and stereotypes. In doing so, teachers are challenged about the assumptions influencing their teaching and learning.

The programme is designed with the core principles of effective CPD encompassing expert tutor input, encouraging teachers to work collaboratively and giving them the opportunity to implement their learning from the Internationalising Learning programme. As part of this teacher to teacher programme participants attend a follow-up day where they review and share their learning journey with other members of the group.

Implementing and sharing good practice can lead to transformational teaching. In an external evaluation of the Internationalising Learning programme conducted by Triple Line Consultancy it was reported that, ‘The methodology of teacher to teacher learning seems to be a good one – the external evaluation notes that it is fully researched and found to be highly effective.’

Details about NUT courses can be found at: www.teachers.org.uk/courses
Education is the only option, says Malala

“One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world”, said Malala Yousafzai, speaking on her 16th birthday on 12 July 2013. “Education is the only option”, she declared.

Shot at the age of 15 in Swat, Pakistan, for campaigning for girls’ education, Malala celebrated her birthday by leading the first ever youth takeover of the United Nations General Assembly.

Young ambassadors, Millie Wells and Sam Whittingham, both from Ringwood School in Hampshire, who won the Steve Sinnott Award*, joined Malala at this historic event.

Blogging from New York, Sam and Millie said: “Malala’s speech was truly inspirational and was one of the most moving speeches we have ever heard.” They continued: “Malala has given hope to so many. We are sure that this will be a historic turning point to finally reaching the shared goal of education for all.”

Happy 16th birthday Malala.

(Gordon Brown, UN special envoy for global education)

*The Steve Sinnott Award is funded by the Global Campaign for Education UK and the NUT, and was set up to commemorate the international work on education of the late NUT General Secretary.