

# **The “Aveiro Statement” - Go Public: Fund Education Support Personnel**

## **Education International’s 2<sup>nd</sup> World ESP Conference, “Building Union Power: Defending the Rights and Status of Education Support Personnel”**

18 May 2023; Aveiro, Portugal

Recognising education support personnel’s important contribution to ensuring equitable, inclusive and quality education for all and fostering the development of the whole student;

Further recognising education support personnel’s role in supporting student learning, wellbeing and safety during the closure of schools and education institution due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in the process of pandemic recovery;

Reaffirming the vision outlined in the Education International Declaration on the Rights and Status of Education Support Personnel;

Affirming the power of trade unions to advocate for improved working and employment conditions for education support personnel;

Yet noting that 85% of world’s population will live in the grip of stringent austerity measures by the end of 2023 and that this trend is likely to continue until at least 2025 unless governments take decisive action<sup>1</sup>;

Concerned that financing for education is stagnant or declining despite the need for post pandemic recovery in the sector, with 41% of countries reducing education spending in 2020, and lower-income countries reducing spending again in 2022<sup>2</sup>;

Observing that reductions in education budgets impact the job security, rights, wellbeing, and employment conditions of education support personnel;

Further observing that insufficient education funding can lead to increased privatisation and outsourcing of education support personnel roles;

Noting that education support personnel often have low salaries, and that the cost-of-living crisis has worsened education support personnel’s living conditions;

Further noting that many education support personnel roles are female dominated professions and that ensuring their quality working conditions is necessary for the realisation of gender equality;

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<sup>1</sup> [End Austerity - Eurodad](#)

<sup>2</sup> [2022 Education Finance Watch | Global Education Monitoring Report \(unesco.org\)](#)

Aware that digitalisation and climate change are adding new challenges and realities to the role of education support personnel;

Alarmed by the continuing prevalence of reports of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, against education support personnel;

Education International's second World Education Support Personnel Conference<sup>3</sup> calls upon governments to:

- Urgently increase investment in public education in line with international targets and the Transforming Education Summit Call to Action on Financing;
- Invest in sufficient numbers of trained and qualified education support personnel that have quality working conditions, salaries that enable a life with dignity, and quality career pathways;
- Provide education support personnel with quality training and free professional development opportunities according to their needs;
- Increase the attractiveness of a career as an education support worker;
- Take concrete actions to enhance the status of education support personnel and ensure that they are recognised as part of the education community;
- Ensure gender pay equity;
- Halt and reverse the privatisation of education and the outsourcing of education support personnel roles to contractors;
- Ensure that education support personnel have secure and permanent positions, with access to full-time employment;
- Ratify and implement Convention C190 to ensure education support personnel are safe from all forms of violence including gender-based violence in the workplace;
- Ensure a just transition in the education sector by protecting education support personnel's safety and labour rights in the context of the worsening impacts of the climate crisis;
- Collaborate with education support personnel and their unions to define how information technologies can support their work, and provide high quality training on how to use them effectively;
- Respect the labour rights of education support personnel and their right to join unions;
- Respect trade union rights, including the right to organise, bargain collectively, and strike, as well as engage in meaningful social dialogue with organisations representing education support personnel.

It further encourages education unions to:

- Continue to advocate for the worldwide application of the Education International Declaration on the Rights and Status of Education Support Personnel;

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<sup>3</sup> [Declaration on the rights and status of Education Support Personnel \(ei-ie.org\)](https://www.ei-ie.org/en/about-us/education-international-declaration-on-the-rights-and-status-of-education-support-personnel)

- Call for increased domestic and international public education financing and specific funding for education support personnel as part of Education International's Go Public: Fund Education campaign;
- Build union power to defend the rights and status of education support personnel by recruiting and organising members;
- Encourage ESP and teacher representatives to support each other and work hand in hand to defend common rights and values to ensure student needs are met.