



REGIONAL STUDY ON BARRIERS TO THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG EDUCATORS IN EDUCATION UNIONS AND LEADERSHIP

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

A. State of the trade union movement

Educators' rights are undermined because of the unfavourable political and trade union climate, which often derives from restrictive labour laws or governments ignoring the laws and ILO Conventions where they have been ratified.

The lack of capacity of the teacher trade unions to defend education and the rights of their members has made the problem persist. Education unions are losing the power to influence the cause of education and the welfare of workers in Africa, hence the need for union renewal. Renewal requires more inclusive unions with the capacity to deliver their mandate, including reducing youth apathy.

The apathy among the youth is taking place at a time the trade union situation is deteriorating in Africa. Workers' salaries are very low with barely any other benefits. The living and working conditions are poor, especially for the teachers. They are faced with heavy workloads, huge classes with inadequate facilities, and teaching and learning materials. They are treated unfairly and are generally denied their rights.

To avoid a lost generation of trade unionists, there is a dire need to resuscitate the teacher trade union movement in Africa if the workers can get the best from their toil. The low involvement of young educators is sometimes caused by restrictive union constitutions that do not give space for the youth to grow within their structures.

The negative perception of unions that has developed over the years has alienated young educators as unions are sometimes viewed as ineffective organizations that lack transparency and benefit a few. The near absence of young educators in action creates a big challenge in promoting education.

B. The Challenge of education

The right to quality education for all remains a pipe dream for millions of children, youth and adults in the African region. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict and other crises have exacerbated educational exclusion and loss of opportunity. According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report, before the pandemic, 260 million children, adolescents, and youth of primary and secondary school age were out of school, with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for about half of that number. At its peak, the COVID-19 crisis disrupted the education of 1.6 billion students worldwide.

Inadequate education financing and the health crisis have created an environment for for-profit private providers of education to thrive, promising education technology (EdTech) solutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis. During the pandemic, millions of African children, particularly those in rural and marginalized areas, missed out on quality education due to the digital divide. Inadequate digital infrastructure, connectivity challenges, and lack of training and support for teachers have been major hindrances to the continuation of learning during the COVID-19 crisis.



Education is a fundamental human right and a public good as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (also known as the Banjul Charter). These normative instruments are complemented by Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 (CESA 16–25), which articulate the African continent's developmental and education aspirations, respectively.

To combat these challenges and ensure that unions can take advantage of the existing instruments and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, in particular (SGD) 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", EI adopted a strategy of union renewal to build the capacity of education unions to push for the global and continental agenda.

C. What EI has done

In September 2021, EI Africa launched the Africa Young Educators Network (AYEN), with a view to building the power of young teachers and education support personnel to advocate for quality public education for all and participate more actively in union structures and activities.

In its 7th Congress, held in Ottawa Canada in 2015, EI adopted a resolution that sought to promote, facilitate and monitor the participation of young and early-stage teachers, researchers, and support personnel from member organisations in EI activities. It was also resolved to pay close attention to gender and other inequalities that may lead to the marginalisation of certain young educators, and to let young elected members represent them in EI structures at the global and regional levels.

The deliberations on the resolution expressed that unions need the capacity to resist negative tendencies like attacks on collective bargaining rights, undermining trade unions, direct attacks on activists, and anti-trade union laws. The need for new ways to respond to changed circumstances, to revitalise connection with members and draw them into activity while transforming mass membership organisations to mass participation organisations with democratic renewal was highlighted.

This pointed to improving participation of underrepresented groups, creating ways to organise around professional issues while maintaining the industrial leg, becoming campaigning organisations by reframing narratives on issues like education funding and building alliances with students, parents, civil society organisations, and others. Unions also need to rethink union structures to be more inclusive and participatory while making the union present in the lives of members in the workplace.

Education International seeks to carry out research on the barriers to the participation of young educators in activities of the union structures and activities with a view to improving the contribution to union effectiveness.

D. Key research questions

The research should address the following questions, among others:

- I. How do the unions seek to represent the interests of young members and include them in decision-making?



- II. What are the main barriers to the participation and leadership of young members in education unions? What has the union done to overcome these barriers?
- III. Are there different barriers (within and outside the unions) linked to age, geography, socio-economic status, culture, family status etc. among young members? What has the union done to overcome these barriers?
- IV. Are there different barriers to be found at different levels of the unions (local, regional, and national)? How might these be overcome?
- V. Do the unions have policies and/or have taken action to increase participation in union activities and decision-making? How have they been effective?
- VI. What more can unions do to increase the involvement of young members in union activities, structures and leadership?

E. Design, scope and methodology

The proposals must include a detailed description of the research design and methodology. The study is expected to include a literature review and a survey of EI member organisations in Africa.

Key deliverables and timeframe

Dates	Description
05/07/2023	The call for proposals is released
14/07/2023	Deadline for submissions To be received by 23:59 CET
20/07/23	Selection and announcement of the selected candidate
24/07/2023	The signing of the contract with a consultant
31/07/2023	Presentation of detailed work plan (Inception Report) by the consultant.
August – September 2023	Research is conducted draft of the Report presented
18/10/2023	Validation Webinar
31/10/2023	Final Report



F. Reporting & Management

The consultant(s) will report directly to and be supervised by the EI Africa regional Coordinator.

The EI Africa regional office will provide the successful applicant(s) with:

- Access to all relevant and available EI research as well as relevant documentation;
- Timely guidance and feedback in relation to the task as needed with written inputs consolidated as feasible;
- Assistance with contact and communication with the EI member organisations.

G. Key skills, Technical Background, Experience

- Advanced academic degree in a related field (education, youth studies, sociology, international development);
- Extensive professional knowledge of, and experience in the areas of industrial relations, power dynamics, and leadership within organisations, including trade unions;
- Experience in analysing qualitative data, producing compelling and user-friendly reports, academic publications, and/or other professional written work;
- Capacity to work independently, with the ability to share information, receive feedback and engage in dialogue with partners;
- Knowledge, skill and experience in using a variety of research methods – both qualitative and quantitative;
- Ability and experience with leading and coordinating a research team;
- Demonstrated ability to synthesise and work with feedback from a range of reviewers;
- Strong command of the English language and excellent writing skills are essential;
- Prior experience in publishing in academic journals and writing for a policy audience are desirable;
- Working knowledge of Portuguese is desirable.

H. Expressions of Interest

This consultancy is open to a suitably qualified individual or group of researchers.

Expressions of interest should include:

- a) up-to-date curriculum vitae(s) and samples of the researcher(s)' previous work;
- b) a statement indicating how applicants' qualifications and experience make them suitable for the assignment;

c) if more than one, at least one research team member should be a gender and/or youth specialist.

c) an “approach to work”, describing the approach to carrying out the assignment, including any inputs that may be required from EI (three pages maximum);

d) two recent writing samples: i) published peer-reviewed journal article on youth and organisational leadership or related theme; ii) report or brief on a relevant theme that has been developed for mixed audiences (including non-academic);

e) the overall cost of the assignment including a breakdown of expenses and consultancy fees. The total budget attached should be in the range of 5,000- 8,000 Euros.

I. Contract and payments

EIRAF will sign a consultancy contract with the consultant. Fifty percent (50 %) of the total amount will be paid upon signing the contract and the remaining fifty percent (50 %) upon submission and approval of the final report and all deliverables.

Interested researchers should submit their proposals, Curriculum Vitae, and samples of their work to the Regional Director, EI Africa Region via email to eirafoffice@ei-ie.org and copy Richard.Etonu@ei-ie.org , no later than 20 November 2022.