



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

**Head Office**  
5, Bd du Roi Albert II  
1210 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel +32 2 224 06 11  
Fax +32 2 224 06 06  
headoffice@ei-ie.org  
www.ei-ie.org

**President**  
Susan Hopgood  
**General Secretary**  
David Edwards

# Statement on International Women's Day

March 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

*As the global movement of teachers' and education support personnel unions and organisations, we mark March 8th each year to lift up the world's women, to recognise their contributions to the worlds' societies and to celebrate their achievements.*

## Educators and Their Unions Taking the Lead

We count down the weeks and months to the [8th EI World Congress](#) with a renewed commitment to advancing gender equality within unions, in education and in society.

And yet...on International Women's Day we also recognise that there is still long a road to travel for women's rights to be universally recognised and upheld, and for there to be gender equality in all spheres of life.

In some countries, it is estimated that because of the gender pay gap, women work *for free for as many as fifty-one days a year*.

In the [education sector](#), men continue to dominate decision-making posts, meaning that women's ability to influence policy design at international, central or local government levels, as well as at the level of schools and communities, is severely limited.

The challenges in achieving universal women's rights and ending gender inequality are myriad, as detailed in the ILO Global Commission [Future of Work Report](#). As educators, however, we do have one of the most effective tools for overcoming them: **education**.

We know that [education transforms lives](#), that it is an enabling right, which opens the door to knowledge and understanding of other human rights; indeed, ensuring girls have access to and complete a full 12-year cycle of quality education can even [save countries upwards of fifteen \(15\) trillion US dollars](#).

**#ThisIsNotACampaign - We're Talking About Real Lives**

Gender-based violence is one of the most persistent barriers to the right to education. EI member organisations in east, southern and west Africa are confidently taking the lead on this issue, through an initiative called [Education Unions Take Action End School-related Gender-based Violence](#) (SRGBV).

And for us as educators, *violence in and around schools is also a work place issue.*

35% of women over the age of 15 – 818 million globally - have experienced violence at work, at home or in their communities. Just stop and think about that number for one minute: it is [more than the entire population of Europe...](#)and the number increases for women who face gender discrimination in intersection with discrimination and marginalisation on the grounds of race, gender identity, indigeneity, disability, migrant or refugee status, and/or age, among others.

To date, the [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) has adopted one hundred and eighty-nine (189) standards on the basic principles and rights that should be adhered to and respected in the workplace. None of these standards focuses on gender-based violence, but gender-based violence is one of the most tolerated violations of workers' human rights. That is why trade unions, including education unions, [have been leading the call](#) for the 108<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference to adopt a binding Convention and Recommendation on Violence against Women and Men in the World of Work in June this year.

#### **Still time to ACT:**

- Make contact with your government to discuss their positions on the adoption of a binding ILO instrument on gender-based violence in the world of work, and share the outcomes of these discussions with the ITUC, which is coordinating trade union action - [equality@ituc-csi.org](mailto:equality@ituc-csi.org).

A multi-lingual campaign toolkit for lobbying and advocating for an ILO Convention and Recommendation on gender-based violence in the world of work has been developed by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in the following languages [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [Russian](#), [Serbo-Croatian](#) and [Spanish](#).

