

ETFO

SUMMER 2012
VOL. 14 - NO. 4

Voice

- ➔ Making a Difference for Women and Girls in Rural Cambodia
- ➔ Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools for Gender-Independent Children

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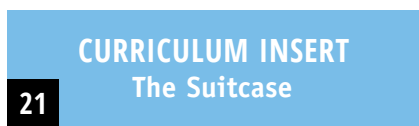
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Leh We Go Befoh – Let Us Move Forward

ON OUR COVER: A student in her classroom in Samlout, Cambodia.

Photo courtesy the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation.

Working Together

While summer brings with it some well-deserved rest after a hectic year, this year it also marks the beginning of bargaining.

On June 1, ETFO served notice to local boards of our intention to bargain and locals went into provincial takeover. Our work in the upcoming months, as President Sam Hammond writes in his column, is to bargain to ensure that we maintain schools where educators are respected and treated fairly; this will, in turn, ensure good learning environments for our students. Read about all of the different resources available to members in "Get Informed. Get Involved. Control Your Future." on page 30.

With this issue we also celebrate the contributions ETFO, and specifically ETFO women members, make locally, nationally, and internationally. In our cover story, "Making a Difference for Women and Girls in Rural Cambodia," Marilies Rettig and Wendy Matthews reflect on ETFO's work supporting women and girls living in rural and isolated villages. By helping to establish a Women's Advisory Committee and a Women's Prosperity Centre, ETFO has facilitated the success, safety, and participation of women in this community. In a related feature, former Project Overseas participant Angie Ortlieb reflects on her experience working as a volunteer with teachers in Sierra Leone and considers how to develop curriculum materials that put the host culture at the centre when doing work internationally. Articles on education in Finland, gender-independent kids, arts programs, and ETFO women's programs add to an issue of great summer reading.

At *Voice*, we are making some changes. You can expect to see a new website to accompany the Fall issue, with more frequently released articles and interactive features. Stay in touch to get all of the most recent news and developments from *Voice* by subscribing to the newsletter at etfo.ca.

Have a great summer!



ETFOVoice

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" I see small achievements every day that add up to something enormous. It's been the best time of my life. **"** – Cheryl, Education Volunteer, Guyana



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TeachNutrition.org

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Sam Hammond
ETFO President

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Respect Teachers, Respect Collective Bargaining

Q+A with President Sam Hammond

As the vice presidents and I have travelled around the province over the last two months meeting with members to discuss the parameters tabled by the government at the Provincial Discussion Table, some questions have consistently been raised. I would like to share them here.

ETFO collective bargaining has been in the media a lot in recent months. What's been going on?

President Sam Hammond: As you know, our contracts expire as of August 31, 2012. In February the government invited us to the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT), a voluntary process that in past bargaining achieved advancements for both educators and students. During the first meeting this year, it became clear that the government wasn't actually prepared to discuss anything. Instead, the three private-sector bankruptcy lawyers heading the government side of the discussion presented us with a series of demands. The meeting defied every principle of fair and respectful collective bargaining.

Is that when you decided to leave the table?

SH: No. First we proposed a fair process for further discussions, one headed by people knowledgeable about education, with clear ground rules, and where issues brought forward by both parties could be addressed. Unfortunately, the government team

would not agree to our proposal. At that point we left the discussion table.

Since their proposal would have stripped our collective agreements of provisions we have achieved over the past 70 years, ETFO decided that it is in the best interests of our members to bargain, as we have in the past and as the law provides, board by board under the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.

As you probably know, the government later gave us an ultimatum – agree to the PDT demands or have them legislated – which was a serious concern to us, since from the outset they presented the discussion table as voluntary.

What are the government's demands?

SH: The government's demands include

- 0% salary increases in both years of a two-year collective agreement (2012–2014)
- retirement gratuities eliminated for those not currently eligible and calculated on August 31, 2012 salary for those who are
- elimination of sick days accumulated beyond the gratuity payout level
- annual sick leave reduced to six days per year at 100% and then 66.66% pay for 24 weeks
- the salary grid frozen for two years, with no ability to advance on the grid based on either experience or qualifications
- a restructuring of the salary grid for the 2014 year and beyond.

What do these demands mean in concrete terms?

SH: I'll give you a couple of examples. For a beginning teacher, a freeze on the salary grid would mean a loss of more than \$18,000 over the 2012–2014 collective agreement. This loss will compound over time and never be restored.

The sick day reduction means that a teacher will actually lose 70% of their annual sick leave days, which is very significant both in our day-to-day work with kids and if a teacher develops a major illness. See controlyourfuture.ca for more details and the latest information.

What are the next steps?

SH: On June 1, we moved into provincial takeover and served notice to local boards of our intent to bargain. We will negotiate in good faith and expect the boards to do the same.

We're going to do everything we can to protect the integrity of our collective agreements, but it will take all 76,000 of us working together. Members must be informed, engaged, and active. There is a great deal at stake. We cannot give up our principles, our professionalism, or our students. Schools where educators are respected and treated fairly create good learning environments for students.

Visit our website controlyourfuture.ca for more information. Visit your local's website and ensure that you are part of this process.



Gene Lewis

ETFO General Secretary

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

A Lasting Impact

Teachers often talk about coming to our profession as one comes to a calling. Understanding the tremendous influence educators have on students' lives while they are in our classrooms, and the lasting impact on who they become as adults, educators treat our work as a tremendous and important responsibility. After all, teachers usher generations forward, equipping them with the social, emotional, and educational tools to become successful adults. We work hard to ensure that all our students learn, that all our students experience "light bulb moments."

Everyone has a list of people who have had a lasting impact on their lives. Most of us have at least one teacher on that list, someone who made a difference, inspired us, gave us confidence when we most needed it, or provided us with the tools to make a leap in our learning. Teachers' commitment to the profession is rooted in our desire to make a difference in students' lives, to create an education system that supports learning and growth, and to equip and prepare students to be successful after they leave our classrooms. This all starts with a solid and well-funded public education system. Accessible, high-quality education from the early years all the way to post-secondary is the only way to ensure the social and economic health of society.

In May, thousands of ETFO members participated in the *Respect Teachers, Respect Bargaining* campaign. They sent postcards that informed the premier, the minister of education, and their local MPP about the impact

the proposed cuts would have on them personally, and demanded that the minister and MPPs respect free collective bargaining. They also reminded Premier McGuinty that the demands the province is making on teachers will destroy a partnership that has been eight years in the making. Teachers spoke about how they would be affected by the proposed strips to their contracts, and demanded that the government work collaboratively in any provincial discussions and respect the rules and conventions of fair negotiations.

Ultimately, teachers told the government that the commitment we show to making a difference in students' lives everyday, and to creating an education system that supports learning and growth, needs to be reciprocated with respect.

At May's Representative Council, Susan Lambert, president of the BC Teachers' Federation, gave an inspiring speech, part of which I'd like to share with you as we prepare for the journey ahead. She said, "We teach children their democratic rights and obligations. We teach them to analyze for bias, motive, and intent. We teach them to respect each other. We teach them compassion and discernment. We teach them to critically appraise opinions and assertions and to question authority. In short, we see our work as encouraging active, engaged citizenship. So we also act as engaged citizens. We act as if we have the rights of citizens in a democracy. We act with authority, voice, and confidence."

YOUR FEDERATION



Women's Collective Bargaining Conference

On March 29 and 30, 60 women gathered for the Women's Collective Bargaining Conference. Participants learned about effective negotiation, talked about women's workplace issues and developed personal bargaining skills. Dr. Cheryl van Daalen-Smith led a spirited discussion about the perception of women perpetuated by the media and the importance of all voices at the bargaining table.

OFL Day of Action

Twenty-two ETFO locals from as far away as Ontario North East, Rainbow, Near North, Ottawa-Carleton, Avon-Maitland, Thames Valley, Bluewater, Limestone, Hastings-Prince Edward, Renfrew County, Greater Essex County, Kawartha Pine Ridge, Simcoe County, Upper Grand, and Trillium Lakelands joined GTA area locals at the April 21 "We are Ontario" Day of Action at Queen's Park. A sea of flags and bright red signs reading "Respect Teachers, Respect Bargaining" dominated the Queen's Park landscape as unions and not-for-profit organizations gathered to demonstrate against the McGuinty government's austerity budget.

"We are here to protect our rights and protect collective bargaining. This government has woken up a sleeping giant across the province," ETFO President Sam Hammond told more than 6,000 people. "The public service did not create this financial problem and we're not going to pay for it."

GSA Conference

On May 11 and 12, 2012 ETFO sponsored the first-ever Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) symposium to help teachers establish GSAs for grades 7 and 8 students in public elementary schools. "GSA groups must be supported in all schools where students or staff request them because they help ensure the safety of all students, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and questioning students," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "This symposium is meant to support our teachers who are dedicated to ensuring that schools are inclusive and welcoming for all students." The conference was all the more timely given the Ontario government's introduction of Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*. The Act, which would help prevent gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia and transphobia, calls for school boards to support organizations such as gay-straight alliances.



Representative Council

On May 2-3, 2012 over 150 ETFO leaders gathered for the spring Representative Council Meeting. They were joined by 25 participants in *Leaders for Tomorrow*. Presentations focused on the road ahead as we ready for provincial takeover and board-by-board collective bargaining.

Susan Lambert, president of the BC Teachers' Federation, spoke to the experiences of teachers in British Columbia and their recent AGM which was themed "Teachers Build a Better World." She offered ETFO leaders encouragement and the support of the BCTF. CAW economist Jim Stanford spoke to ETFO leaders on the second day of the meeting about the macroeconomics of recession, deficits, and austerity. Both of these speeches



can be viewed on our website, etfo.ca. Stanford's book, *Economics for Everyone* is a great economics resource for activists. Punchy and readable with short bite-sized chapters, cartoons, and flow charts, *Economics for Everyone* explains (and critiques) the free market system. The book is available for purchase at economicsforeveryone.ca, with proceeds going to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.



Respect Teachers, Respect Bargaining Campaign

In May, thousands of ETFO members participated in a *Respect Teachers, Respect Bargaining* campaign by sending postcards to the premier, the minister of education, and their local member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). Members used the

postcards to tell legislators about the impact the proposed PDT cuts will have on them personally. Members demanded that the Minister and their MPP respect free collective bargaining.

Beacon for Education Reform

Pasi Sahlberg's Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?

By Vivian McCaffrey

For the last decade, Finland's success on international tests has caught the attention of education policymakers around the world. What is it about this small Nordic nation that has led to its students' high performance in science, math, and reading assessments? Are there lessons for other countries, such as Canada, or for our own province? Pasi Sahlberg, a former teacher and education expert, endeavours to answer these questions in *Finnish Lessons: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* (2001)

What is most perplexing for international experts is that Finland has produced top-performing students while eschewing market-based education reforms premised on competition and standardized tests. "Finland is an example of a nation that lacks school inspection, standardized curriculum, high-stakes student assessments, test-based accountability, and a race-to-the-top mentality with regard to educational change," Sahlberg explains.

In Finland, the emphasis is on teacher-based assessment; teachers have the authority to design their own assessments and use them when they deem appropriate. External testing is limited. About 10 percent of students participate in random-sample tests to assess aspects of the education program. The only universal test is the matriculation exams that high school students must pass to be eligible for post-secondary education.

The centrepiece of Finnish education is the nation's teaching force. Teacher education reform dates back to 1979 when a new law on teacher education was introduced, along with a focus on professional development. Teachers are required

to have a master's degree and competition for spots in faculties of education is fierce. Only about 10 percent of applicants are accepted.

The term "accountability" is not part of educational policy discourse. Finns place high trust in their teachers and provide them considerable professional autonomy. "The basic assumption in Finnish schools is that teachers, by default, are well-educated professionals and are doing their best in schools. In real professional learning communities, teachers trust each other, communicate frequently about teaching and learning, and rely on their principal's guidance and leadership," writes Sahlberg.

Finnish education reform has also focused on equity and social cohesion. Sahlberg describes the commitment to equity as part of Finnish cultural values. It is reflected in the national poverty rate: 3.4 percent, compared with 21.7 percent in the United States and 13.6 percent in Canada. Granted, Finns do pay higher taxes than Canadians to support their extensive social programs.

In schools, the equity focus led the Finns to abandon streaming in the mid-1980s and to minimize grade retention. Establishing the same learning expectations for all students resulted in a decrease in the achievement gap between high and low achievers.

The equity policy has also resulted in considerable support for special education. There is an emphasis on early identification and intervention at school. About 20 percent of elementary students receive at least part-time special education support to address dysfunctions in speaking, reading, writing, or learning difficulties in



In Finland, the emphasis is on teacher-based assessment; teachers have the authority to design their own assessments and use them when they deem appropriate.

mathematics or foreign languages. Finland also supports early intervention through its voluntary, free, early childhood education programs.

Sahlberg attributes Finnish students' success in mathematics and science to the extent that these subjects are embedded in curriculum and in teacher education. The focus on hands-on and experiential learning is also important.


The Finnish model confounds North American theories about the amount of time students should spend in school. Finnish students don't begin formal schooling until the age of seven. They spend less time on homework than their peers in other countries. "Finnish educators don't believe that doing more homework necessarily leads to better learning, especially if pupils are working on routine and intellectually unchallenging drills," observes Sahlberg. Rather than extending the school day through homework, the emphasis is on engaging children in sports and other extracurricular activities.

Finland's commitment to education is tied to its economic strategy. Education spending is viewed as an investment in productivity. As Sahlberg explains, "The Finnish experience of the 1990s represents one of the few documented examples of how education and therefore knowledge can become driving forces of economic growth and transformation. During that decade, Finland became the most specialized economy in the world in telecommunication technology and thus completed its transition from a resource-driven to a knowledge-driven economic and educational system." Sahlberg links the success of the telecommunications firm Nokia to the Finnish school system's focus on mathematics and science and its emphasis on problem-solving and creativity.

Some argue that Finland's relatively homogeneous population means it is difficult to transplant the Finnish approach to other countries. Sahlberg acknowledges that Finland doesn't have the ethnic diversity of either Canada or the United

States, for example. However, he points out that the number of foreign-born Finnish citizens has nearly tripled during the first decade of this century. Also, since joining the European Union in 1995, Finland's cultural and ethnic diversification has progressed faster than in other EU countries. Immigrant students appear to be well served in Finnish schools. According to the OECD PISA data, "Immigrant students in Finland scored on average 50 points higher than their peers in other countries."

Elsewhere in Canada, teachers are closely studying the Finnish model. In December 2010, the Alberta Teachers' Association formalized a partnership between the Alberta education ministry and its Finnish counterpart. Since then, Alberta and Finland have organized visits to each other's schools to enable teams of educators to witness their respective approaches.

In Ontario, there is ample opportunity to apply the Finnish lessons to improve our own schools. Sahlberg's chronicle of Finland's success gives Ontario educators some powerful examples to support policies we have long advocated. These include universal early childhood education, a rejection of standardized testing, greater professional autonomy for teachers, a focus on experiential learning, more support for special education, and a real commitment to equal opportunity. 

What is most perplexing for international experts is that Finland has produced top-performing students while eschewing market-based education reforms premised on competition and standardized tests.



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Vivian McCaffrey is an executive staff member of ETFO F

Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools for Gender-Independent Children

Interview with Dr. Carys Massarella

In February 2012, Dr. Carys Massarella, a transgender rights activist and physician from Hamilton, spoke to the Representative Council about some of the issues facing transgender adults and gender-independent children. An expert in transgender issues, Dr. Massarella is one of the few transgender doctors in Canada. She is also a clinical professor, emergency medicine division, at McMaster University, and teaches transgender primary health care to students, residents, and family doctors. *Voice* caught up with Dr. Massarella this spring.

You recently gave a TEDx Talk at McMaster University under the theme of “Bridges and Barriers.” What was your talk about?

Dr. Carys Massarella: The talk I gave recently at TEDx was about the depathologization of transgender identity.

The concept essentially was that for a long time being transgender had been associated with a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder and that this was part of the reason that transgender communities had been consistently marginalized and treated poorly by the medical community, in particular. In fact, we have a safe, effective treatment for transgender identity: medically supported transition, which has proven to be effective and humane. This was the essence of my TED talk.

Where do you think we need the most change in relation to transgender issues?

CM: We need change in the perception of transgender identity. We need to understand that gender is not binary but fluid and that transgender identity is not an illness or something needing to be fixed, but rather part of the rich diversity of human experience. We need to also improve

training and understanding of safe and effective treatment for transgender individuals with our health care providers, particularly in medical and nursing schools. Finally, our education systems need to nourish transgender-identified children and adolescents in a supportive environment so as to reduce stigma but also, more importantly, to reduce the real risk of suicide that we see in this community.

At ETFO’s February Representative Council meeting you mentioned that you would always make time to talk to elementary teachers about transgender issues. Why are elementary teachers a particularly important audience?

CM: Gender-independent children are living in our communities. A large part of a child’s life is in school with their peers and teachers. They deserve to have a safe environment to live and learn in, and having support from a teaching faculty, and in particular a homeroom teacher, is tremendously important. We know that these children will do better in a supportive environment where they have the space they need to realize their potential.

I think first and foremost that getting across the idea that gender-independent children exist and that they are normal kids is important.

How do you define gender-independent children?

CM: Gender-independent children are those children whose gender identity does not necessarily match the biological gender that they were assigned to. They could be the classic “tomboy,” which is an acceptable identity, or they may have a much stronger desire to live in the gender opposite to their assigned biological gender and may indeed insist that they are the gender opposite their biological gender.

What are some specific ways to create a positive and inclusive environment in the classroom and the school?

CM: I think first and foremost that getting across the idea that gender-independent children exist and that they are normal kids is important. They shouldn't be made to feel ashamed, embarrassed, or afraid to express themselves. There should be books and curriculum that reflect the full experience of gender in our children, including children's books such as *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert. Classrooms should be positive spaces for children that reflect the diversity of

experience. Also, if there is a gender-independent child in a particular school, then maybe that school would have to consider how it manages bathroom policy and which bathroom these kids should use.

In terms of advocacy, all teachers should advocate for all students regardless of their background. We need to have inclusive policies that are reflective of the communities we live in. But I think the key is really to reassure school boards and parents that these are normal kids who just need space to express themselves. Many will not end up being transgender and will confirm their assigned biological gender as they get older, but some will be transgender and that's okay too. It's just a question of being fair and supportive.

How do socioeconomic factors that intersect with gender identity affect these children's experiences in school?

CM: Gender-independent children come from all socioeconomic backgrounds. However, as with many predictors, we know that children who come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have better health outcomes, as their parents are



Photo: Cathie Coward. Courtesy: Hamilton Spectator.


We need to understand that gender is not binary but fluid and that transgender identity is not an illness or something needing to be fixed, but rather part of the rich diversity of the human experience.

likely better able to advocate for them as compared to some other groups. Parents likely have access to resources, particularly the support of private therapists, which are generally cost-prohibitive.

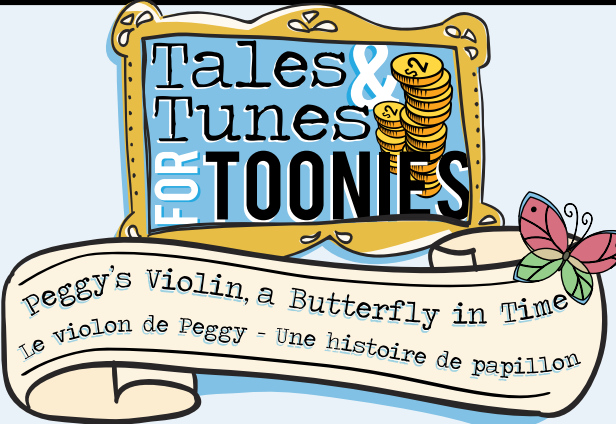
What similarities and differences do you see between doing work in schools on homophobia and doing work on transphobia?

CM: With respect to the work with homophobia, the two issues are clearly linked. Again, we know that the LGBTQ community has a much higher rate of suicide than non-LGBTQ communities. This is not because of anything inherently pathological about these identities, but is due to the lack of acceptance that leads to shame, anxiety, depression, lack of self-worth, and, in some cases, to the tragic consequence of suicide. Acceptance of diversity is key. Education is key. This should be promoted across school boards, both Catholic and public. The difference is that transgender kids can be gay, queer, straight, or bi, unlike lesbian and gay kids. But in essence the fight is the same and the issues are similar.

What kind of advice would you have for teachers when they are talking to parents about their gender-independent child?

CM: For teachers, I would first say that they should reassure parents that their child is normal and that they have done nothing wrong. This is not an illness or disease that needs to be cured. Let their child have the freedom to express themselves in a safe space and they will come to an understanding of their own identity, as all children ultimately do. Likely their child will not be transgender, but in the end it doesn't matter because if we offer them support and understanding we will end up with a healthy, happy child regardless of the outcome — which in my opinion, is the most important thing. 

With contributions from **Helen Victoros**, executive officer at Elementary Teachers of Toronto; **Kelly Hayes**, coordinator of Equity and Women's Services at ETFO; and **Izida Zorde**, *Voice* editor.



Tales & Tunes FOR TOONIES

Peggy's Violin, a Butterfly in Time
Le violon de Peggy - Une histoire de papillon





Wed., Nov. 28 and Thurs., Nov. 29
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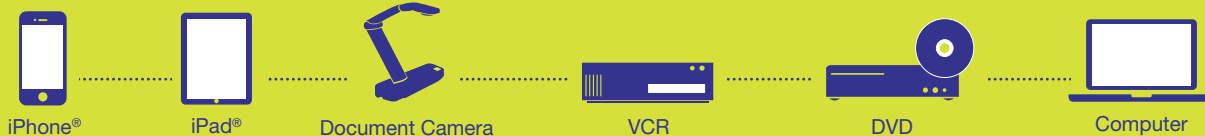
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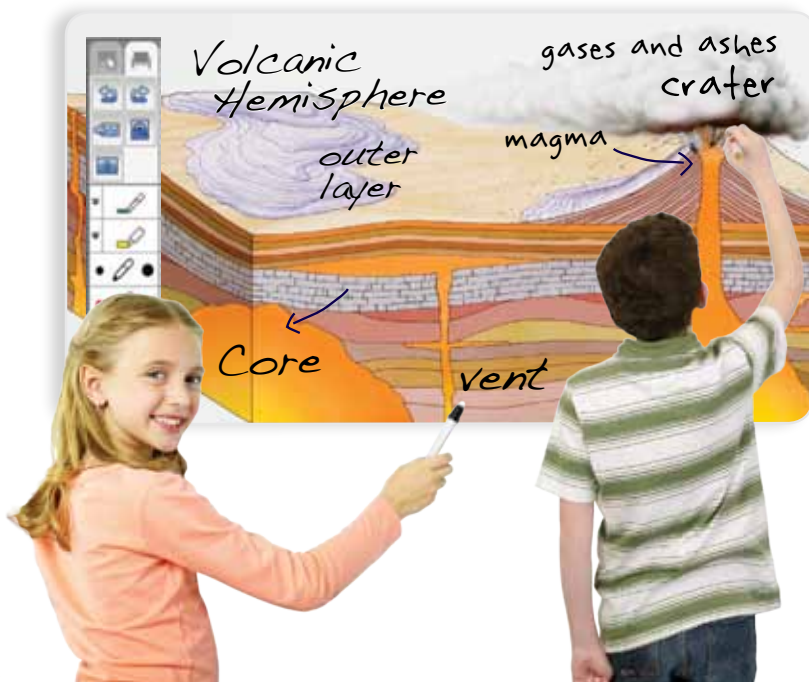
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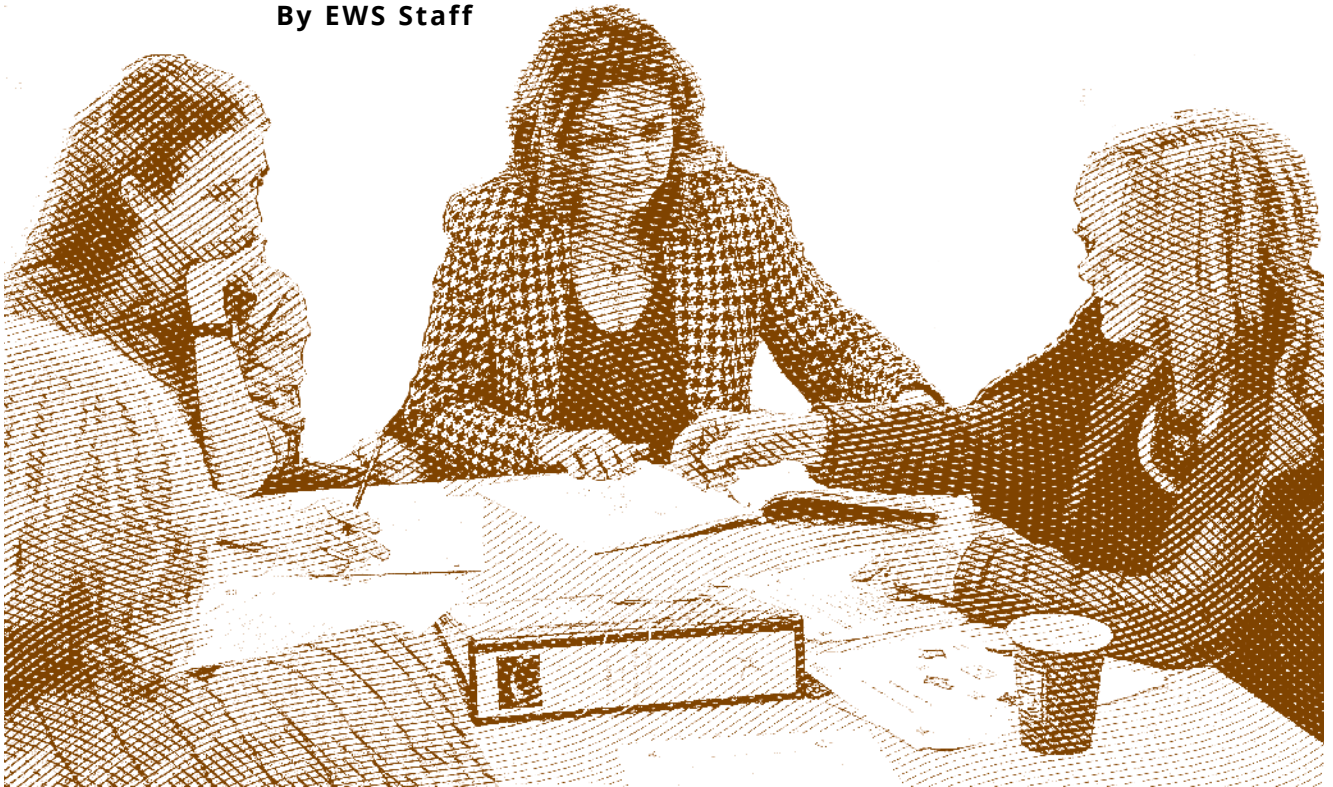
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Three ETFO Programs Devoted to Women's Leadership Development

By EWS Staff



ETFO is committed to working toward a more just and equitable society, and has a particular commitment to supporting women's participation and leadership in the union. This is constitutionally mandated; ETFO's constitution guarantees positions for women on the Executive (five of 14 positions), and that programs for women will be provided with funding (6 percent of ETFO's annual budget) allocated for this purpose.

ETFO's women's programs offer direct services to women members through courses, workshops, awards, and publications. Funding is also available for partnerships with provincial and local organizations and to support groups that advance the status of women and women's issues in society.

ETFO Constitution, Article X, Provincial Organization Section 4 – Programs for Women

- 10.4.1 There shall be guaranteed programs for women.
- 10.4.2 The Federation shall allocate 6 percent of the annual budget to programs for women.
- 10.4.3 The budget for the programs for women shall be approved as part of the regular Federation budget process.
- 10.4.4 The programs for women will provide direct services for women members.
- 10.4.5 The programs for women will provide funds for partnerships with other organizations.
- 10.4.6 The programs for women will include funding for organizations which advance the status of women and women's issues.
- 10.4.7 The General Secretary, in consultation with the Executive, shall ensure the allocation of staff solely responsible for programs for women.

While ETFO offers a wide variety of programs for its women members (see the Fall 2011 issue of *Voice* for a complete listing), the three programs outlined below are distinctive in that they are multi-session, providing an opportunity for women members to learn together over the course of a year. Members complete these programs with new knowledge and skills. The relationships developed over the course of a year with other participants and presenters also provide them with a supportive network as they move forward.

REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE INSTITUTE

The *Reflections on Practice Institute* (ROP) is a face-to-face and online community of women teacher action researchers and facilitators, and is now in its eighth year. Each year, 30 women ETFO members have the opportunity to learn about reflective inquiry, action research, professional activism and leadership, and to expand their research skills. The institute has three sessions: a four-day training session in the summer; a two-day training session in the fall; and another two-day training session in the spring. Participants attend the three sessions, engage in online chats, conduct an action research project, and prepare and share a report of their findings.

ROP has an interactive online space where teams of critical thinkers work with facilitators to produce their

action research studies. These studies are then written, published, and presented on the website for new participants to use as models.

Participants in *Reflections on Practice Institute* speak of the transformational aspect of the program on their practice and their new self-identification as action researchers. Many are surprised to discover that their work has unanticipated benefits and that these benefits continue after the research itself has ended: lasting changes in classroom practice, a stronger professional voice and increased confidence, and a greater leadership role in their schools and locals.

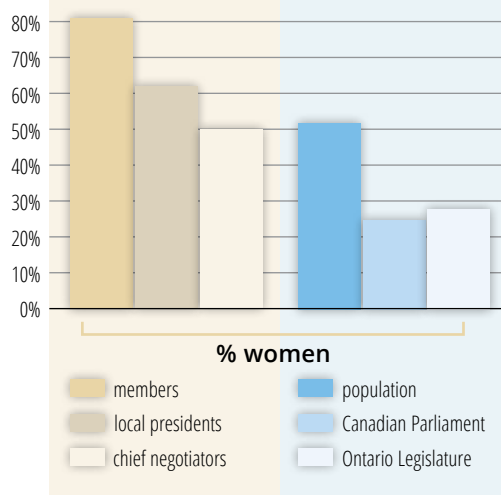
For more information, contact Anne Rodrigue:
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**FIGURE 1
ETFO**

81 percent of ETFO members are women.
62 percent of the presidents of ETFO locals are women.
50 percent of ETFO's local chief negotiators are women.

**FIGURE 2
Canada and Ontario**

Female population of Canada: 52 percent
Female members of the Canadian House of Commons: 25 percent
Female members of the Ontario Legislature: 28 percent





LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

While women continue to be underrepresented in proportion to the membership in ETFO leadership positions, the representation of women from designated groups (Aboriginal, people with disabilities, lesbian/bisexual/transgender and/or racialized) is even lower. *Leaders for Tomorrow* (L4T) is an intensive, year-long leadership development program for ETFO women members who self-identify as belonging to any of these groups. Participants engage in a variety of workshops and experiences related to leadership roles within ETFO and in the broader community, over the course of four sessions throughout the school year. The course is designed to enhance leadership skills in an inclusive, anti-racist/anti-oppression framework.

Participants in L4T explore issues of identity and privilege as women from designated groups, and develop inclusive leadership styles within an anti-racist/anti-oppression framework that acknowledges and respects differences.

Skills development components include an exploration of presentation styles, public speaking, résumé writing and interview preparation.

Participants are encouraged to access and participate in leadership opportunities both within ETFO and in outside organizations, and to create and implement a three-year leadership plan.

Leaders for Tomorrow is in its eighth year of operation and has engaged between 20 and 25 members each year. Many “graduates” of L4T now serve in elected positions on ETFO provincial and local executives and committees.

For more information, contact Kalpana Makan, kmakan@etfo.org


VISIONS

Visions is a new program in 2011–2012, designed to provide women members in their first five years of ETFO membership with the knowledge and motivation to engage more deeply in ETFO, the broader labour movement, and opportunities for activism. Participants meet on three weekends during the school year, and involve themselves in local union activities between sessions.

This first year, 15 women members from nine different locals are participating in *Visions*. Nine participants are occasional teachers.

ETFO leaders from the local and provincial levels share their personal journeys and experiences of union leadership, as do members who exercise union leadership while working in the classroom, and ETFO staff members. Participants note the wealth of opportunities for involvement, the diverse paths to leadership, and the dedication and pride shown by all these women leaders. The structures and procedures of ETFO, including how Annual Meeting works and how the budget is constructed, are demystified.

In sessions focusing on activism, participants attend labour and community events (this year, the Ontario Federation of Labour International Women’s Day breakfast), and meet activists from other unions and community groups.

Communications skills are also a focus, so workshops on effective presentations, rules of order, and chairing a meeting are part of the *Visions* program. Finally, participants write and deliver a short speech, receiving feedback from peers and staff. 

For more information, contact Kelly Hayes, khayes@etfo.org



Making a Difference for Women and Girls in Rural Cambodia



Photos courtesy: Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation

By Wendy Matthews and Marilies Rettig

In 2010, the ETFO Executive approved a partnership between the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJP) and ETFO, to provide support for women and girls living in rural and isolated villages in northwestern Cambodia. Cambodia is a country that was ravaged by decades of civil war (1970–1989). It was not until 1998 that peace was secured in Samlout, the last region in the country to be liberated from the guerrilla soldiers known as the Khmer Rouge. Land mines and other explosive devices, remaining from the war, are scattered across Samlout, with red landmine warning signs covering the landscape. The human toll is still very evident.

Samlout villagers are rich in spirit, but face extreme rural poverty, with over 70 percent living on less than two dollars a day. This poverty has a stark impact on villagers' health, nutrition, security, and education — especially for women and girls. Female villagers are much more vulnerable and are not afforded the same opportunities to complete basic primary education, participate in rural politics with an equal voice, or earn the necessary income to support their children.

Over the past year, a new and very disturbing threat has come to the forefront in this part of rural Cambodia: the trafficking of girls. Trafficking in Southeast Asia is on the rise,

ETFO's first project saw the development of a Women's Prosperity Centre, which was established to provide a venue for women to meet, gain literacy skills, and access vocational training.



with international and local criminal groups recruiting and sending girls to other countries, especially Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, to work as “domestic servants,” who are often forced into the entertainment/sex industry.

It is in this context that ETFO has partnered with the MJP Foundation and is contributing to a number of projects that support women and girls by promoting education, leadership development, literacy, and vocational training, and by addressing issues of health and security.

MJP started its work in Cambodia in 2003, with an initial focus on environmental issues, such as stopping the illegal wildlife and timber trade. It was soon evident that while important, focusing solely on the environment could not adequately address the multiple and complex issues confronting the people of this region. As Stephan Bognar, the CEO of MJP argues, environmental security must encompass the environment *and* human development interventions in health, education, and food/nutrition security.

In 2006, MJP adopted the UN Millennium Development Goals as a blueprint/roadmap to alleviate extreme rural poverty in Samlout, with the additional goal of landmine clearance. MJP's multisectoral, integrated approach to human development encompasses environmental security and social and economic development, addressing both the “hardware” (infrastructure) and the “software” (capacity training) of development.

ETFO's first project saw the development of a Women's Prosperity Centre, which was established to provide a venue for women to meet, gain literacy skills, and access vocational training. It is also used as a women's shelter in times of need.

A Samlout Women's Advisory Committee was also created by MJP, and the local village women worked with the foundation on designing and implementing a variety of programs that would be delivered in the Women's Prosperity Centre. Today, the Women's Advisory Committee has become an important voice for women in the community. The committee



Since the completion of the Women's Prosperity Centre in January 2012, a number of activities have been created for the local women. For example, through the Women's Advisory Committee, MJP helped the local honey hunters and village women build a small business in wild honey production.

provides advice to the local Commune Council (a village equivalent of a city hall) on how the needs of women can be addressed and provides important input in the development stages of programs for women and girls

In the winter of 2011, ETFO First Vice-President Susan Swackhammer, Vice-Presidents Maureen Weinberger and Hilda Watkins, and Deputy General Secretary Marilies Rettig travelled to Samlout to visit the Prosperity Centre, which was then under construction, and to meet with the Women's Advisory Committee. It was during this visit that ETFO representatives could see first-hand the multiplicity of challenges that people are facing in this post-conflict area. Even at this very early stage of development, it was clear the tremendous impact these facilities and the programs they would offer could have on the women and girls of Samlout.

Since the completion of the Women's Prosperity Centre in January 2012, a number

of activities have been created for the local women. For example, through the Women's Advisory Committee, MJP helped the local honey hunters and village women build a small business in wild honey production (housed at the Women's Prosperity Centre). The small profits generated from the sale of honey help to support women and their families.

On March 8, 2012, MJP also worked with the local authorities to celebrate International Women's Day. Bringing together over 200 women and local leaders, the two themes of the day were domestic violence and "land rights are women's rights." Sadly, across Cambodia, many NGOs are saying that over 1 million citizens have been forcibly evicted from their land in the name of economic development. Many women, as the lead caretakers and providers, have seen their land, their only possession (and their economic lifeline), fall to agribusinesses with nothing in return.

Resilient and determined to build better lives for themselves and their children, the women of Samlout are working to build a community that respects and values women and children.

ETFO also supported MJP in designing and building the first Early Childhood Care and Development Centre in the area, a facility that offers an early childhood education program to three- and four-year-olds. In October 2011, the first two ECCD classes opened in Samlout. The teachers are two young village women. Both teachers attended two intensive four-week training sessions for community preschool teachers in Phnom Penh (an 11-hour drive from Samlout, and a completely different world) in the summer of 2011. Today, the teachers are educating and caring for more than 26 three-year-olds.


The ECCD Centre also provides a venue for MJP and ECCD teachers to meet with mothers who are learning the importance of early childhood education, developmental stages of children, other issues related to health, and what they can be doing at home to further support the development of their children. The Women's Advisory Committee plays a key role in the success of the ECCD program — suggesting ways to

promote the new program, the first of its kind in Samlout, to families and mothers in particular.

The long-term goal is that the ECCD Centre will become the hub for education and nutrition programs for parents and children from birth to age six, and that small community-based preschool programs will be developed for three- and four-year-olds in the surrounding villages.

Samlout's first community library was also made possible with funds provided by ETFO. Although open to the entire community, the facility is particularly important for young girls. Samlout had other informal activities for boys — volleyball courts in schools or in empty fields provided an opportunity for hours of play for boys. Most girls, however, remained at home doing household tasks (or with nothing to fill their time). These girls now go to the library and enjoy reading, opening their closed world to new opportunities.

The Women's Prosperity Centre, ECCD Centre, and library have become community hubs. Located at the heart of a cluster of villages where the Samlout Commune Council meets, the three centres remind local decision makers (on a daily basis) of the significant positive impacts they have on the community. Being at the centre also makes it easier for the Women's Advisory Committee to call upon the local government to eliminate the disconnect between policy on women's rights and reality, and to seek ongoing support for and enhancement of programs for women and girls.

Resilient and determined to build better lives for themselves and their children, the women of Samlout are working to build a community that respects and values women and children. They are making this change within programs and facilities supported by ETFO. ETFO members can feel proud of the lasting impact their contribution is having on this community in rural Cambodia. 



Wendy Matthews is a retired member of ETFO executive staff. Marilies Rettig is ETFO's deputy general secretary.

The Suitcase

by BEATRIZ PIZANO

The Suitcase by Beatriz Pizano is one of nine original short plays written by Canada's foremost playwrights and published in the ETFO resource *More Than a Play*. Each script in the book is based on a different social justice/equity theme and is designed to be read aloud in junior/intermediate classrooms. Each play is accompanied by a teacher page with key questions and practical follow-up activities to help promote critical thinking and understanding. *The Suitcase* is one of the three plays in the book that are translated into French.



Beatriz Pizano is the founder and artistic director of Aluna Theatre.

CAST (in order of appearance):

THE TEACHER

COREY - a student

KADIN - a student

PAZ - a student*

JADE - a student

ROCA - a student *

GRANDMA - Roca's grandmother

MARIA - Roca's mother

*(major role)

SOUND FX: *A school bell, car honking, knock at the door.*

SCENE ONE: A CLASSROOM

TEACHER: Well done, class. I'm very pleased to see how much your reading skills have improved.

SOUND FX: *A knock at the door.*

TEACHER: Excuse me just a moment.
The teacher goes to the door. Kadin, Paz, Jade, and Corey talk at the back of the class.

COREY: Psst. Look. Roca has fallen asleep again.

KADIN: And s/he has her(his) arms wrapped around that stupid old suitcase.

JADE: S/He's so new to Canada s/he hasn't even unpacked.

PAZ: Don't say that Jade. You don't know what it's like.

JADE: And you do I suppose?

PAZ: Yes. I came to Canada a long time ago but I still remember.

JADE: Did you sleep with your suitcase too?

PAZ: No!

KADIN: My father told me that refugees can be sent back home any time.

JADE: Maybe that's why Roca brings her(his) suitcase. So s/he's ready to leave.

COREY: Let's take the suitcase and find out what's in it.

JADE: Yeah.

KADIN: Yeah.

PAZ: No!

The teacher returns.

TEACHER: What's going on back there?

COREY: Roca is asleep again.

ROCA: *(While sleeping)* Grandma ...

The students laugh.

TEACHER: Quiet please.

ROCA: Grandma ...

The teacher tries to wake Roca.

TEACHER: Roca. Roca ...

The Suitcase

SCENE TWO: ROCA'S DREAM

GRANDMA: Roca, Roca!

ROCA: *(Waking up)* Grandma! Is there something wrong?

GRANDMA: Pack your favourite things in this little suitcase.

ROCA: Is Dad okay?

GRANDMA: Yes. He's going to meet you at the airport. You're going to Canada.

ROCA: Right now?

GRANDMA: Right now and you can only take one small suitcase. Your mother will buy you new clothes when you get there.
Roca's mother calls from outside.

MARIA: Mom, is Roca ready?

GRANDMA: Almost.

MARIA: The taxi is waiting.

GRANDMA: Gives us a minute. *(To Roca)* Put on these pants and shirt. What should I pack for you?

ROCA: My diary ... my book ... and the sweater you made for me.

GRANDMA: Ready.

ROCA: And my computer!

GRANDMA: Too big. I'll send it later.

ROCA: *(Worried)* You're not coming with us?

GRANDMA: The plane is too small.

ROCA: But what if they come for you?

GRANDMA: They won't find me. I will be hiding until it is safe to travel.

ROCA: Then I'll stay with you.

GRANDMA: You can't Roca.

ROCA: I will! I'm not going without you!
Roca's mother calls from outside.

MARIA: Roca! Hurry up!

GRANDMA: We'll be right there.

ROCA: I'm not going.

GRANDMA: OK. I will come with you.

ROCA: I thought you said the plane was too small.

GRANDMA: It is. I'm going to hide in your suitcase.

ROCA: What?

GRANDMA: When I was a child, my mother had to go away and I couldn't go with her. So she taught me how to hide in her suitcase.

ROCA: You're making this up.
Roca's mother approaches.

GRANDMA: Close your eyes.



ROCA: No.

GRANDMA: Do you want me to come with you?

ROCA: Yes.

GRANDMA: Then close your eyes.
Roca closes her(his) eyes.

GRANDMA: Good girl. I love you. Now count to ten. Come on. One, two, three ...

ROCA: Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine –
Roca's mother enters.

MARIA: Roca! Open your eyes. We have to go.

ROCA: Where's Grandma?
A car honks loudly.

MARIA: You know where s/he is. Now take your suitcase and come on!

ROCA: Grandma!

SCENE THREE: THE CLASSROOM

TEACHER: Roca, wake up.

ROCA: *(Waking)* Grandma!

TEACHER: It's okay, Roca. You were having a dream.

SOUND FX: *A school bell rings.*

TEACHER: Class, for homework please finish reading chapter one. You will be quizzed on it tomorrow.
The students begin to leave.

TEACHER: Paz could you stay with Roca until I come back from the principal's office? It's important.

PAZ: OK.
The teacher leaves. Roca and Paz are alone.

PAZ: ¿Está usted bien?

ROCA: You speak Spanish!

PAZ: I was born in Colombia.

The Suitcase

ROCA: So was I! I wish I could go back.
PAZ: Is that why you bring your suitcase to school every day?
ROCA: I'm afraid my mother will unpack it.
PAZ: Why are you afraid of that?
ROCA: Because ... I'm afraid I will lose my grandma.
PAZ: I don't understand.
Roca points at her(his) suitcase.
ROCA: She's in here.
PAZ: In your suitcase?
ROCA: Yes and I'm afraid if I open it she will disappear. Already, I'm beginning to forget what she looks like.
PAZ: Roca, do you really believe your grandmother is in your suitcase?
ROCA: No. I just miss her so much.
PAZ: I miss my cousins. All I have of them is a picture.

ROCA: All I have of my grandmother is a sweater she knit me.
PAZ: You're so lucky.
ROCA: Do you want to see it?
PAZ: You have it here?
ROCA: Yes. It's in my suitcase.
Roca opens her(his) suitcase.
ROCA: She gave it to me on my birthday. I can see her smiling.
PAZ: You can see her?
ROCA: Yes.
PAZ: Then maybe she was in your suitcase.
The teacher enters.
TEACHER: Roca, come with me to the principal's office. You have a phone call!
ROCA: Is it my grandmother?
TEACHER: How did you know?
ROCA: I opened my suitcase.

THE END

Teacher Page

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. How did the story *The Suitcase* make you feel?
2. Do you know someone who has immigrated to Canada? What was it like for them? Why did they come here?
3. What similarities of experiences might immigrants and refugees share?
4. What is the difference between "assimilation" and "integration"?
5. What is the difference between pioneers, settlers and colonizers? Are there similar challenges that these groups of people might face in a new land?

Suggested Follow-up Activities:

Activity 1:

Ask students to interview someone who has immigrated to Canada and then to write their story. Their story should include: background information, reason for migration, process of assimilation.

Provide information on interview skills: what questions to ask, how to ask these questions, taking notes (handwriting or computer), scheduling the interview, collecting information such as pictures, letters, etc. Once the interview is completed, students will gather the information and write a report on the

person who immigrated to Canada. Whenever possible, students should invite the person they interviewed into the classroom to tell their own story.

Activity 2:

Students write a creative story on the immigration of a child to Canada (may connect to Social Studies/History curriculum and pioneers or Europeans in the early 1800 - 1900s). The story must include background information on the main character and the reason for leaving his or her birth country. Use the vocabulary given and discuss the process of assimilation. Images and maps can be used to illustrate the story.

English Language Learners may have their story (either Activity 1 or 2) translated into their first language.

Special Needs Learners may work with a partner to help gather the information, input the story on the computer, illustrate etc.

Vocabulary

assimilation	:	integration	:	refugee
immigrant	:	migration	:	settlers
immigration	:	pioneers	:	

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Leh We Go Befoh – Let us Move Forward

By Angie Ortlieb

In 2008, I received a phone call from the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) to discuss the possibility of going to Sierra Leone with Project Overseas (PO). I knew very little about Sierra Leone and had only collected impressions from a few news reports that focused on the civil war. I knew I had lots to learn. Like many other volunteers, I had applied for PO because I wanted to make a difference, and this seemed like a great opportunity to learn about the host country and to share my teaching skills and experience.

Project Overseas is a joint endeavour of CTF, participating member organizations such as the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and overseas partners such as the Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU). The primary focus of PO is delivering professional development for teachers in developing countries. Each Canadian volunteer leads workshops with a co-tutor from the host country. Excited to be connected with a co-tutor, I prepared for the challenge by reading, speaking with PO alumni, and organizing a binder of possible lesson plans.

Although we had several unexpected challenges that first year, we managed to work alongside co-tutors, delivering lessons on the various workshop topics requested by the SLTU. The teachers were extremely open-minded and positive. They participated in my choral reading lessons and morning messages with great enthusiasm. Together we tried our best to work through the tight schedule.

When I returned in 2009 as a team leader, the highlight was reconnecting with my SLTU colleagues and their families. Our team attempted to bring local resources into the workshops. We also tried to reinforce content from the various sessions to make the program more holistic. Like the summer before, my time was filled with unique learning experiences. One evening, I sat with Giacomo Bangura, a colleague from SLTU, catching up on our last year and discussing the PO program. The electricity went out, but the conversation didn't skip a beat; we continued to talk by flashlight about the benefits and drawbacks of PO. We both had many unanswered questions about what was happening after participants left the



capital city, where PO took place, for their homes in rural communities. We questioned whether they had the resources and support to implement workshop ideas. We wondered how we could include more local ideas in future workshops and what was missing from our program. Jacomo suggested it was time for follow-up and encouraged me to come back to Salone in 2010 to undertake research that might shed light on some of these unanswered questions. This conversation and my critical reflections about PO in Sierra Leone developed into graduate research in which I followed up with past PO participants.

The Sierra Leonean educators that I interviewed reported learning skills for their classrooms, such as how to use various teaching tools and how to develop lesson plans, which in turn influenced student learning. They reported an increased understanding of SLTU and were able to clarify some misconceptions. Perhaps the most powerful finding was the social and emotional impact that PO has had on teachers' lives. Many Sierra Leonean teachers reported an increase in self-confidence and expressed the intention to pursue post-secondary studies.

I have found various practices within the structure of PO that work toward a framework that puts the host country at the centre, including co-tutor partnerships, the practice of sending repeat volunteers, and CTF's effort to meet partner requests. From my informal

conversations with PO alumni and my own experiences, it is clear how committed, well-intentioned, and passionate PO volunteers are about the work they do. We are excited to learn from, with, and about our colleagues.

Despite the success, I had many lingering questions about how better to enable PO to work toward a framework that would better recognize both the strength of Indigenous practices, and the impact (both positive and negative) of the development work we were doing. My intention was to consider where the critiques of international development could contribute to PO and how to include more local materials, resources, and cultural knowledge.

Margaret Kovach, an Indigenous scholar based in Saskatchewan, offers particularly significant advice to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars who are committed to Indigenous knowledges. Kovach's writings on the importance of thinking critically about our own roles and responsibilities in the work we do, knowing the history of a place, and making sure that our work is done in relation to those we are working with prompted me to offer recommendations based on my personal growth and learning. I share these thoughts, not to be understood as final, but to spark dialogue among those involved in international education partnerships. I am certain there are past and current CTF co-tutors who are far more aware than I about practices that put the history, needs, and culture of the host country at

Although we had several unexpected challenges that first year, we managed to work alongside co-tutors, delivering lessons on the various workshop topics requested by the SLTU.



their centre. However, it is likely that there are many volunteers who, like myself, have room to grow.

Prioritizing Reading: Because CTF co-tutors are constrained by time during the school year, rarely do we have an in-depth understanding of the historical and contemporary issues faced by the destination country. Without dismissing the reading that many co-tutors do in preparation, my suggestion is to simply take this aspect of planning seriously. It seems many CTF co-tutors, including myself, spend a lot of time fundraising, working on detailed lesson ideas, and reading tourist-based literature on the host country. Novels, historical pieces, and research-based articles about volunteer tourism and development work would all be useful in preparation, adding depth to our understanding. It is not realistic to expect co-tutors to read endlessly before heading overseas, nor is this the only step necessary for effective work. Instead this reading has the potential to move us forward and to develop a framework that includes multiple social and historical layers.

Privileging Local Materials: Many volunteers feel that incorporating local resources into PO is very important, and I remember conversations about this at pre-departure training. My research shows that Sierra Leonean educators also place great value on local knowledge. Until my fieldwork, I did not realize just how limited I was in this capacity. I remember my team suggesting teachers use bottle caps for math counters since we were finding them all over the streets of Freetown. These suggestions were well-intentioned but we were told there were no soft drinks available in rural villages, the communities where the work-

shop participants taught. We also suggested using natural products such as seeds. An interviewee explained that hungry students might eat the counters. So even in instances where we thought we were incorporating local materials that would work, we were not. Taking the time to facilitate discussion about local materials and knowledge in our PO workshops and with our co-tutors is crucial to developing a locally relevant program.

Valuing Cultural Knowledge: Privileging Indigenous knowledge has been an important part of my learning experience and has guided my recommendations. During the interviews, teachers specifically mentioned incorporating cultural knowledge. One Sierra Leonean teacher believes drumming, dancing, and local rhymes should be emphasized in PO and stated that children should not be separated from their culture. Another teacher thought PO should include many topics in relation to cultural knowledge, such as the history and migration of different ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. He stated that every district in Sierra Leone has a story for its name and believed this topic would provide a strong starting point for discussion. Working together, we can develop curriculum that includes this cultural knowledge.


Asking Deep Questions: From my experience, participants in Sierra Leone are often very excited to be a part of PO and meet Canadian teachers, and seem to enjoy the interactive experiences. As a Canadian co-tutor, it is easy to get lost in this excitement, with a great feeling that you are making a difference. This enthusiasm can drive the program forward but it is important to step back and ask questions.



For example, the following critical questions, adapted from the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Shawn Wilson, could remind us about PO's intentions and help us infuse local resources into the workshops whenever possible.

- For whom is this project relevant and how do I know?
- Who defined the terms of the workshops?
- What is my role in the co-tutor relationship and what are my responsibilities?
- How do I help build respectful relationships with all those involved in PO?

Our responses and the conversations that unfold could lead not only to improved understanding of international relationships and histories, but also to our challenging them.

Debriefing: An experience abroad does not necessarily mean that people have learned or progressed in their thinking. Instead, it can actually reinforce stereotypes about the host country, our role as volunteers, and/or poverty. This is why a debriefing component is critical upon our return home from PO. Not only is it important for volunteers to share stories, we also need a formal opportunity to think critically and confront our personal beliefs and actions. Asking deep questions and taking time to engage in critical dialogue helps us process our stories and opens our minds to other interpretations. At a recent ETFO debriefing session, we discussed the power of our messages upon our return home. We need to ensure that we are passing on a clear message to our students, colleagues, family, and friends that this is our interpretation of the experience, not the experience. 

.....
Angie Ortlieb is a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

For a copy of the master's thesis that this article is based on, please contact angieort@hotmail.com. Thank you to SLTU, CTF, and ETFO for providing me with such an enriching opportunity.

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 - Katie Cook, Teacher

Get Informed. Get Involved. Control Your Future.

ETFO's member communications campaign for the 2012 round of collective bargaining

By Lisa Mastrobuono



The countdown to bargaining has begun. Collective agreements for ETFO's 76,000 members expire on August 31, 2012 and, for the past several months, ETFO and its locals have been hard at work preparing for the next round of collective bargaining. In June, ETFO locals let school boards across Ontario know that they're ready to begin negotiations.

It is widely recognized that the skills, professionalism, and extraordinary efforts of ETFO members have made Ontario's publicly funded elementary education system one of the best in the world. ETFO's overall goal for collective bargaining in 2012 is to achieve collective agreements for our members that reflect this reality.

Member engagement is always the most critical factor to achieving success in bargaining. For this reason, an important part of ETFO's preparation has been to create a communications strategy that keeps members informed about, and actively engaged in, the collective bargaining process. That strategy has been developed around the message "Control Your Future."

Developing a member-oriented collective bargaining campaign

During the development of the 2012 collective bargaining campaign, it became apparent that ETFO faced a challenge — presenting potentially complex issues and events to our members in a way that's both accurate and accessible. ETFO members are well-educated professionals with significant skills and expertise. However, that expertise doesn't necessarily translate into an in-depth understanding of highly specialized labour relations terminology and processes. So the primary question that informed the development of a member-oriented campaign was: What do ETFO members want and need in a collective bargaining communications strategy? To answer that question, we turned to our members.

ETFO member focus groups

The first stage of development involved speaking with hundreds of ETFO members in focus groups held across the province about what they wanted to see in a collective bargaining communications campaign from their federation. Over the course of many focus group sessions, three overall considerations became apparent:

- The collective bargaining process is a new one for a significant portion of our membership. Many ETFO members have experienced no more than two rounds of collective bargaining in their careers, and over 30 percent of ETFO members have never participated in a bargaining process that involved a strike vote.
- While ETFO members recognize the importance of collective bargaining, they lack familiarity with many aspects of the process and want to know more about it.
- The nature of their work and lives means that ETFO members are subject to serious time constraints and significant information overload.

ETFO members in the driver's seat: The *Control Your Future* collective bargaining campaign

Incorporating the extensive feedback we received from our members, ETFO developed the *Control Your Future* collective bargaining communications campaign. The *Control Your Future* campaign is designed around three overlapping processes: education, motivation, and action. The campaign:

- educates ETFO members about collective bargaining and its significance to their professional and personal lives
- motivates ETFO members to take their futures firmly into their own hands by participating in and taking ownership of the bargaining process
- provides the vehicle ETFO members can use to navigate through times of challenge and change during bargaining, as well as to engage in collective action when necessary.

Campaign Central: The *Control Your Future* website

The anchor of ETFO's collective bargaining communications campaign is the *Control Your Future* website (controlyourfuture.ca). The website is a multimedia tool that includes videos, podcasts, and animation, in addition to written content, to respond to the diverse communication needs of our membership. Within the website are a number of easy-to-access sources of information:



- Members want up-to-date bargaining information, and so the **Latest Bargaining News** section contains that information supplied in both print and video formats.
- Previous rounds of bargaining provide vital context to the issues connected to the 2012 collective bargaining, and the website includes a historical overview of previous collective bargaining rounds called **Where We Were**.
- A **Video Room** contains bargaining information supplied through short and entertaining videos. All video and animation tools are accompanied by an accessible alternative, such as captioning or a text transcription.
- The **Where We're Going** section lists the provincial bargaining goals for all ETFO members. The goals are highlighted by hyperlinks that provide additional background information about current issues related to educator workload, salaries, and benefits.
- A **collective bargaining app**, the first of its kind for any Canadian union, can be downloaded from the *Control Your Future* website, making information that was previously accessible only through a computer now available from members' smartphones and tablets. The app provides updated bargaining news, FAQs, videos, a calendar of events, and a direct contact link to ETFO's Collective Bargaining Department.
- Sections have been developed to address **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** and provide information about **Bargaining Terms**. Each section is refreshed with new questions and answers or terms as they arise from ETFO members throughout the bargaining process.
- ETFO members can direct questions, comments, and suggestions to ETFO for a personalized response through the **Contact Us** feature on the website.

ETFO locals have made it their collective mission to promote the *Control Your Future* website to their members. Many ETFO locals have included *Control*

Your Future logos, videos, and podcasts on their own websites. Links from dozens of local websites to the *Control Your Future* website have extended the reach of ETFO's collective bargaining content beyond the confines of the provincial website.


Bargaining information comes to you

While the *Control Your Future* website is an important part of ETFO's communications strategy, it's just one way ETFO is reaching out to provide bargaining information. Members are receiving *Control Your Future* bargaining updates in all-member mailings to their homes, *Control Your Future* pamphlets are being delivered to members' schools, and bargaining information is being disseminated through social media on ETFO's Twitter feed. All of these options provide accurate information about bargaining just the way members have told us they want to get it: concise, streamlined, and easy to read.

In addition, ETFO has developed the *Control Your Future* e-newsletter. Negotiations can move quickly, and having up-to-the-minute bargaining news sent to ETFO members' email addresses is a great way of keeping them informed and engaged. Subscribe to the collective bargaining e-newsletter by going to controlyourfuture.ca

The Future of *Control Your Future*

More than during any other round of collective bargaining in ETFO's history, our members have a plethora of options to help them get informed about and stay on top of bargaining issues and events. And as the *Control Your Future* campaign continues to grow and evolve, new communication strategies are being developed and will be implemented to meet the needs of ETFO members.

Website, e-newsletters, apps, pamphlets, videos, letters, podcasts — there is a method of getting up-to-date bargaining information that is uniquely suited to each and every ETFO member, making it easier than ever to get informed and stay involved in the 2012 round of collective bargaining. 

Lisa Mastrobuono is an executive staff member of ETFO Protective Services.

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Every Day is Arts Day

By Holly Ogden

As an elementary teacher, I have witnessed firsthand the value of an arts-rich education. Experiences in the arts offer many benefits to our students. The arts provide opportunities to develop creativity and imagination, and to experience joy, beauty, and wonder. The arts also present everyday occasions to enrich the quality of our lives, and to develop creative ways of expressing thoughts, knowledge, and feelings. There is ample evidence that learning in, about, and through the arts contributes to increased engagement in learning in other subject areas, and to the development of students' self-confidence, social skills, and metacognition.

My experiences in working with children attest to these findings. My students solved problems and developed their ability to express ideas and feelings through role play and working collaboratively on creative projects. I have witnessed the development of self-esteem, discipline, character, co-operative skills, and motivation in my students as they acquired the diverse skills necessary to create a musical theatre production. I have also seen how the arts can foster a greater sense of social responsibility as my students contributed to collaborative works of art, developed an increased awareness and appreciation of

diverse cultures, and shared their talents with members of the wider community.

In a newly released literature review entitled *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child* (2012), commissioned by ETF0, Dr. Rena Upitis highlights ways to support and advance arts education for elementary students. The review document examines the effects of taking part in the fine and performing arts — painting, sculpting, writing poetry, playing an instrument, singing, dancing, acting, creating mixed media productions, and filmmaking.

We all have a contribution to make to arts education and, as *Arts Education* shows, there are many ways to bring the arts into the classroom. Partnerships between generalist teachers, specialist teachers, and art-makers of all kinds can provide rich arts education experiences for elementary students. Ideally, the arts should be both integrated throughout the curriculum and taught as separate curriculum subjects. And the arts should be part of children's daily school experiences.

Make the arts relevant

Arts activities do not have to be extravagant to be relevant. Do not be afraid to include non-traditional arts activities in your classes, such as puppetry, sewing, circus arts, improv, digital photography, or rap. Incorporate repertoire and





forms from a variety of contexts, especially those that are important to your students outside of school. Create a class playlist of students' favourite songs and use the compilation to explore similarities and differences in form, theme, and use of instruments. Write and perform a puppet show for students in other classes, or produce books and audio recordings to welcome new students to the school.

Incorporate technology

Web-based and other information technologies can enhance education in the arts. When given the opportunity to use information and communications technology (ICT) in their creative work, elementary students have demonstrated increased motivation, self-regulation, pride, and inventiveness — particularly in situations involving creative expression or composition. There are many freeware programs that allow students to explore sounds and manipulate images or texts (e.g., Audacity, Wordle, Pinterest). These tools can enhance students' artistic explorations. For example, you could use Audacity, a free audio editor and recorder, to make a radio advertisement, create podcasts, record compositions and class performances, or record soundtracks for animations.

Support generalists with more PD

In order to provide rich daily arts experiences for their students, teachers must directly experience the joy and value of artistic work for themselves — whether by involvement in the arts in their non-teaching time or by enhanced professional arts development and offerings. Substantial professional development is required for generalist elementary teachers in faculties of education, through the ministries of education, and through school


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Holly Ogden is a teacher with the Limestone Teacher Local and a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University.

boards. Research suggests that the most effective way to develop teacher confidence in the arts is by providing opportunities to teachers for sustained, hands-on art-making. Once teachers see themselves as artists, the transition to bringing arts into the classroom becomes much more fluid.

Hire more specialists

Ontario no longer has arts specialist teachers in every elementary school; in fact, Ontario has the highest proportion of elementary schools where music is taught by generalist classroom teachers with no music qualifications. Three regions of the country have a very large percentage of elementary schools with a specialist music teacher: Quebec (87 percent), the Atlantic Provinces (86 percent), and British Columbia (83 percent). In contrast, 58 percent of Ontario elementary schools rely very strongly on generalist classroom teachers with no music background. Hiring specialist teachers not only enhances the direct instruction to students, it provides opportunities for cross-curricular collaborations among colleagues.

Concluding thoughts

The value of the *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child* review is both broad and profound. It extends an invitation to envision a system of education where the learning that happens in school feels more like the learning that happens in our adult lives, where we take part in informal learning or hobbies with dedication and passion. But the aim of arts education is not only to prepare students for later life. The aim is also to bring moments of joy and beauty into their lives at school. By engaging students wholly in the present moment — in forging relationships, making things, and using their bodies — the arts prepare students for the future by encouraging them to become strong citizens with a finely attuned sense of social responsibility. These outcomes are all possible when the arts are a central part of the education of the whole child. 

Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child is available for download at www.etfo.ca/Resources/ArtsEd.



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"I am impressed with how the instructor modeled best teaching practices and demonstrated by example what we should be doing for our own students. I will certainly take another ETFO AQ!"

"I found the course extremely well laid out and totally relevant to my teaching practice. I was very impressed by the practical nature of the assignments ... this is the first course that I have taken in a long time where I actually feel as though I have gained significant professional knowledge."

"I have to tell you that I have taken other AQ courses with two universities before and this is by far the best I've ever taken ... I was hesitant to take an online course, but I'm so glad I did. From now on I will be taking all of my AQ courses with ETFO!"

"I just want to say 'thank you' for making my first online AQ course an enjoyable experience. Your step-by-step guidance (online and in-person) and your approachable manner were very much appreciated."

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Weaving Inspiration into the Curriculum


By Carmen Oliveira

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is the creativity and inspiration we can weave into the curriculum to bring deep and meaningful learning experiences to our students (and ourselves!). This past week my class enjoyed an art lesson integrated with media, oral communication, and writing expectations. It served as a perfect example of how students become more engaged when our lessons are filled with what inspires us.

A friend of mine emailed me a phenomenal video depicting the sheer beauty, simplicity,

and breathtaking scenery found in the world. It moved me deeply and I knew I had to somehow share the video with my students in a meaningful way. I decided to use it as the foundation for an art lesson. We have been exploring cool and warm colours, texture, and patterns. We watched the video and had a class discussion using sensory prompts (I see..., I hear..., I feel..., I smell...). The descriptions were profound and all the students were eager to share their thoughts and feelings!

Next, students chose an aspect of nature (ocean, rainforest, sunset, etc.) to create a frame for a sensory poem using warm/cool colours and papers of different textures.

Last, using a template as a guide, students created their sensory poems. Students were encouraged to experiment with word choice and powerful images to portray their scene. I cannot begin to describe how excited and proud they were to share their art and poetry with me and each other! At the end of the experience, they asked to watch the video again. I gladly shared it once more and silently thanked my friend for the inspiration that created a beautiful teaching opportunity. 



heartandart.ca was developed to accompany the resource book, *The Heart and Art of Teaching and Learning: Practical Ideas and Resources for Beginning Teachers*. You can follow individual bloggers, or explore specific categories of the blog that coincide with chapters of the book including Before School Starts; Building Inclusion; Classroom Management; Communication with Parents and Guardians; Diverse Learning Needs; Occasional Teaching; Professional Learning and Growth.

Each blog entry is “tagged” so with one click you can call up any blog entry and see how a specific area from the book is being lived in the classroom with real teachers and students.

For more blog posts from *Heart and Art* contributors, go to heartandart.ca.

Carmen Oliveira is a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

I Will Need a Key for the Classroom

By Valence Young

Occasional teachers, like everyone else who works in the school, need to know how to protect themselves and their students during an emergency. In the event of a major incident or threat of school violence, there could be a lockdown. During a lockdown or a lockdown drill, educators must be able to lock the door to their classroom or other secure areas where they are working.

Some school boards are not providing a classroom key to OTs. These school boards appear to be concerned that OTs may forget to return the key at the end of the day. But without this key, the educator cannot protect herself and her students during a lockdown. An OT who has to insist that a classroom key be provided may face a stressful situation with the principal before the school day has even started.


School boards that don't provide OTs with keys to the classroom are falling short of provincial policy and legislation. The Ministry of Education requires that all publicly funded school boards have a lockdown policy to ensure that a lockdown plan is in place at each school site, and that a minimum of two lockdown drills occur each school year. School boards have to measure up to the detailed guidelines for lockdown plans as described in the Ministry's *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol* (2011). The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) requires that school boards and principals take every precaution reasonable for an educator's protection. The OHSA also requires that school boards must provide information, instruction, and supervision to the educator to protect his or her health and safety.

There is more to a lockdown plan than carrying a classroom key. A lockdown plan must

include clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations for dealing with an emergency situation. The plan includes expectations for staff, students, parents, and police. Educators must be able to lock the door to their classroom or other secure areas where they are working. There are lockdown practices for unsecured areas, like the hallways and the gym, where an evacuation may be required. There are additional actions for keeping people safe in portables and washrooms, as well as in outdoor areas.

Here are three steps to getting ready for a lockdown:

- Ask for the classroom key. If a classroom key is not provided, inform the principal that you need a key in case there is a lockdown.
- Ask for emergency plans including the lockdown plan for the school. You need to be informed about dealing with a lockdown drill or an emergency event.
- If the door lock is faulty, report it to the principal as a health and safety hazard. A faulty locking mechanism could cause a lockdown to fail.

If you cannot get your hands on the classroom key, report this to your principal as a health and safety concern. Inform the worker health and safety representative at the school site. Call your Occasional Teacher President for support. Your OT President can get expert advice from ETFO Provincial Office. 



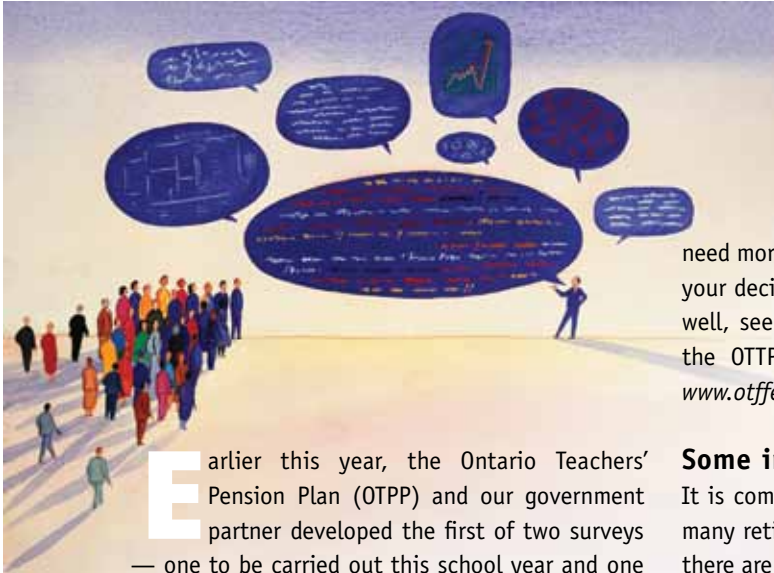
Valence Young is an executive staff member of ETFO Protective Services.



OTF REPORT

By Rian McLaughlin

Speaking of Pension . . .




Earlier this year, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) and our government partner developed the first of two surveys — one to be carried out this school year and one next school year. This task came about as a result of the last valuation filing of a balanced pension plan in September 2011. These surveys are meant to inform all of the parties as to “who we are” as a group of members, “what we understand about our pension,” “what we, the Partners [OTF and the government] need to do to ensure that members understand various aspects of their pension plan,” and “what is likely to drive retirement behaviour now and in the future.” The first wave of surveys is now complete. Many ETFO members participated in the focus groups or in the telephone survey, and we thank you for taking the time to do so — your input is valuable!

The survey firm Pollara was contracted to conduct this work. They ensured that all groups of members were included, which means that full-time, part-time, and occasional teachers participated. It also means that new, mid-career, and those approaching retirement were solicited for their input. While the results have not yet been made public, I encourage you to take this opportunity to reflect on what you know about your pension, what aspects of it you feel you

need more education about, and what might drive your decision to retire when such time comes. As well, seek answers to your questions by visiting the OTTP website, otpp.com, the OTF website, www.otffeo.on.ca, and our own website, etfo.ca.

Some interesting pension facts

It is common knowledge that there are nearly as many retired teachers receiving their pensions as there are active teachers contributing to the Plan. What does this mean for the Plan and how do the Partners understand these demographics? As a result of the last valuation filing, a Demographic Task Force was established to examine these questions and many others. The OTF Executive appointed me to this task force on your behalf.

I can tell you that we, the members of the Plan, are a very interesting group! Longevity, also known as mortality, is a key factor for the Plan. Teachers are living longer all the time. In fact, we are outdistancing the general population! Did you know that centenarians (100 years of age and older) are the fastest-growing demographic in North America, expanding at the rate of approximately 8 percent per year? There are more than 2,300 Plan pensioners over 90. As of December 31, 2011, the oldest retiree collecting her pension was 109! Given this small snippet of demographic reality, I invite you to consider what your retirement will look like regardless of where you are in your career. Chances are good that you will have a very long and productive retirement and it's never too early to start making plans! 

Rian McLaughlin is the OTF Table Officer for ETFO.



CTF REPORT

By Paul Taillefer

International Summit on the Teaching Profession

The second International Summit on the Teaching Profession held in March in New York included national teacher unions and education officials from 24 countries/regions with high-performing and rapidly improving educational systems. Hosted by Education International (EI), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Asia Society, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the National Education Association (NEA), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and by other U.S.-based partners, the Summit examined common characteristics of outstanding education systems, highlighted benefits of joint government and teacher union discussions, and underscored the importance of properly funded education systems and policies that empower teachers.

The theme “Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century” touched on developing school leaders, preparing teachers to deliver 21st century skills, and ensuring that teachers can succeed where they are most needed. An OECD background document, “Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century,” (oecd.org/dataoecd/4/35/49850576.pdf) provided an international backdrop for discussions. The summit dovetailed with CTF’s research priority (See CTF report entitled *The Voice of Canadian Teachers on Teaching and Learning*, ctf-fce.ca/Documents/publications/catalog/TeacherVoice_OrderForm_EN.pdf.)

On “Leadership development,” CTF as first responder noted:


- School leadership and the principal as “first teacher” are vital to professional learning and development.
- All-staff PD should not replace teacher-initiated PD. School leaders must create a climate of confidence for individuals to innovate and involve colleagues.
- Developing teacher quality as the core of effective leadership must be “done with teachers, not to teachers.”

On “Preparing teachers for the delivery of 21st century skills,” there was some consensus around the following:

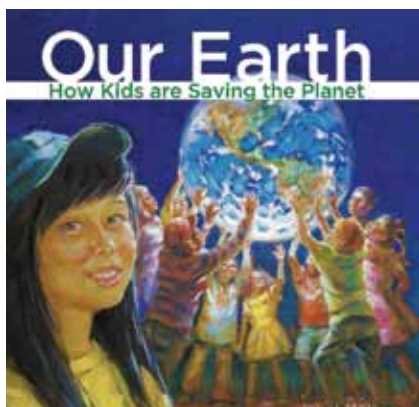
- Teachers need constant learning and growth as they reposition themselves in a rapidly changing world.
- More incentives need to be developed for innovation but should not be monetary or punitive.
- Schools must be learning organizations where teachers learn from each other (lacking according to OECD).
- ICTs are only as good as the teacher-supplied pedagogy.

On “Preparing teachers to work and succeed where most needed,” CTF stressed:

- While supply in Canada is a problem in remote areas, no silver bullet exists for the challenge of maintaining staff.
- Respect for teaching helps address matching supply to demand.
- Respect stems from high teacher qualifications and fitting compensation.

The global financial crisis currently dominates policy discussions and is affecting collective bargaining. Many jurisdictions around the world are attempting stringent controls, including pre-selection of teacher candidates and evaluation of teachers based on student achievement. The Summit highlighted the many paths towards supporting and nurturing student success, and that it is unwise to impose a formula. It was universally acknowledged that the voice of teachers is important for reform and innovation, and that teachers and their unions should not be, as John Bangs of EI puts it, “ghosts at the feast.” Many practices in Canada support teachers as professionals. It is up to us to ensure that our input informs the positive evolution of education reform. 

Paul Taillefer is CTF President for 2011-13. He is the former president of l’association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO).



Our Earth: How Kids Are Saving the Planet

Janet Wilson

Toronto: Second Story Press, 2010

32 pages. \$18.95



Review by **Debra Menary**

Using a combination of original paintings, photographs, and concise information in a column format, Janet Wilson has captured the spirit of why young people are so concerned about caring for our planet. She has packed a lot of information into this short but encompassing book. At the bottom of every second page is a write-up about the issues each young person has chosen to address, plus a reference to websites that allow the reader to learn more through online resources.

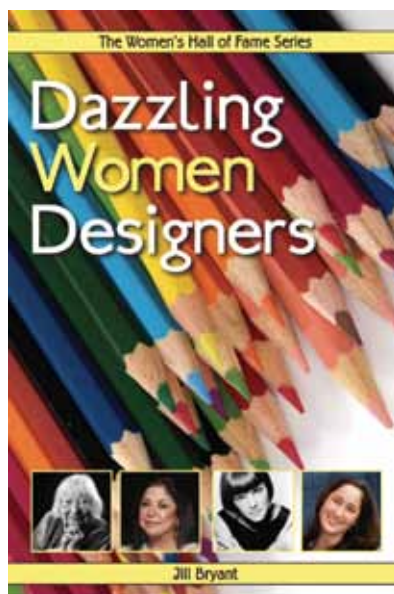
Each page highlights a child who has accomplished something to help preserve our natural environment and provides brief biographical information.

From every corner of the planet, boys and girls of many ages weigh in on how to do our part for the environment and why it is so important to try. Even if it is a seemingly small and insignificant effort, we can do something good for our earth. Wilson does not hesitate to point out that the young people in this colourful gem of a book have accomplished a lot in a short time on our troubled planet.

How Kids Are Saving the Planet would work nicely as a classroom resource for both students and teachers. It is a helpful “go-to” for ideas to observe Earth Day in the classroom, or for suggestions to promote school Green Team activities.

I would also recommend using this book as a jumping-off point for teaching a variety of reading and writing strategies. Students who enjoy non-fiction might make this book a personal reading choice.

Debra Menary is a retired member of the Simcoe County Teacher Local.



Dazzling Women Designers

Jill Bryant

Toronto: Second Story Press, 2010

126 pages. \$10.95



Review by **Andrea Hertach**

Dazzling Women Designers introduces children ages nine to 13 to ten unique and creative women who have made a difference in the world.

The book begins with an introduction that defines design, makes real life connections, and highlights how each woman overcame hardships to succeed.

Dazzling Women Designers is part of a series called “The Women’s Hall of Fame,” which focuses on significant contributions made by women — including Extraordinary Women Explorers, Spectacular Women in Space, Super Women in Science, and Amazing Women Athletes, to name a few. The books support overcoming gender bias by highlighting women’s myriad contributions.

The body of the book is divided into 10 sections highlighting 10 extraordinary women: Eileen Gray, designer of functional art such as folding screens and furniture; Jane Jacobs, urban planning activist; Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, a landscape architect of children’s parks; Suzanne E. Vanderbilt, hired by General Motors to design cars in the 1950s; Eiko Ishioka, production/costume designer for stage and film; Ritu Kumar, a haute couture designer who brought modern Indian fashion to the world; Vera Wang, famous designer of bridal gowns and Olympic skating costumes; Zaha Hadid, architect of audacious designs that people said wouldn’t work; Aissa Dione, a West African textile designer who developed new fabrics by mixing fibres; and Cynthia Breazeal, an American robotics designer inspired by *Star Wars*, who created Huggable, a robotic teddy bear that is used to comfort children in hospitals.

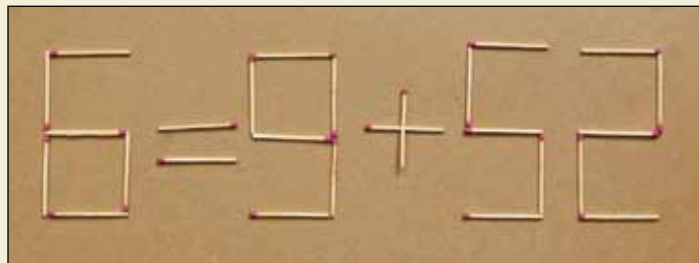
While *Dazzling Women Designers* is a fascinating and readable non-fiction text, it would benefit from more vivid photographs to help students understand abstract concepts and historical content that junior students may not be familiar with. For more information on these designers a sources and resources section is included at the end of the book listing texts and websites to encourage further research.

Andrea Hertach is a member of the York Region Teacher Local.

trivia By Peter Harrison

Matching Numbers

The class of students have been playing with safety matches to represent numbers – and to make up equations.



Unfortunately, their latest attempt above, $(25 + 6 = 19)$ laid out on the desk as shown, clearly leaves a lot to be desired. But help is at hand. Jo, by far the brightest member of the class, quickly showed the others how the equation can be made correct with the minimum possible effort – simply by adding, taking away, or just moving the smallest number of matches so that the math is perfect. For example, you could make the 6 look like a 5 by removing a match; make the 6 look like a 3 by moving a match and removing another; or turning it into an 8 by adding a match.

What was the final equation? And how many matches were added, taken away or moved to achieve it?

Send your answers to ETF0voice@etfo.org with the word “Trivia” in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to The Editor, *ETF0 Voice*, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by July 15, 2012.

SOLUTION TO OUR LAST PUZZLE

The smallest number of moves is 25.

The winner for the Spring 2012 trivia puzzle is **Wil Douglas**, Elementary Teachers of Toronto.

Congratulations!

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