

Sample letter to

1. John Fallon, Chief Executive Officer, Pearson, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom, email: tom.steiner@pearson.com
2. Jim Yong Kim, President, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC-20433, United States of America, email: civilsociety@worldbank.org
3. Nick Dyer, Director General, Policy and Global Programmes, Department for International Development (DfID), 22 Whitehall, London SW1A 2EG, United Kingdom, email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk

Dear

Re: Bridge International Academies adds intimidation to its business plans.

The **[insert name of your organization]** notes with deep concern that Bridge International Academies has commenced legal proceedings against the Kenyan National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and its General Secretary, Wilson Sossion, for exposing its business plan which undermines the attainment of inclusive and equitable quality education for all consistent with SDG4. As a result of these legal proceedings an injunction has been issued prohibiting the KNUT and its General Secretary from making statements regarding Bridge. This represents an infringement on the right and responsibility of member organisations to campaign in the interest of quality education for all. This also represents a clear violation of core ILO Standards (87 and 98) and is in contravention of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of the Teaching Profession (Article 26).

These measures suggest that Bridge is becoming increasingly desperate in attempting to silence its critics.

Bridge's business plan is predicated on the employment of unqualified staff delivering a highly scripted standardised curriculum in substandard facilities. These are cost-cutting techniques aimed at minimizing operational costs in order to maximize profit.

In August last year, Bridge International Academies schools in Uganda were ordered shut down by the Government because of the company's neglect and disregard for national legal and educational requirements. In announcing the closure of Bridge in Uganda, the minister cited the company's failure to employ qualified teachers (more than 80% of Bridge staff are not qualified), failing to conform to the Ugandan curriculum and poor hygiene and sanitation that "put the life and safety of the school children in danger." This decision was upheld by the High Court of Uganda following an unsuccessful appeal by Bridge.

In Kenya more than 70 percent of Bridge teachers are not qualified. They are directed to follow a standardized highly scripted curriculum reading off a tablet. One teacher told researchers, "We do not plan any lesson. We follow the tablets to the letter. We are robots being directed by tablets."

Following an unsuccessful appeal against the County Education Board of the city of Busia, in February 2017 a court in Kenya ordered the closure of Bridge schools for non-compliance with basic educational standards. In its recommendations, the board had highlighted the fact that the schools did not employ trained and registered teachers. The report also noted the lack of appropriate facilities.

Also of concern, on 28 March 2017, Ms Shannon May, cofounder of Bridge International Academies, appeared before a UK parliamentary inquiry in the role of the UK Department for International Development's (DfID) support of for-profit education providers in developing countries.

Under oath, Shannon May repeated false claims concerning researcher Curtis Riep which resulted in his arrest in Uganda last year in June. This is despite the fact Bridge has since admitted that "there were no signed visitor books under a different name". Furthermore, in a sworn statement, the investigating officer states, the "allegations were without merit". Repeating these false claims is not only desperate but also potentially defamatory and in contempt of proceedings.

Your ongoing support for Bridge international Academies is beyond justification.

Yours sincerely,

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cc Kenya National Union of Teachers' knut@nbnet.co.ke
Education International globalresponse@ei-ie.org