



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

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**President**

Susan Hopgood

**General Secretary**

Fred van Leeuwen

**TO ALL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS  
TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Brussels, 11 April 2017

**Solidarity Action required**

Dear Colleagues,

Your attention is drawn to the following resolution endorsed unanimously by the EI Executive Board at its meeting on Tuesday 4 April 2017.

***Bridge International Academies adds intimidation to its business plans.***

*The Executive Board of Education International 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, supported by the likes of Pearson, The World Bank, DFID UK, Gates, Zuckerberg etc., 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.*

*The Executive Board*

- *condemns this attempted intimidation by Bridge International Academies*
- *expresses its solidarity for the KNUT and its General Secretary. To this end will explore legal means to protect the KNUT so that it can continue to pursue its policy objectives consistent with EI congress decisions.*
- *resolves to intensify efforts to expose Bridge International Academies and its supporters for their willful disregard of the SDG4.*
- *resolves to mobilise support from member organisations and allies to further the aims of the KNUT and EI.*
- *requests the secretariat to contact the relevant international institutions including ILO and UNESCO*

You are requested to write to supporters of Bridge International Academies

1. John Fallon, Chief Executive Officer, Pearson, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom, email: [tom.steiner@pearson.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk)

highlighting that their continued support for Bridge International Academies is beyond justification. Attached please find a sample letter you may wish to use.

Please copy the Kenya National Union of Teachers' [knut@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:knut@nbnet.co.ke) and EI [globalresponse@ei-ie.org](mailto:globalresponse@ei-ie.org) in your correspondence

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen  
General Secretary