



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILDHOOD
JOURNEE INTERNATIONALE DE L'ENFANCE AFRICAINE
INTERNATIONALER TAG DER AFRIKANISCHEN KINDHEIT
INTERNATIONALE DAG VAN DE AFRIKAANSE JEUGD
DIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA INFANCIA AFRICANA
...and its YOUTH - IDAY - www.1606.eu

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« *When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.* »

1. In October....

1.1. Meetings of IDAY-International (minutes available on website) :

- 1 October : Meeting with Mrs Aya Kasasa of the ACP secretariat.
- 10 October : Meeting with Moussa Issifou of IDAY- Bénin at Rémicourt.
- 11 October : Meeting IDAY-international / IDAY-Belgium.
- 18 October : Meeting with M. Igor Driesmans, Administrator at the Directorate for Development of the European Commission following the letter of support by M. Louis Michel, Commissioner.
- 25 October : Meeting with David Archer et Lucia Fry of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), and with Chike Anyanwu of the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) in London.

The final version of the statutes of IDAY-International will be sent for registration in Belgium at the end of October. Thanks are extended to all those who cared to participate in their preparation.

1.2. Meetings and activities of the IDAY-national coalitions (minutes available on website) :

- Meetings of regional consultative groups of youngsters in Burkina and Cameroon having resulted in the creation of the IDAY- CEDEAO et IDAY- Central Africa coalitions.
- Organisation of IDAY-Bénin.
- Decision of Mrs Said Omar Karima and Yannick Arlabosse-Titz to launch an IDAY-Switzerland.
- Mauritania becomes a new African member with the participation of the association Forum National des Droits de la Femme et de l'Enfant (FNDFE).

1.3. Finance : IDAY thanks the Funds CLM/AFLAM of Antwerp for its decision to finance the secretariat of IDAY-International, and the Fund Message of Yaguine & Fodé for its financial contribution. There remains still about 120 000 € to be found to finance the contribution of IDAY - International to the 2008 campaign. Numerous letters have been sent by IDAY-International since August without success.

1.4. IDAY-International notes that Abantu, LHAC and Laïcité France have inserted the IDAY logo on their publications. This practice must be generalised by IDAY members if our objectives are to receive the publicity and political support needed for their success.

2. The Agenda...

2.1. IDAY – international

- 5 to 19 November : Mission of Jean-Jacques Schul to Togo, Burkina Faso and Mali to meet IDAY national coalitions.
- 15 to 17 November : Participation of Catherine Lievens in the Forum of the Euro-African Civil Society in Lisbon.
- 26 to 27 November : Participation of Valérie Du Bois at the preparation of the GCE World Assembly in Oslo. Trip cofinanced with the NGO Abantu.
- 13 December to 13 January 2008 : Mission of Catherine Lievens to Senegal and Mali in part for meetings of IDAY national coalitions. Trip co-financed by Mrs. Lievens.
- 21 to 27 April : Global Action Week : Theme : « Back to school for government officials and journalists ! » . See :
http://www.campaignforeducation.org/action/2008/action_2008.html
- IDAY-international will call a meeting of the representatives of European coalitions in December 2007 or early January 2008.
- 12 June 2008 : Ceremony of IDAY-International at the European Parliament.
- 9 to 22 June 2008 : IDAY Events in Europe and Africa.

2.2. Meetings/Activities of IDAY-national coalitions :

- 6 November : meeting of IDAY – Luxembourg
- 6 November : meeting of IDAY-Togo in Lome
- 12 November: meeting of IDAY-Burkina Faso in Ouagadougou.
- 26 November : meeting of IDAY- Belgium
- 1 December: in Antwerp (Belgium) : The Day of African talents.
- October-November: “ A notebook, a pencil for the Congo” LHAC & Laïcité France campaign.

3. Documents and links...

- The list of GCE members to be invited to participate in the IDAY campaign :
http://www.campaignforeducation.org/about/about_member_list.html
- The Europe-Africa website that focuses on the public consultation process for a joint EU-African joint strategy (Summit of Lisbon 2007) : <http://europafrique.org/>

4. Thoughts on....

4.1. The efficiency of foreign aid.

Fifty years of foreign aid have not succeeded in lifting less advanced countries into the main development stream despite some times massive influx of outside capital. Since the

'80s, the literature has put forward explanations for this failure : domination of the donors' interests, poor governance by the recipients, lack of participation of the interested parties, socio-cultural obstacles,.....The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has now joined the sceptics in a recent report "Aid and Growth : what does the cross-country evidence really show?". After having isolated the « non-causal » factors, it concludes that « there is not enough robust proof that aid contributes to development » of the recipient countries « even when it is well utilised ». Instead, improving national policies does have a positive impact. See: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2005/wp05127.pdf>

4.2. The causes of poverty.

In his article (New York Review of Books » of May 2007 -pages 34-36) on several books on poverty, Nicholas Kristof concludes that one of the main causes of poverty is poor people's ignorance of their rights and their acceptance of misery. He notes that in recent times, numerous countries have managed to extract themselves out of persisting and generalised poverty. The notable exception is Africa where resistance to globalisation is the strongest and self-determination the lowest. Education, writes the author, is the most powerful tool to help people become aware of their rights and move out of poverty.

4.3. The impact of the IMF budgetary restrictions on public expenditures for education.

To put public finances on a sounder footing, the IMF imposes, rightfully in most cases, budgetary restrictions. A study by Action Aid on 3 African countries, however, shows that these restrictions can prevent a country from reaching the second Millenium Development Goal (MDG2). The implication is that by preventing education for all, the IMF is keeping these countries in their existing status. The Malawi Government, for instance, should recruit an additional 90 000 teachers (comparerd to the existing 40 000) to achieve a basic quality education for all, lowering the ratio students/teacher from the current 72 to 40). IDAY supports this conclusion and has asked since 2005 in its annual Manifesto (see www.1606.eu/documents) that public expenditures on education be budgetised as investments rather than as current expenditures. This would allow these countries to meet the IMF conditions while avoiding preventing poor countries from meeting the MDG2. The study also argues for more international grant-aid being allocated to education to overcome these restrictions.

4.4. Concrete projects or empowerment ?

Since the Dakar Forum of 2000, the international community has become more clearly aware of the crucial roll of the local civil society in achieving the Millenium goals and delivering an efficient foreign aid. To examine how this could best be done in the field of education, the UK Government created in 2002 the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) with the participation of major NGOs : Global Campaign for Education (GCE- <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/>), OXFAM-UK, Action Aid and Save the Children. This fund supports promotion of education in 16 African and Asian countries. Before its closure in 2008, the CEF engaged in a consultation process to find the best way to continue in a sustainable manner their activities which were shown to be pertinent and efficient. They conclude that because of the shear size of the problem, Education for all (EFA) can only be achieved by the national authorities;

and, that only coalitions of the local civil society can bring their national governments to invest adequately in education to achieve EFA.

The CEF recommends logically that part of foreign aid (the CEF suggests 3%) should go to the reinforcement of the local civil society involved in education. This could best be done through the setting up of Civil Society Education Funds (CSEF). The CEF conclusions are based on the observed negative effects of foreign aid (dependency, domination of foreign interests over local needs,...). For more information see : <http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org/downloads/downloads/documents/briefingpaper10aug07.pdf> or contact M. Chike Anyanwu (canyanwu@commonwealtheducationfund.org).

IDAY notes that these conclusions vindicate its original approach according to which « concrete projects – service provision » are useful as relief against unacceptable humanitarian local conditions but that they will contribute to solve the problems in sustainable manner only if they are accompanied by a reinforcement of the capacity of the local civil society to get its rights to full education respected by the local government. “Concrete projects” are no substitutes for inefficient government services. Instead, they must be conceived and implemented as complement to an efficient government service. Hence, donors must also support the local civil society in its efforts to obtain such a service. The active participation of the African diaspora in IDAY is indicative of the soundness of its approach as shown during the seminars in Brussels (April 25th) and in Paris (June 7th 2007). Its narrow relationship with and knowledge of the local civil society are of tantamount importance to implement efficiently CEF’s proposals. GCE’s and IDAY’s national coalitions could become useful starting blocks to implement the approach proposed by CEF.

Among its European members, IDAY notes that the Fund Message of Yaguine and Fodé, managed by the King Baudouin Foundation, allocates already more than 3% of its annual outlays to IDAY, and that the Fund CLM/AFLAM of Antwerp has also integrated the CEF findings in its procedures.

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