

STAFF UNION BULLETIN
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EDUCATION GRANT
STAFF MOBILIZATION PRODUCES RESULTS

In the face of reform proposals which threatened the Education Grant, the ILO Staff Union launched a petition campaign in partnership with the staff unions and associations of our international federation, the Coordinating Committee for Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) and our sister Federation, FICSA.

A series of dramatic changes were being proposed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)¹, with long-term negative impacts not only on the staff themselves, but on the ability of organizations to recruit staff to particular duty stations. The Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union Committee, speaking on behalf of CCISUA, pointed to the serious threats associated with the proposed changes, arguing before the Commission:

“Under [the ICSC proposal] that is defined by a global cap in US Dollars, and a declining scale of reimbursement, the differences in education costs—and reimbursement levels—would increase the risk that when staff members make their career and mobility decisions, they will have to account for the widely varying costs in different duty stations. This is *precisely* what a system-wide entitlement was intended to prevent.”

In an effort to protect the current Education Grant, and most importantly the principle of ensuring an **“equal level of access to quality education, irrespective of duty station,”** the representatives of CCISUA and FICSA collected nearly 5,000 signatures in the less than three weeks. Signatures were received from both G and P staff, from headquarters and field duty stations, in an encouraging show of solidarity and staff mobilization.

¹ The International Civil Service Commission is a body established by the United Nations General Assembly whose mandate is “to regulate and coordinate the conditions of service of staff in the United Nations common system”.

In addition to the petition campaign, staff representatives worked closely with the Human Resources Network in an effort to develop an alternative proposal to that of the Commission. Through all of these efforts, and strong representation at the 67th Session of the ICSC, the Education Grant has been protected, *for the time being*. It should be noted that the ICSC decided to keep the Education Grant methodology under review, and further staff support may be required to protect the entitlement in the future.

Participation of General Services staff should be particularly recognized and appreciated, as the Education Grant has always been an expatriate entitlement. As part of the ongoing efforts to defend the rights of all categories of staff, it should be noted that CCISUA and FICSA are continuing to work in partnership to protect and improve the GS Salary Survey Methodology, with an ICSC Working Group taking place this month.

Should this review encounter similar problems to Education Grant, *all* staff may be called upon to lend their support, to ensure that the Methodologies can once again yield results reflecting the best prevailing conditions as mandated by the Flemming Principle.
