



World Teachers' Day Celebrated Last October 5

Last October 5, educators throughout the globe were honored in World Teachers' Day, established in 1994 to commemorate the signing of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/International Labor Organization (ILO) Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. According to UNESCO, World Teachers' Day represents a significant token of the awareness, understanding and appreciation for the vital contribution that teachers make to education and development.

Countries from Albania to Zanzibar conducted participated in different ways: opening a "Teachers' Monument" (Serbia and Montenegro), organizing a "Teacher of the Year" contest (Russian Federation), hosting a soccer tournament (Namibia), raising money for education in developing countries (Denmark), and holding a symposium on education (India).

Many countries, including the Philippines, lobbied political leaders on education issues and raised awareness through national media, posters and pamphlets. Philippine groups that took part included the Teachers' Organization of the Philippine Public Sector (TOPPS), the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), and the Abellana National School Faculty And Employees Association (ANSFEA).

Below is a joint message issued by various world organizations on the occasion of World Teachers' Day:

5 October 2004

UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF

On World Teachers' Day, and on any other day for that matter, the basic message that a teacher needs to receive is quite simple: "We appreciate you."

That message cannot be repeated often enough, by those of us in the United Nations family and by those who interact with you every day.

We highly appreciate you having chosen this profession, one so fundamental to society, and the fact that you continue in it, despite—and often because of—the challenges you face. We value the initiatives you take in opening doors of knowledge and tolerance for each girl and boy. We are aware of what your profession demands of you, of your responsibilities and of your rights. We acknowledge the difficulty of your task, and the fact that it takes professional training and a decent work environment to teach well. We appreciate the care you take to direct your knowledge at children with special needs, and your awareness that all students have individual needs. We value your ability, developed through training and experience, to listen to your students and to shift the responsibility of being a learner from your shoulders to theirs.

In sum, we appreciate you, and we call upon parents, community leaders, business people, trade unions and government officials, especially educational authorities, to find a way, this World Teachers' Day, to tell you just that, in their own words and in their own way.

- Koichiro Matsuura, Directo-General, UNESCO
- Juan Somavia, Director General, ILO
- MarkMalloch Brown, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Carol Bellamy, executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

About Us

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New Research on Bullying

It has been traditionally believed that bullies have low self-esteem, and teachers have been encouraged to give trouble-making students an ego boost.

New and comprehensive research on bullying, conducted by the University of California in Los Angeles, along with RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion, shows otherwise. Bullies, according to this study, are frequently considered the "coolest" kids in class and are popular with their peers. According to findings, 7 percent of the 12-year-olds studied were bullies, while their victims comprised 9 percent of the group.

"Bullies are popular and respected: they are considered the 'cool' kids," said Jaana Juvonen, UCLA professor of psychology, adjunct behavioral scientist at RAND. "They don't show signs of depression or social anxiety and they don't feel lonely.

"We hope that these findings help us dispel the myth that bullies suffer from low self-esteem," Juvonen said. "Our data indicate that bullies do not need ego boosters. Unfortunately, this myth is still guiding many programs conducted in schools. Instead, we should be concerned about the popularity of bullies and how to change the peer culture that encourages bullying."

Depression, social anxiety and loneliness are common among victims of bullies, who are nine percent of the students in the study.

"Victims are reluctant to talk about their plight," she said. They suffer in silence and often blame themselves. We need to provide students with educational settings in which they feel comfortable talking about their plight. But we also need to give kids tools to effectively deal with bullying. One method of doing so involves engaging students to talk about strategies that might help them stop bullying and tactics that make them feel better after being bullied."

Other useful information from the study:

- Six percent of the kids studied are bully-victims (this means they are both victims of bullies, as well as bullies themselves), and displayed higher levels of disruptive behavior and depression than any other group.
- Boys are twice as likely as girls to either be bullies, victims, or bully-victims.
- Bullying is associated with a wide range of problems, including poor mental health and violence.
- Victims of bullying complain of more headaches, stomachaches and colds than non-victims.
- The younger kids are, the easier it is to help them deal with bullies. Adults can role play situations with them, helping them try out different strategies for dealing with the problem.

New Year, New You

Make Year 2005 a year of self-improvement. Avon offers "Avon at Work," a free training session that teaches women the basics of projecting and attracting professional success.

Modules include Visual Poise, Wardrobing, Social Graces, Business Manners, and Time Management. Avon can bring this seminar to teachers at no cost if they can organize a group of 40 people to take part in the activity. For more information, call Mr. Francis Espiritu at 8642655 or email work@avon.com

Bilingual is Better

At Dartmouth College, researchers report that bilingual (speaking more than one language or dialect) children may be "smarter" than their monolingual peers. "Our findings show that bilingual children can perform certain cognitive tasks more accurately than monolinguals," says Laura-Ann Petitto, PhD. "Being bilingual can give you a cognitive edge."

The bilingual children in the study outperformed their monolingual peers. "We used to think that young bilingual children were disadvantaged because their language development was thought to be delayed and because learning two languages left them confused," says Petitto. "But in this study we found this is definitely not true." According to her, the bilingual children's enhanced cognitive skills are due to the increased computational demands of processing two different language systems.

Teachers should share this finding with parents and encourage those who speak another Philippine dialect to teach it to their children and to speak it at home apart from Filipino. It's a painless way to help kids boost their brain power!