



# REPORT ON ACTIVITIES 2009 / JULY 2011

Education  
& Solidarity  

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Network 



## INTRODUCTION

In the period between the Network's inaugural conference in May 2009 and the July 2011 General Assembly the Network launched its activities and developed its methodology and visibility, focusing on two objectives:

- Developing and promoting solidarity-based social protection systems for education professionals themselves and for the wider population
- Developing strategies for education and training in solidarity-based social protection.

**To launch the activities, the Network organised several exploratory missions** in each region of the world :

- in Europe: Russia,
- in Africa : Morocco, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- in Latin America : Argentina
- in North America : United States, Canada
- in Asia: China, Japan.

These missions enabled the Network to become familiar with the diversity of issues and explore possible lines of action and projects. Each mission resulted in the creation of new projects, which will be described in detail in the first part of this report on activities.

The launch of the Network also meant perfecting its **methodology and tools**.

The Network's tool box now includes:

- methodological frameworks, adapted to each category of project
- a project management framework including
  - o Project descriptions setting out the objectives, content, partners and means
  - o Project agreements between the Network and the partners for each project
  - o Mission descriptions setting out the framework for concrete action in the field
  - o Budget frameworks to keep costs in line and evaluate the funding needed.

### 1. The Network's core activities: projects

The projects initiated and supported by the Network cover five main areas:

- The creation of mutual societies
- Training, education and the fostering of a social protection culture
- Practical solidarity
- Partnerships and exchanges
- Advocacy and communication.

#### 1.1. *Creation and development of mutual societies*

Since its creation the Network has worked side by side with certain trade unions and organisations that would like to study, set up or develop solidarity-based social protection systems, based principally on the mutual society model. This is a long-term task whose results will not be seen immediately. We have also made contact with 10 interested sponsors (Lebanon, Niger, Costa Rica, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Russia, United States) but the Network has only been actively involved in three projects to date:

- Development of a health mutual for education professionals in Burkina Faso, within the framework of the setting up of a universal social protection floor, including universal sickness insurance, with the technical support of the International Labour Office (ILO); locally the project is being run by three Education International (EI) member unions, and supported by the Quebecoise national trade union centre Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ, Canada) and the National Education General Mutual (Mutuelle Générale de l'Education Nationale, MGEN, France)
- Support from the pensioners' mutual Union Mutualiste Retraite (UMR, France) for the Education and Sciences Employees Union of Russia (ESEUR, Russie), for development a solidarity based mutual pension fund
- Initial discussions and work on the model of a solidarity-based mutual health insurance scheme for teachers at the University of Wuhan (China) in cooperation with the University of Paris and the MGEN (France).

These projects should show their first concrete results in the second half of 2011, but will not be finalised until 2012. They should also enable the Network and its partners to draw their first lessons in order to support subsequent projects in the best possible way. In some cases the Network played a background role only, but contributed to the discussions and action of the trade union participants (as is the case at the moment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) or passed the case on to other partners (in the Lebanon).

## ***1.2. Training, education and fostering a social protection culture***

As the President underlined in his report, this is at the very core of what the Network is about: mobilising the world of education and the social economy to promote the training of education professionals and leaders, to initiate and support education for social protection and preventive health care, and in the longer term to contribute to the emergence and development of a culture of social protection.

With regard to **training professionals and leaders in social protection systems, notably mutual societies**, since its creation the Network has initiated or supported two types of project:

- Practical training for leaders of mutual societies: such as the programmes carried out with the MGEN's training centre, the Centre de Formation des Militants for the civil servants general mutual (Mutuelle Générale des Fonctionnaires MUGEF) in Côte d'Ivoire and the General Mutual for Public Administration Staff (MGPAP) and trade union leaders in Morocco, as well as the project carried out in Ouagadougou for mutual society and trade union leaders from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA);
- The development of a specialised training course and in the longer term a university qualification for the training of mutual society and social economy leaders, with the support of two projects initiated by Asociacion Federal de Educadores en Cooperativismo y Mutualismo (AFECYM, Argentina) and the MGEN in Latin America and in Europe with the Petro Maior University (Roumania): this work concerns both the content of modules and setting up an "e-learning" platform with the support of the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM, Canada).

**Education and fostering a culture of social protection** are the second part of this second subject area. The Network's start-up phase has been used to clearly define the framework for this action and to prepare a network of support essential to the success of projects in the countries:

Outlining and developing a strategy for social protection education was the subject of a project that the ILO and EI contributed heavily to and led to the definition of the criteria for the successful social protection education strategies:

- The setting up of a knowledge base on the subject (an initial database has been established with the ILO and is available on the website)
- A first discussion on the best way of developing tools and strategies for education in social protection and preventive health care, notably with the Inter-American Centre for Social Security Studies (CIESS, Americas)
- the launch of a Network of Social Protection Training Centres at the international level, beginning with National Social Security Academy (l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Sécurité Sociale (EN3S, France) and the CIESS (Americas), as well as the ILO Training Centre in Turin
- the dissemination of a publication, the "Network Notebooks" to share the results of research, experience and innovations in the field of education and training in social protection and preventive health care.

### **1.3. Practical solidarity**

In many countries social protection has been developed by means of financial solidarity at the initiative of social or occupational groups, notably education professionals. This local solidarity, which later became national, must henceforward take the globalisation of our societies into account. International professional solidarity could be the next challenge for the mutual society movement.

This was the spirit which drove the Network's commitment to promoting North-South solidarity between education professionals, through their trade unions or mutual societies. Several countries from the North have signed up to this movement: Canada, Australia, Sweden and France.

By means of a "preparatory project" to get the movement started, the Network worked on two aspects:

- setting out the guidelines for the transfer of funds, so that the 1 € solidarity contribution from the North reaches the South without any losses incurred in the transfer;
- above all, setting out the conditions that must be met by the organisation that redistributes the funds collected from its members in the South.

The Québécois trade union, the CSQ, will take part in the first practical experience of the "solidarity Euro" through the project to set up a mutual society in Burkina Faso, as soon as the mutual is up and running, and the health insurance contributions have been defined, as well as the contributions from the local members and the country's public authorities.

### **1.4. Partnerships and exchanges**

This area of activity must first of all be seen as **a means for mutual organisations to establish cooperation with each other and between their care establishments**. Hence two projects are underway between:

- The MGEN centre in Nancy and the MUGEf in Côte d'Ivoire

- The “Centre de Soins” in Paris and the MGPAP Medico-Social Complex in Morocco. An agreement on the twinning of the establishments was signed in both cases. The establishments exchange staff, work on subjects of shared interest such as patient reception ... and the results of this work will be the subject of an evaluation and feedback that will add to the Network’s knowledge base.

A Twinning Committee has been set up and will meet once a year to assess the activities carried out by the partners, in order to share the successes, innovations and interesting practices.

It has also become clear that it is important to work on **topics of shared interest**. Two topics were identified as a first step:

- The occupational health of education professionals, through initial cooperation with the National Education Association’s Health Information Network (NEA HIN, USA) and the MGEN’s Health Department. The first subject to be worked on will be teacher « burnout », and the aim is to collect the results of research from both sides of the Atlantic and discuss the causes and consequences of burnout and the tools for prevention; all this will then be used more broadly to mobilise teacher unions and mutual society partners and will be the subject of a conference in 2012.
- Ageing and dependency, a subject that concerns every country and in particular Japan and the European countries; work began in 2010 on preparing a mission to Japan on this subject.

The Network also serves as a meeting place for actors who want to initiate exchanges with other partners, one example in Europe being the MGEN and the British mutual healthcare society BENENDEN.

### **1.5. Advocacy and communications**

Advocacy and communications, the last main subject area cuts across all sectors and supports other projects. It has played an important role in making the Network more dynamic and more visible, and has enlarged the recruitment base.

In terms of advocacy, the Network has made itself known and acquired legitimacy thanks to its participation in many events:

- intervention in and or co-organisation of conferences on social protection: the IPSE conference in Liège (Belgium), the MGEN’s (France) International Day and the Social Economy Conference in Marseille (France)
- participation in internal EI events (African regional congress, a meeting of the francophone committee in Casablanca, the world women’s conference in Bangkok) and AIM events (General Assembly in Brussels, South America meeting in Buenos Aires).

The Network is also active in the **Coalition for the United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative**, where it is one of three associated NGOs working side by side with the United Nations, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and government agencies. Through its participation in this coalition it has been able to give strong support to activities in the field of social protection education.

The ESN is also **in partnership with other networks** from the world of education (such as the PRODERE programme in West Africa) and social protection (such as the GIP SPSI « Groupement d’intérêt public - Santé et protection sociale internationale » - public interest group for health and social protection in the international arena, or the sickness insurance platform in France) in order to develop discussion and future projects for 2011-2011.

The Network is of course **in contact with many potential partners** such as foundations and enterprises. Contact has been established with more than 20 of them. However there have been no tangible results so far in terms of financial partnership, unfortunately. That is one of the weak points of the Network's activities in its first two years.

Finally the Network has worked on **communications tools** to establish a steady flow of information and exchanges:

- by means of newsletters disseminated in the three languages of the Network every two months;
- by means of a website designed as a resource for members and partners: tool box, latest news, project information...
- by means of a blog and a Facebook page to facilitate a flow of information and exchanges among all those interested in the Network's activities.

## **2. Structure and organisation**

These activities meant that a structure needed to be given to the way the Network was run, to its different bodies, and the way it is organised.

### **2.1. The Network's staff**

In its start-up phase, the Network needed two people, each with their distinct roles:

- a Coordinator, who had taken part in the launching of the Network, and whose principal tasks are:
  - o project administration and running the projects with partners and members
  - o the development and regular follow-up of the communications tools, notably the Website.
  - o the administrative tasks surrounding the structures and membership
  - o keeping track of the budget
  - o participation in certain activities and projects
- A Managing Director, recruited in February 2010, whose tasks are:
  - o to implement the development strategies for activities and projects in line with the guidelines set out by the Executive Board, the Executive Bureau and the President.
  - o leading the advocacy and communications work
  - o developing partnerships and institutional relations.

### **2.2. The Network's bodies**

The Network adopted and registered its articles of association, as a Belgian entity, at the end of 2009. Since then the Network's statutory bodies have met on a regular basis:

- The Executive Board met twice in 2010 and has met once in 2011 to define the guiding principles and give an impetus to the ESN's activities;
- The Bureau has met 10 times, including once in a seminar, in January 2010; these regular meetings have been used to:
  - o enter into the details of the guidelines to turn them into concrete areas of work



- clarify, at the January 2010 seminar, the Network's policy guidelines and provide the textual material that made it possible to draft the Manifesto and launch the website
- follow-up the activities of the professionals in the Network,
  - By enabling the launch of projects and monitoring the implementation of the projects
  - By guiding, enabling and monitoring the implementation of advocacy and communications tools and activities.

### 2.3. *Operating the Network*

The Network has two principle modes of operation:.

**The project mode** was adopted for its five main areas of work. Its methods were outlined in the introduction ; members and partners run most of the project, while the role of the Network is above all to:

- create the connections and the conditions needed to get the projects started
- provide project tools and frameworks
- learn from the projects carried out and share the results in order to feed into the knowledge base and improve practice, creating a virtuous circle.

The Network is however in a leadership role, and takes initiatives, exploring and seeking tools for unity.

**The regional mode**, which brings together actors from one region of the world in order to unite their energies and get them all to work together. This mode has only really been in operation in Latin America, with three meetings of the Network (two in 2010 and one in 2011).

## 3. *Membership of and support for the Network*

The networking we have adopted means, as we saw in point 2, that the head office of the Network is simply the figurehead of the network, while the activities are carried out by members and partners. Continuing to develop membership and partnerships is therefore essential to the success of the Network.

**Membership** - , In 2010 the Network had:

- Three founding members
- 29 active members, trade unions representing the teaching profession
- Four associate members from the social economy or interested in the topics the Network is working on: UMR, CASDEN, Groupe Lazard and OFI VALMO
- Three individual members from the world of education and mutual societies, who wish to make a personal contribution to the Network.

At the beginning of 2011, the Network was pleased to find that memberships were being renewed almost systematically, and that new associate members were joining its ranks, such as the UNMS (Belgium) and the LIGUE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT (France).

Despite these numbers, however, the membership base is insufficient:

- It is not enough to provide a significant part of the organisation's budget
- It's geographical coverage is over-concentrated in Europe, while North America, Africa, Latin America and Asia are still under-represented



- It still does not have enough members from the social economy (mutual societies, health care cooperatives...).

Similarly, **financial partners** are not yet ready to put money into the network, beyond the associated financial partners mentioned above. Despite having more than 40 active contacts, financial support was not forthcoming at the end of 2010. However partners may make a decision in 2011, notably on projects. In the meantime support for running the Network is non-existent to date, which is weakening its financial structure. The search for financial support must therefore be a top priority for 2011.

## CONCLUSION

Through its activities in 2009-2010 the Network has built up an undeniable reputation and dynamic. 2011 should be the year that consolidates all this:

- Through the completion of projects in the five main areas of work
- Through the confirmation of its institutional role at the international level, through its contribution to the work of the social protection floor initiative
- Through a strategy of dynamic and interactive communications which can be based on the tools developed in 2010
- Through the stabilisation of the Network's financial base.