

DIALOGUE

December, 2011

UNITY  POWER



PROGRESS

ST. LUCIA TEACHERS' UNION

Editorial

The St. Lucia Teachers' Union is moving forward, representing its members with fervor. The teachers' union has always been agitating for better wages and working conditions for teachers. We have been the leading voice in the education system, lamenting the plight of teachers and providing wisdom and guidance for the advancement of the education system in St. Lucia. Not always, however, are our voices heard. There are many challenges confronting us that we in the education system need to take stock of. Hence constant reflection and debate is necessary at all levels of the education system and we the SLTU must stand firm when advocating for our members, doing whatever it takes, within the laws of this country to ensure that our members rights are not violated.

During our observation of Teachers' Week 2011, we got an opportunity to reflect on the theme "Teachers for Gender Equality". Gender equality issues are very pertinent today. There is much debate on the marginalization and also empowerment of women. Additionally, the debate on male marginalization is also heightening. In this article I wish to focus on a matter of gender equality that is a bother to me. We

Inside this issue	
Editorial	2
Message from the President	3
My CUT Experience	4
Cut Camp Followers Log	4
Quotable Quotes	5
CUT Highlights	6
Netball Fever	8
Mr. Samuel	9
SLTU Football	10
Message from the chairperson	11
Highlights of Teachers' Week	12
Flash Back	15

live in a developing country and one would think that blatant discrimination against women would be a thing of the past. However in St. Lucia female teachers are being blatantly discriminated against. Why is it in our small developing country a female teacher is denied vacation because her maternity leave falls during the August vacation period? If you examine the private sector, there is no such thing. Even in the public service this violation of a woman's right is

nonexistent. It is only a teacher who in my opinion is being punished for becoming pregnant and giving birth during the August vacation. This issue further aggravates me when even some high level female officials within the Ministry of Education cannot agree on the fact that this is a violation of a female teacher's rights. We must stand firm on this matter.

We have yet another issue plaguing our education system such as the controversy with our Cuban Trained Teachers. Our Cuban Trained Teachers are still suffering because the Ministry of Education does not want to accept that those persons are trained and qualified teachers. Again the ministry demonstrates its total disregard for authority, this time the authority of the Joint Board of Teacher Training for the Eastern

Caribbean. They are the accreditation body for teachers in the Eastern Caribbean. Joint board has ruled that our Cuban Trained Teachers have met all requirements and that they can be considered as Qualified Teachers. Sometimes I wonder what is going on in the Ministry of Education.

Another issue in our education system that we must watch closely is the constant decline in our school population. This is also a matter for concern. The St. Lucia Teachers' Union is watching this closely as any action taken by the Ministry of Education to deal with this issue will affect us teachers. The union on many occasions has indicated to the ministry that the decline in population is an opportunity for them to implement some important programs within our schools. Let us hope that together we can forge a way forward on this matter, bearing in mind that teachers must not be disadvantaged by whatever initiatives are implemented.

In this special issue of Dialogue, more issues affecting us in the education system are discussed. The President in his message implores us to raise the bar by being professionals at what we do. Mr. David Samuel, a lecturer at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, provides some insight into Information Communication Technology and Education. Some of our members wrote on their experience at the 35th Biennial Convention of the Caribbean Union of Teachers' held in Barbados. This magazine also shows some of the highlights of Teachers' Week 2011.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all those who made a contribution to this magazine and also the members of the publications committee. As we read through this issue of Dialogue, let us take time to reflect on our practice. Perhaps we can do further reading on the issues and discuss them on SLTU's Facebook page. This will serve as some guidance for the executive on the issues.

I urge you to continue to support your union. We must always show solidarity for each other. As the saying goes "One for all and all for each", let us stand by our resolve to better our education system in St. Lucia



Long live the teachers of St. Lucia; long live the St. Lucia Teachers' Union

Don Howell
Public Relations Officer

Message from the President

Teachers week provided us with an opportunity to reflect on the education system, the role of education in our society and our work as professionals and the professionalism that we bring to the job.

Teacher professionalism has to be promoted and maintained in our education system at all times as it is a fundamental pillar that will make education what it ought to be. As teachers, we are responsible for the education and welfare of the students placed in our care. This suggests that we need to maintain standards for professionalism for the education system to be effective. As such we must accept that we are influential role models and so conduct ourselves professionally at all times.

The preamble of the SLTU's code of ethics states:

"The teacher as an individual has a number of responsibilities, one of these is the promotion of the esteem of the Teaching Profession in the eyes of the students and the public.

It must be understood, however, that the promotion of the profession does not mean building an elitist concept of the Teaching Profession; it means earning the respect and recognition of the community at large.

This respect and recognition will be earned as a result of the confidence which parents will place in teachers when they recognize the far reaching influence which the teachers' work has on the development of the society, and also on the significance which their work has for the community.

It is the teacher's personal commitment, love of children, strong sense of duty and identification with the interest of other workers which will (erase the outmoded concept of the teacher and) create and maintain a professional image."

I think it is wise that we are guided accordingly. Our professionalism must be reflected in our commitment to students, our relations to colleagues, our commitment to the profession, our commitment to our professional body (the SLTU) and our commitment to the education system and the community.

As professional education workers we must come to the realization that education has the power to transform lives. We must therefore at all times promote the concept of quality education for all. This makes the Education International theme for Teachers' Week 2011 very relevant to us. The theme, Teachers for Gender Equality, encourages all of us involved in education to promote equality within our education system and the wider society. In doing so, we must be prepared to combat all forms of discrimination based on gender or gender stereotypes.

SLTU as a trade union organization is in the business of defending rights. Therefore it has to be seen working to achieve gender equality within the society. In this regard the SLTU can be proud of the support that it has given to the promotion of women's issues through the work of its status of women committee.

We understand the issues of education are many however, through commitment to education we will overcome.

Julian Monroe
President



My CUT Experience

On August 6-13 I was in Barbados with a delegation of members of the St. Lucia Teachers' Union. We were there to attend the 35th Biennial Conference of the Caribbean Union of Teachers.



Stephanie Lawrencin

I must attest that this was a rewarding experience for me. It afforded me the opportunity to share Villa 148 with three other colleagues from St. Lucia. Two of whom I had never met before. We dealt with each other like sisters.

Also, I got to interact with other members from the sister unions at the various functions and activities such as the Grand Opening Ceremony of the conference and Cultural Night. We got to chat, dance, eat, joke and lime with each other.

The highlight for me however, was being an observer at the Women's Conference. I got to sit in and listened to reports from the presidents of the Status of Women's Committees in the region. Also, I got the opportunity to partake in group deliberations where I presented on behalf of my group. These presentations opened my eyes to the depth of numerous factors that affect Caribbean teachers such as:

- Advancing gender equality in Education unions
- Preventing Violence against Girls and women: the role of unions
- Transforming Gender Stereotypes through Education
- Teacher Migration and its impact on Female Teachers – what can unions do?

I also witnessed the election of officers for the CUT Executive 2011-2013.

Additionally, this was the time for our own President Mr. Julian Monrose to be elected as 3rd Vice President of CUT and I was there.

I am looking forward to making CUT part of my biennial vacation if it is God's will.

Long Live STLU and Long Live CUT!

CUT Camp Followers Log

By Randie Charmon

Villa 254, 148, 34, 35. How close were they? Close enough according to the camp manager "no place is far around". Attending C.U.T. as a camp follower was an experience. First the flight was delayed by two hours, so for those who don't know me let me inform you, I was happy it was delayed, not because I did not want to leave but because I had more time to support my local economy.

We arrived in Barbados close to ten p.m. There was transportation available to take us to our destination. On arrival at our residence the camp daddy was there (camp manger). We were assigned to villas and given directions to the common area for dinner (villa 54). After dinner we indulged in conversation and a few beverages, then headed to rest. Sunday morning was mass.

Sunday morning saw a half hour bus ride to service at St. Mathias Anglican Church. The service was good but after I felt abandoned by the host.

The camp followers began their journey on Monday. Yours truly did breakfast and was also responsible for lunch. This lunch would set the tone for the entire week. Somehow the rice served on that day was named "concrete rice", to this day I am yet to find out who coined the phrase. The Monday was the opening ceremony. The St. Lucian contingent was the

largest. The ceremony was a spectacle, the host put on a great event but again it ended in disappointment. The cocktail reception left plenty to be desired.

The next day was “Canaries Day 2k11”. We were not aware that there was a village of Canaries in Barbados, they have their own national anthem. Canaries Day was great. Hello Gwena. That afternoon to culminate Canaries Day we went to the pool. Some of us were extremely shy where as others were bold. There was a wedding on the same premises which was disturbing our aquatic aerobics. That same evening we went on an Oistins lime. The St. Lucian contingent made that lime a success, until we had arrived everyone was seated like they were at a funeral.

Upon our arrival the dead were brought back to life. Wednesday was a business day for most camp followers but the night was not. Party. There was a party, again it started like a funeral service. People were just sitting around drinking.

Then out of nowhere the St. Lucians started to



make an impact, first with two black berries. Have you ever heard of a black berry d.j. Ask any of the camp followers about that one. The restaurant we ate at on Thursday was spectacular. The name says it all Le Restaurant DeL'chefs Nu. Translation The Naked Chefs.

Thursday was the cultural night. This night solidified a special St. Lucian Barbadian connection. This brought about an offer of weekend flights to Barbados.

Friday night a few of us went to St. Lawrence Gap. One member of our party was playing hide and seek between Trinidad and Grenada. Saturday was a wind down day with persons preparing for departure and others wasting their time going to sell beer bottles. In all being a camp follower at C.U.T. was a great experience. Any member who's thinking about the next one I would advise you purchase your ticket now.

Quotable Quotes

The men and women who have the right ideals..... are those who have the courage to strive for the happiness which comes only with labour and effort and self-sacrifice, and those whose joy in life springs in part from power of work and sense of duty.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

CUT Barbados 2011 HIGHLIGHTS



Left - Delegates from St Lucia

Right - Sister Poyotte addressing the CUT opening Ceremony



Bottom - Swearing in a new CUT Executive



Left - St Lucia's delegates at the Closing Dinner

Bottom - St. Lucia Delegation to Barbados



Left - Mr. Monroe addressing the Conference

Right - Mr. Louisy filled with the spirit after church





Left - Discussion at the Breakfast Table



Bottom - President and PRO having Breakfast



Right - Our colleagues from Haiti



Right - Our ladies making us proud



Bottom - Drama at the CUT Opening Ceremony



Top - President at the Opening church service



Left - Our female delegates at CUT Status of women Conference



Right - Outgoing CUT President addressing the conference

Netball Fever

The SLTU Netball Team has participated in the



St. Lucia National Netball Associations' Commercial League Plus from its inception

several years ago. The team continues to be consistent in its participation in this tournament, by being able to ensure its teams' appearance each year. The team's composition throughout the years has changed, but the team still boasts a number of current and former national players, along with a wide cross-section of teachers from around the island.

Team teachers has performed creditable over the years always being placed in the winners circle or in the top three places. This year saw once again a very dominating performance by the team, which was able to advance to the

championship game against Best of Eleven. This highly anticipated encounter proved to be all that the spectators and players had hoped for. It was a keenly contested affair



with nail-biting action that kept spectators at the edges of their seats and tips of their toes. With much action and excitement the encounter ended with The Best of Eleven being the victors, while Team Teachers would have to settle for second place. The Union has remained firm in its resolve to support the team, and has played an integral part in the teams' existence and development. This team has always been and is the team to beat.

Bravo! To S.L.T.U., Bravo!

To Team Teachers.

THE DIGITAL GENERATION: IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.

Is there really a digital generation?

The term digital generation has been defined as the common name given to individuals born from the late 1990s to the present. So it describes children from probably pre-school age to their early teens. The rationale for this description probably has to do with the latest developments of high speed broadband internet, mobile phones, wireless internet access and iPod and iPad technology. There is, however, the argument that the generation actually begins from children born in the late 1980s. This is probably a more relevant argument considering the obvious affinity of teenagers and young adults for modern digital technology. There is also little argument that the digital revolution has had a profound impact on both the young and not so young. So even though this discussion concerns the digital generation, the points raised may well apply to individuals much older.

Characteristics of the digital generation.

The younger members of this generation have spent their entire lives knowing about and/or using personal computers, digital cameras, the World Wide Web, e-mail and text messaging, MP3 players, iPods etc. They witnessed the emergence of broadband internet access and wireless communication, allowing a world of knowledge to be accessed from almost anywhere using hand held devices. In addition to internet access, this includes GPS capabilities, high resolution photographs and the swapping of text messages and graphic images.

The generation is therefore highly connected especially with the advent of social networks like Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. Many of them can be very creative and innovative in the use of the technology. This can be readily seen with their uploading on YouTube.

According to Don Tapscott in his book 'Growing up Digital', "the generation is so bathed in bits (and bytes) that they think that it is all part of the natural landscape". From personal observations, it seems clear that a majority of young people spend most of their spare time using digital technology. This is not surprising considering not only the attractiveness of technology, but also the ease with which young people get to learn and use the technology. According to Tapscott, "For the first time in history, children are more comfortable, knowledgeable, and literate than their parents, with an innovation so central to society".

Some persons actually see this as a negative trend when comparing the present generation with previous generations. In their book 'Born Digital', John Palfrey and Urs Gesser indicated that the digital generation can seem both extraordinarily sophisticated yet strangely narrow. This view is probably based on the observation that today's youth appear

to be abandoning the kinds of hobbies, lifestyles, recreation and other activities of the older generations. Activities such as leisure reading, games like road cricket, marbles, leisure activities like kite flying are attracting less and less of our young people. Some may argue that this may just be the result of changing times. That may indeed be the case but the question is: what is attracting the youth away from these activities? The evidence suggests that it may be the digital world.

There are other observations that point to negative influences of the digital revolution on the youth. These include:

- Young people do not read and are poor communicators. All the time spent online is reflected in poor performances in schools and universities (Robert Bly)
- Some writers regard them as screenagers. They are net-addicted with little social skills and no time for sports or other health activities.
- Reduced inhibitions in the type of information placed online, seemingly unaware of possible consequences.
- Regular violations of intellectual property rights.
- Emergence of online bullying.
- Culture of violence is attributed by some to addiction to violent video games.
- Poor work ethic e.g. inappropriate use of social networks.
- Increase in narcissism e.g. encouragement of attention seeking by sites such as Myspace and YouTube.

Some writers have however pointed to some positive effects on the youth such as they are:

- More appreciative and tolerant of diversity
- They are smarter and quicker in accessing and using information
- They are creative and innovative in the use of technology.
- They care greatly about injustice and problems faced by society.

Impact on the education system

There can be little argument that digital technology has the potential to enhance every aspect of teaching and learning and hence transform primary and secondary education. Evidence however suggests that the impact on student outcomes have been disappointing. Why is this the case considering the amount of money spent to equip schools with the required technology?

Questions which arise are:

- Is the technology provided to schools sufficient to adequately engage the students in a digital learning environment?
- Are the teachers adequately trained to use the technology?
- Are the teachers adequately trained to incorporate the technology in the implementation of the curriculum in the various subject areas?
- Are the classrooms technology-ready?
- Is the school curriculum organized in such a way to allow the incorporation of digital technology?
- Are the subject curricula developed in such a way that digital technology is incorporated as an important aspect of the implementation?
- Are there adequate maintenance facilities?

Alison Bailey (2011) opines that the problem is not with the technology itself, but how it is deployed. She indicated that the technology is normally used to facilitate or augment existing practices rather than as a catalyst to transform teaching and learning.

Other issues pointed out in the literature are:

- The training of teachers focus on the use of the technology rather than exploring or explaining how it might transform learning. Therefore there is discomfort in the use of the technology in the classroom.
- Lack of adequate resources to develop a digital friendly curriculum.
- Emphasis on traditional approaches to instruction where the textbook dictates what students learn and how they are taught.
- Problem of adequate financing. So schools struggle with broken computers and faulty network connections.
- Prohibition of the use of technology that is readily available to students e.g. cell phones. Some of the more modern cell phones have much of the capabilities of laptop computers including internet access. They are banned in schools because of inappropriate use by students. Questions which arise from this are:
 - ◇ Is the problem the technology or how it is used?
 - ◇ If education is about preparing students for society, and cell phone technology is now the most popular digital device, isn't it counterproductive to totally prohibit cell



- phones in schools?
- ◇ Rather than banning cell phones, shouldn't schools be educating students about its use and misuse?
- ◇ Is the banning targeted more at protecting the reputation of schools than prevention of indiscipline? Don't students have access to cell phones (and its use and misuse) outside of school?

For successful digital integration into the education system, it is suggested that:

- Adequate funding is provided to integrate technology into every aspect of the education system.
- Adequate training to enable teachers to adequately use the technology in the classroom.
- A level of imagination and creativity on the part of the teacher and school administration to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the current generation of students. According to Bailey (2011) students of the digital generation expect schools to employ the kinds of technologies that they use in their personal lives.

Impact on the Social Environment.

Throughout human history, technological advances have been instrumental in facilitating social and economic changes in human societies. This was the case for the scientific revolution of the post-renaissance period in Europe, the industrial revolution of the 19th century and presently for the digital revolution.

There have been both positive and negative changes. Some may use the negatives as an argument against technology. The counter argument is that technology is not a determinant of change but a facilitator. Paula Uimonen stated that it is the social context in which technologies are introduced and implemented that determines their usage and impact. So the changes brought about by the digital revolution have more to do with the realities and aspirations of everyday people.

Data collected from countries around the globe indicate the tremendous growth in the use of digital technology confirming that the world is in the midst of a digital revolution.

E.g. Information from www.internetworldstats.com.

- Internet access in regions range from 11.4% of the population in Africa to 78.3% in North America.
- In the Caribbean, 25.2% of the population has internet access.
- In St. Lucia, 85.5% of the population has internet access (highest in the region).
- In St. Lucia, there are 48,300 facebook users.

With respect to mobile phones, the Regional Dialogue on the Information Society (DIRSI) did a study on mobile phones and poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean (Nov, 2007). For St. Lucia, they reported 105,700 cell phone users in 2005.

Results also showed that cell phones are highly valued by the poor as a tool for strengthening social ties and for increasing personal security. So the economic impact of accessing mobile phones is mediated by social capital variables.

This illustrates the point that we are social beings and any technology that facilitates effective human interaction will be successful.

As with any technology however, there are both positives and negatives to the human interaction facilitated by digital technology.

Some positives include:

- More effective mechanisms to keep in touch with loved ones.
- Development of global friendships.
- Online communities containing individuals with common interests.
- Instant messaging capabilities.
- Work at home possibilities with a consequent reduction in rush hour traffic
- GPS.
- Online consumer purchases.

There are however many negatives and this number is steadily increasing. These include:

- Less and less opportunities for personal interactions.
- Online predators and online bullying.
- Inappropriate use of the technology by children.
- Loss of man hours due to web surfing.
- Changing lifestyles of children.
- Identity theft.
- Addictiveness of online games.
- Cultural penetration



SLTU Football

By: Nigel "Cong" Francis

The SLTU 2011 Teachers' Week Football Tournament had certainly lived up to its anticipated hype. All members of the teaching fraternity anxiously awaited the commencement of this exciting competition where teachers from the North, South, East and West battled in friendly rivalries on the football pitch. Over the years, the tournament had increased in popularity and this year could have been considered the most exciting in the history of the tournament's existence.

Last year, there were joint winners as the north and East shared the spoils in a keenly contested finals in Micoud. This year, all four teams rallied their troops to ensure that one

team walked away with the coveted prize.

In the first round of matches, the North travelled to the South and hammered their opponents at home, sending a strong message to the other teams. The East also came out victorious as they edged out the West in a tough encounter. Last year's finalist proved that they are ready for battle.

In the second round of games, the North were held to a one all draw by the West, despite countless opportunities to put the game away. The East continued in their winning ways as they easily defeated the lads from the South. In the third round of matches, the North recaptured their fine form as they defeated the East. Both teams secured a place in the finals for a third consecutive time.

Despite fierce competition from the East in the finals, the North proved that they were a cut above the rest. Superb goal keeping from Randy Poleon and an organized backline ensured that the North were in it to win. The retired Gilroy "Ezi" Hall kept the East at bay with flashbacks of his youthful days in the midfield. In form striker "Worms" continued to pressure the defense of the East. The East however were relentless as they gave a good fight to stay in the game. With scores tied at one all in the eightieth minute, a surge of aggression and technical prowess from yours truly resulted in the winning for the North. The North were victorious once again for the third consecutive year in the prestigious SLTU football tournament.

I take this opportunity to applaud all the footballers in the competition especially my teammates from the North. We are looking forward to winning next year's competition.



Message from Chairperson

Status of Women Committee

Vern Charles



World Teachers Day 2011 was observed under the theme **"Teachers for Gender Equality."** A challenging theme as gender equality is a concept which can be easily misunderstood and is highly influenced by the mindset which one holds, based largely on socialized patterns of thinking. There are also the varied perspectives which one can consider when engaging in such discourse.

In our St. Lucian context our women teachers have come a long way in their development. Approximately 85% of our trained teachers are women who have been afforded reasonable terms of employment. Though women have made strides in numbers and academic accreditation, it can be noted that many of our science and technology subjects remain taught mostly by males and the larger part of our male teaching population can be found in secondary and tertiary institutions. Does this say something if anything at all?

There are also other issues which crop up when one thinks of gender equality and teaching. Teachers are looked upon as role models and consequently students emulate not only what we teach but also how we behave. Should gender equality for teachers therefore focus more on recruiting trained men into the profession, especially in the primary schools where our boys can be impacted upon from an early age?

Is there a correlation between the lack of male role models, both in the primary and secondary schools and the underperformance of boys at

those institutions?

Do our teaching styles cater to the learning styles of both sexes or does it lean towards a bias for one sex and is there any possibility that this can change when many teachers are not conscious of this? Sadker (1994) expresses it clearly by saying "Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same textbook, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls receive very different educations."

The concept of gender equality in relation to teachers and teaching is wide-ranging and as we discuss issues relating to such we begin to unravel its magnitude. As teachers move on from teachers' week activities, let us remain cognizant of the theme and continue to work in our classrooms to promote gender equality in our thinking and in our professional duties.

~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~ 0 ~

Castries Branch Education Lecture



Ecumenical Service



Education Conference



Football Pics





Retirees Function



Teachers' Week 2011



Flashback on Past SLTU DIALOGUE

DATE: MARCH 2001

MORE MEMBER PARTICIPATION NEEDED

(By Eric Regis)

31st March, 2001 will mark the end of the present triennium. Collective bargaining for the next period has not started through no fault of SLTU, as several letters have been written to the Permanent Secretary of the Public Service to initiate the process. SLTU has also selected its negotiating team, which is headed by the President.

With this in mind, we must begin to critically examine the last agreement with a view to making the next better. To this end the General Secretary has written circulars asking for teachers' input for the next round of negotiations. Teachers must be careful not to make the mistakes of the past, as this would indicate that we have not learned. In the past teachers had all the best excuses in their opinion for not attending special meetings convened to discuss negotiations and after the collective agreement had been signed expended all available energies accusing persons on the National Executive and Secretariat of 'selling out' to the government.

These persons always complain that Saturday or after school meetings were inconvenient as they have other more important business to transact. Such meetings, they argue, should take place on a school day. But if SLTU is not engaged in industrial action, teachers should not boycott classes just to hold a meeting. It does not auger well for the negotiating process. Those same complainants are the people who, when given the day at the end of the third term, always have more important business to transact on the given day.

Members must note that all power of the union is vested in the Biennial Convention, Annual General Meeting and other Special General Meetings whenever they are convened. These gatherings are so powerful that all decisions taken by the Administrative Secretariat and National Executive Committee have to be ratified or can be overturned by these meetings which, also, have the authority to adopt policies for the advancement of the organization. Members must make all efforts to attend this year's Annual General Meeting which will be held at the Babonneau Secondary School on Wednesday 12th April, 2001.

Teachers' Week Continued

