

The report of the Third Commonwealth Teacher Research Symposium
is dedicated to the memory of

Steve Sinnott

who advocated relentlessly for the rights of
Commonwealth teachers and gave the moral support of the
National Union of Teachers to research for their
professional advancement and development



1951 — 2008

General Secretary, National Union of Teachers (2004 — 2008)

Convenor, Commonwealth Teacher's Group (2002 — 2008)

Chairperson, Commonwealth Working Group
on the Professional Development of Teachers (2004 — 2008)

"...as a teacher in my soul, I remind young people joining teaching that they are to be part of the best and most important of all professions. I say to them that when they make promises to children they should not break them. The same must apply to governments. No breaking of the promise of Universal Primary Education — all children in school by 2015. Every child in the world should be able to claim their right to education"

- Steve Sinnott, Commonwealth Public Lecture, Sierra Leone, November 2005

Foreword



UNAIDS figures for 2007 estimate that 68 per cent of the global total of 33.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS are in sub-Saharan Africa. In spite of international attention, this is a pandemic which is still out of control. HIV/AIDS is a life-threatening illness which has a particular impact on children and teachers. It challenges the global ambition to provide a worthwhile education for all.

It was therefore appropriate that the latest research symposium in the series established after the adoption of the ground-breaking Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol in 2004 should take place in southern Africa. The symposium was not restricted to the issues of teacher loss and combating stigma, but also discussed how the education system itself can inoculate societies against the stress and despair surrounding HIV. Support for testing and positive living can start with teachers in schools and influence whole communities.

Findings shared at the symposium included the importance of peer group work among teachers, the radical drop in levels of infection in countries such as Kenya, and the key role of rights, education and equality for women. This report will be of interest to education ministries and educators throughout the Commonwealth. It is important that it is followed up at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM) and its associated civil society conference, which will take place in Malaysia in June 2009.

The peoples of Commonwealth countries have borne a disproportionate amount of the suffering arising from HIV/AIDS. The Commonwealth, therefore, can lead the world in finding evidence-based solutions.

Richard Bourne

