Electronic equipment in BC schools may be fueling violence against women

by Greg Queyranne
Centre for African Development and Security

Largely unseen and unknown here in Canada, the world’s deadliest war rages on in what has been called the rape capital of the world—the Congo, in the heart of Africa. And we, as consumers, are indirectly contributing to this violence through our purchases of electronic equipment.

Virtually all of our electronic gadgets—from computers, printers, and faxes to cell phones, iPods, and LCD projectors—need a number of minerals to work. Yet, some of these minerals come from mines that rebels, militias, and abusive units of the Congolese army exploit to fund their war efforts.

Some of the electronic equipment used in schools throughout British Columbia may therefore be funding unspeakable acts of violence half a world away in the most lethal conflict since World War II. Since 1998, war in the Congo has led to the deaths of over six million people, with over 200,000 women, girls, men, and boys viciously raped.
The four key conflict minerals in our electronics are tin, gold, tantalum, and tungsten, which are used as a solder in circuit boards, to coat wiring, to store electricity, and to make cell phones vibrate, respectively.

Brutal armed groups in the eastern regions of the Congo control mines and tax the trade in these conflict minerals, earning them hundreds of millions of dollars every year to buy more weapons, enrich corrupt commanders, and kill.

One of the most horrific—and effective—tactics that these soldiers and rebels employ to access more and more lucrative mines is rape as a weapon of war. Armed groups often use sexual violence against villagers in mineral-rich zones to terrorize, traumatize, and humiliate, so that people will flee their homes, while those who remain are more easily controlled.

In the spring of 2010, I traveled to Congo’s war zone to learn more about what I had been reading. The countless stories of violence and courage shocked me but also inspired me.

One of the most amazing people I met was Dr. Denis Mukwege, the region’s top gynecologist and director of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, the capital of Congo’s South Kivu province. Rumored to have been a top nominee for the Noble Peace Prize in 2009, Mukwege humbly treats seemingly endless numbers of survivors of some of the worst acts of sexual violence. Some of the women he sees return a few years later, after having been raped a second time.

As Mukwege explains, armed groups attack villages near mines and commit barbarous acts to force people to leave. “The trauma of being forced to watch one’s mother raped, one’s father sodomized—it leads people to flee. They use rape as a weapon of war. It is inexpensive and very powerful. It works very well,” he adds.

In July, however, the financial reform bill that the Obama administration signed into law contains provisions that require electronics companies to find out if their electronic products fuel violence in the Congo. Until recently, electronic giants simply stated that they relied on the good word of their suppliers that the minerals were clean. Thanks to these provisions, in April 2011 the US government will establish specific regulations forcing companies to declare whether or not they are conflict-free, starting with the first fiscal year thereafter, so we can know which companies and which pieces of consumer electronics contain conflict minerals from Congo’s war zone.

There is a similar momentum here in Canada, with BC Member of Parliament Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra) having submitted a motion on this issue in Parliament in December, as well as a bill on the topic introduced in the House in September by MP Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre).

Until the US law comes into effect and the Canadian initiatives are passed, we can use the investigative work done by the American NGO—the Enough Project, which is monitoring and ranking the big 21 electronics companies on their efforts to keep Congo’s conflict minerals out of our electronics. Their ongoing assessments of these companies can be found on their website (www.enoughproject.org).
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aybe it’s the time of year
that has me thinking
in weather metaphors. In my
work with the BCTF’s Status
of Women Action Group, I
find myself thinking a lot about
how to be an effective ally for
young women facing violence
and oppression. I find myself
using the analogy of rays of
light and clouds of fog. For me,
being an ally means shining
light on what’s hidden and
ensuring I don’t contribute to the
fog—forces that mask or hide
oppression.

I've been mulling this over
in a concerted way for years
now. When I started teaching
Social Justice 12 in an adult
education center in Vancouver,
the students, and the young
women in particular, quickly
informed me of how normalized
sexual harassment and assault
were in their secondary
schools. I reflected back to my own
secondary school experience
and realized that the same
had been true for me; it was
a shocking realization, not
primarily because it had
happened, but rather because I
had never before overtly labeled
the sexual violence happening
around me. It was as though
it had taken place in a fog that
neither us, nor the adults around
us, were able to recognize it for
what it was, and I want to know
why.

I was inspired when I saw legal
action in both North Vancouver
and Abbotsford, holding schools
and boards accountable for
non-intervention in student
harassment and homophobic
violence. It was reassuring to
think that adults, like the ones
who had turned a blind eye in
me and my students’ secondary
schools, were being shaken out
of the comfortable complicity
afforded by such blindness. I find
myself asking, if such recourse
is available for students who are
assaulted or harassed, why have
I been unable to find examples
of such cases on behalf of young
women, given the prevalence of
such things in their schooling
experiences? Why does this fog
continue to envelop and hide
violence against women?

It wasn’t until I recently found
myself in a First Call Coalition
meeting listening to a speaker
from Women Against Violence
Against Women (WAVAW)
that the pieces finally fell into
place. We were shown headlines
describing youth experiences
of violence at school, but the
headlines read, “teasing at
school” and “peer bullying” to
describe what drove a student
to suicide. Looking at them, I
felt like I was seeing through
the fog. When harassment is
branded teasing, and assault is
called bullying, criminal violence
is normalized. Such experiences
become part of what is accepted, even expected, in the daily lives of youth.

One of my students recounted to me an experience from her early years in secondary school about being followed and assaulted by boys at school who targeted her with homophobic slurs. An adult in the school found her crying one lunch hour, and after hearing the student's story, told her, "They are just teasing. They probably like you." An area that came up repeatedly in my discussion with these students was PE class. One student spoke of experiences that very much paralleled my own, of boys who, during team sports, would grab them, fondle them, and even pin them to the ground. Others spoke of boys who harassed them on the basis of appearance, sometimes even entering the girl's change room to do so. Most of the young women said that they had never considered reporting such behaviour, and the small group who did report said they quickly gave up when the response they were continually given was, in essence, that "boys will be boys."

Rhetoric is powerful. For instance, I teach my English classes how metaphors can make the abstract tangible, such as the way Maya Angelou allows us to viscerally understand oppression through the metaphor of a caged bird. In this case, though, it's the danger of euphemism—teasing and bullying do exist, but they aren't the same thing as criminal harassment or sexual assault. Boys will indeed be boys, nor would we want them to be otherwise, but to suggest that assault is the inevitable result of boyhood demeans boys and is dangerous to boys and girls alike. As allies, we need to help our students see behind these euphemisms that create the fog behind which violence is veiled. By helping them to understand what assault and harassment are, and naming them as such when we see them, we begin to shine light into the dark places where violence hides.

Note: The BCTF Status of Women Action Group is currently developing a workshop and working with our community partners, including We Can, to help teachers name and address these issues.
Does life really get better?

by Wayne D. Madden, retired Alberta teacher

In wake of recent suicides of LGBTQ youth, a concerted effort has been made to tell young gay teens that “Life gets better.” These messages are crafted in the hope that those troubled by bullying and lack of support will find hope and not consider suicide. While the messages are important, they fail to recognize that kids need support and change right now. It is all well and good for adults, both gay and straight, to tell young people, “Life gets better,” but two realities are being ignored.

First and foremost, adults forget perceptions of time and circumstances are much different for youth than for adults. As we get older, time moves faster, but for youth, time is slow. A year or two years of bullying in school seems like an unending nightmare. Furthermore, teens are being told these years are supposed to be the best years of their lives—whether they are or not is debatable—and seeing their peers having good times, friends and experiences, life is hell for bullied youth. Going to school is particularly difficult for LGBTQ youth if adults do not provide adequate support or send messages that they, the students, are the “cause of their own problems.” Telling these young people that “life gets better” in a few years just doesn’t cut it.

Secondly, LGBTQ youth do not have to look far to see evidence that life does not necessarily get better. Many are tossed into the street by their families or given clear messages that being gay is not okay. If they come from conservative religious homes, they may face efforts to force them into so-called reparative therapy or other forms of quack counseling from those who deliberately ignore scientific and psychological evidence concerning homosexuality in favour of the questionable interpretations of religious scriptures and teachings of church leaders.

Young people are not stupid; LGBTQ youth can comprehend mixed messages. For example, when they hear even LGBTQ positive leaders like Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama make proclamations that life gets better, while, at the same time, opposing marriage-equality rights for lesbians and gay men, they understand they are going to continue to be second-class citizens.

LGBTQ students hear adults oppose school policies to stop homophobic bullying, or make statements that bullying is part of growing up and that it is good for youth because it “toughens them up.” They hear legislators opposing legislation to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination, or make statements that gay men with HIV/AIDS live perverted lifestyles and do not deserve needed healthcare and living support. Finally, they hear proposals from the religious right and their political supporters to recriminalize homosexuality. The obvious conclusion is that life is not going to get better.

Clearly, action is needed. Passing laws and regulations to stop bullying is only the first step. There are plenty of laws and regulations on the books but they are totally useless because they are never enforced. To ensure regulations are effective, provincial ministries of education and boards of education must have procedures in place to require accountability. It is essential for schools and boards to provide documentation that show enforcement of regulations and consequences for homophobic bullying, are effective.

Allowing Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in secondary schools is a great idea, but what is to be
On Wednesday, February 23, 2011, schools all over the province celebrated Day of Pink. The Day of Pink was started in 2007 by two students in Nova Scotia who responded to a classmate being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. The boy was threatened because bullies perceived him as gay for wearing a pink shirt. As a response, two of his classmates urged the students in their school to show up the next day wearing pink as a sign of solidarity. Since then, the Day of Pink has grown internationally as a way for students to stand up against homophobia and transphobia in schools. It is not a generic antibullying day as some would believe.

Unfortunately, the Day of Pink often gets recognized in schools devoid of any content to its origin as a homophobic-bullying incident. One of the consequences is a disconnect between homophobia/transphobia and the Day of Pink. For example, a colleague of mine told a story of her child who witnessed a classmate being taunted as gay because he was wearing pink on the Day of Pink.

As a teacher and a teacher-librarian, I have the opportunity throughout the year to talk to students and read books about homophobia/transphobia and gender stereotypes. Books are a great way to look at gender myths and their effects on girls and boys.

In December, students at Hastings Elementary School saw a performance that dealt with racism and homophobia. This helped to create a teachable moment in which I could have a conversation with my students about gender stereotypes. One of my students interrupted the conversation at one point and exclaimed “who invented these stupid gender rules anyways?”

It is crucial that conversations like these take place at the very beginning of the school year in order for students to feel safe in our classrooms regardless of how they express their gender.
When we overlook transphobia and homophobia happening throughout our schools, we are unknowingly contributing to schools that don’t include all our students and their families. We can do better. We can make it better.

Although the Day of Pink offers endless teaching possibilities, it is essential we do not wait until February 23 each year to talk about gender diversity, homophobia, and transphobia. By dealing with these issues consistently throughout the year, we can make sure our classrooms and school environments are welcoming and celebratory of all identities.

For more resources, visit the Pride Education Network website (www.pridenet.ca), or the BCTF social justice LGBTQ web page (bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106).

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**A true story**

by Dorothy Smith, CASJ
—Peace and Global Education Action Group member

Every day when I walked to school and home again, I would see Mikey, a 19-year-old youth with Down syndrome standing on the sidewalk in front of his house, rocking from one foot to the other, grinning from ear to ear whether or not it was sunny. He lived directly across the road from my school, but he was bussed out someplace every day. I didn’t know where; it was 1960 and I was only 9 years old.

“Hi Mikey” I’d call. “Hi there,” he’d reply, without a break in his perpetual movement. He often held a folded newspaper in his hand, which he waved to and fro as he rocked.

Mikey was friends with everyone, he didn’t know how not to be friends. He loved talking to other kids, especially if we stopped for a few moments, but he was just as happy to see the kids who hated him—not knowing the difference until they threw stones at him. They threw stones at him regularly. They would walk by, laughing and mimicking him; he would laugh too, and turn to greet them, thinking that’s what you do when you meet someone.

He never learned to go inside to avoid them until they actually hurt him. I would sometimes be close enough to see the bullies coming, and to tell him, “Go inside, Mikey, your mum wants you,” but I was too often too far away and he would watch their approach with the same grin that he always displayed. From the distance, my heart would sink as he wouldn’t realize anything was wrong until the first stone landed.

I felt so sad for Mikey. I didn’t understand why he let nasty people hurt him again and again. Is it human nature? Is it something we all do? I felt bad, too, that I didn’t come up with a plan until years later. I could have made a note of who was in that gang. I’m sure I could have found a way to meet up with a couple of them one-on-one. If I had had the courage to approach even two of them, introduce them quietly to Mikey, educate them as to how naive and affectionate he was then perhaps I could have made a difference. But I didn’t.
By the time I turned 19, Mikey had been put into a residential institution and was no longer a part of my life, but the effect his short presence had on me was quite considerable. I decided to work with similarly vulnerable young people. When I was working in jobs in special homes, I worked with staff who were caring and had a mindset similar to my own. We could change the wet sheets and diaper of a crying 20-something-year-old child at four in the morning and then stand still for a glorious moment to share the enjoyment of staring out the window at the most beautiful dawn of a new day. We’d exchange smiles before trudging down to the laundry with the soiled linen.

My father was angry and upset: “Why would you want to work there?!” He didn’t understand and he was scared that these big clumsy young oafs might turn around and hurt me or even rape me. I tried to explain that they weren’t like that and what they needed was friendship, but he was set against my ambitions. I loved my father, and so to please him, I finally agreed to qualify as a teacher. I would always have the choice to work with the “mentally handicapped,” as people like Mikey were then referred to in my part of the world, or I could teach in a regular school.

My father was proud when I made the decision to be a teacher, but he remained confused when I volunteered to spend my vacation time working respite care in a home for the handicapped. The hours were long, the work was sometimes challenging, but always heaps of fun. I wanted my dad to come and see it for himself, to experience the sense of community that was there. Unfortunately, he died before that could happen. I couldn’t figure out what was wrong.

Here were vulnerable members (youth) of my community in need of a little understanding, and ordinary people like members of my own family, were in need of awareness-raising to be able to understand them.

Well, that was a long time ago now. Things have changed, haven’t they? I think that the general public is more aware these days of the variety of learning differences, and it is not such a major concern for me anymore. But I can’t help wondering if history is repeating itself. Maybe my observations of, and interactions with Mikey, were just a practice run for what’s ahead.

This time the victim isn’t Mikey, or Edward, or Alan, or any of the other kids I looked after in those days, it’s the kids with special needs in my class. It’s the children with special needs in your class, too. The victims are all of our students because they’re all special, and they all have needs; as educators we know that those needs are not currently being met. So I’m asking every teacher who reads this to speak to just a couple of people with whom you would not normally discuss school matters. Let’s get the word out. Let’s make a difference.

- A report from the BC Association of School Business Officials, speaking for school district secretary treasurers, states that the Kindergarten to Grade 12 system needs an extra $300 million in the coming school year just to maintain current levels of service.

- A new roof for BC Place costs $500 million.
  (BCTF website February 9, 2010)

- Until 1995, this country enjoyed the world’s highest level of per capita public investment in education, higher even than the amount spent by our much richer neighbours to the south.

- By 2002, Canadian education spending had fallen a full 17.5% behind that of the United States.

- Over the two fiscal years between 1995–96 and 1997–98, (Paul) Martin achieved an impressive $33 billion turnaround in Ottawa’s fiscal position, moving from a $30-billion deficit to a $3-billion surplus. The biggest rollback was in transfers to the provinces, money used to fund education and healthcare.

- It would take an increased annual education expenditure of over $21 billion across all levels of government in Canada to return to the per capita spending position we enjoyed relative to the US in 1995.

The Walrus, November 2009
I felt fortunate and blessed to join the Annual Women’s Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women that was held on February 14, 2011 in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES), on the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh shared traditional territories. The march started at the corner of Main and Hastings Streets in Vancouver, where family members spoke to honour and remember the lives of the missing and murdered women.

The march took us through the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, with stops to commemorate where women were last seen or found. I found this experience to be very emotional and inspiring; it was great to see the number of people who attended. My heart is heavy and my thoughts go out to the families of the missing and murdered women.

I raise my hands in honour and respect to the organizers of this event. It was organized and led by women in the DTES because women, especially Indigenous women, face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis. The march allowed people to come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice.

Let’s all help to end violence against women. Violence is never acceptable; every life is precious and we all must continue to advocate for justice for the murdered and missing women.

“One in three women may suffer from abuse and violence in her lifetime. This is an appalling human rights violation, yet it remains one of the invisible and under-recognized pandemics of our time.”

Nicole Kidman

Marjorie Dumont, C’tan
Wet’suwet’en Nation
(roots are also of the Gitksan Nation)
BCTF Assistant Director, Aboriginal Education
Professional and Social Issues Division
Secondary school Gay/Straight Alliances can make a difference

by Vic Gladish, Chilliwack teacher-counselor, and Clarke Fryer, former Chilliwack student

Sardis Secondary School has had a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) for nearly 10 years. This Fraser Valley school and community would still be an unlikely place for a GSA if it wasn’t for a young man who, in his last years of secondary school, decided that he had to do something to turn the tide of homophobia, which was an unfortunate part of his school and community experience, even before he knew he was gay.

In 2001, Clarke Fryer approached me, his school counsellor, stating that he had recently come out and that he was eager and felt compelled to help improve the lives of LGBTTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, and questioning) students at Sardis Secondary School before he graduated and moved on. Fryer just needed to know where to start and to have an ally. We decided to travel to Victoria to attend a BCTF workshop on how to start a GSA. Following that, and with our newly acquired knowledge, we next met with the school counsellors and administrators. With their support, Fryer, his mother (Allison Gaudet), and I then met with the school Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Both moved and excited by the courage of these two, the PAC gave unanimous approval to organize our club, with one condition—that it be known as the Diversity Club rather than the GSA Club. The Diversity Club came into existence in March 2001 and has run nearly continuously ever since. The club has, over the years, had several student leader/activists at the helm and has undertaken many projects—pizza sales to raise funds, days of silence, social evenings, dances, our first Pride Week, guest speakers on homophobia, and over the past year, lobbying the board of education for a policy regarding the safety of LGBTTQ students and staff.

My main motivation for writing an article at this time stems from a recent exchange of e-mails with our founding Diversity Club/GSA president, Clarke Fryer, about what has occurred since our board of education’s passing of the aforementioned policy. The following is an edited compilation of Mr. Fryer’s messages.

It’s been a while since we last got to talk. I am sending you a message in regards to some of the more local events that are happening in the media right now that I think need to be addressed by the Diversity Club. I am sure that, as a teacher and someone who has been there to help support the gay students at SSS, you are aware of the wave of suicides taking place all over North America and even our own country. I had heard a lot about it but didn’t realize how close to home it was hitting until I found out about the two young ladies who killed themselves back in Ontario. This is just unacceptable and it really hurts me to think that these things could be prevented if only they had someone to talk to, but I think the issue runs a lot deeper than that! I was trying to think back to my high school days and really figure out what made being a gay student so hard. Part of it was others finding out or being bullied, but one of the biggest issues was the feeling of being alone and having no support. And I just don’t mean support from a group of people like the GSA, but just other allies. I remember one of the biggest things was when gay issues came up in class, people slandered gay people out loud and there was no one to say anything to stop it. I don’t think teachers realized what they could say or do to handle those kinds of situations. Nothing was said and the kids making the comments would continue without any kind of discipline, which allowed them to view their behaviour and their words as acceptable. However, a young gay person witnessing this would not view that person as an adult in whom s/he could confide for help or guidance. This, although seemingly a very minor situation, is actually a lot more important than we think. When students see adults as supportive, they may start to see that they have allies they can turn to for help in finding people to talk to, such as yourself and other counsellors in the schools. If the teachers are not informed about where to find this information, then the students could feel isolated and cut off and will likely continue to feel depressed. We need teachers who are allies and on the students’ side so that kids will start to see that being gay isn’t scary and that they have support from everyone who cares about their well-being.

I can’t help but think how awful I would feel if even one Sardis Secondary School student fell victim to suicide and there was something I could have done to better reach that person, and to help prevent the situation. Other secondary schools in our district need to try to implement the same thing that Sardis Secondary School is doing. Having one school with a GSA is great, but there are students all over the district who are dealing with the same issues and they all need support. Another consideration is to post ads for crisis help lines and information about LGBTTQ topics in the counseling department of our schools. Kids read these ads. There is information about teen pregnancies and...
safe sex in our counseling department but very little to let kids know that LGBTQQ issues can be discussed. Something that simple could make all the difference in the world to one of our students who is dealing with LGBTQQ and gender-identity issues.

If you wish to correspond with either Clarke Fryer or Vic Gladish, please use the following e-mail addresses: clarke_fryer@hotmail.com; vic_gladish@sd33.bc.ca.

For more information on starting a GSA at your school, visit www.pridenet.ca.

EDITOR’S NOTE
The Chilliwack School District is one of the most recent ones to adopt an LGBTQQ policy. Twelve of sixty districts have policies. You can find them online at bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=17994. If your district does not have a policy or action plan for dealing with antihomophobia education issues, please contact James Chamberlain: 604-871-1842, or toll-free 1-800-663-9163, local 1842, e-mail jchamberlain@bctf.ca.

Our Social Justice Movement: Inspiring Schools and Communities

FILM FESTIVAL (All Welcome)

Below is a list of the films being shown on Friday, April 15, 2011 from 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport in Richmond. Screening of the films will be followed by a discussion with the directors and producers of the films.

The Spirit Has No Colour

Concept, interviews, and associate producer: Norma-Jean McLaren
Directors and producers: Nicholas Kendall and Keet Neville

We are excited to offer a premier showing of this film, which is a joint production of the Police Academy at the Justice Institute of British Columbia, 42nd Street Consulting, and Orca Productions.

The film covers a variety of topics, including:
- the history of Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples), particularly in BC
- the role of police in the enforcement of the laws of Canada that today are deemed to have been damaging to the Aboriginal peoples, destructive to their culture, language, spiritual values and practices, and based on a belief of cultural inferiority
- the experience of the Aboriginal peoples, showing what police will see on the streets and in the communities today, both the powerfully positive and the profoundly negative
- the consequence of generations of children being taken from their families and entered into residential schools, which systematically destroyed family systems, and any possible learning of family practices and parenting skills
- connecting issues of drug and alcohol abuse, family disintegration, and loss of identity to the sexual, psychological, physical, and other abuses common in the schools.

For further information, contact Norma-Jean McLaren at njmclaren@telus.net.

See websites: Orca Productions, orcaproductions.com; The Spirit Has No Colour thespirithasnocolour.ca.

Crude Sacrifice: You Can't Reclaim Humanity

Director: Lawrence Carota

This film looks at how the community of Fort Chipewyan, in northern Alberta, is affected by the exploitation of Canada’s tar sands and how the federal and provincial governments are dealing with local concerns. People in the community can no longer drink the water or eat the fish and game that have sustained them for thousands of years. Leading scientists and Aboriginal residents discuss the environmental and health issues surrounding the world’s largest construction project.

Schooling the World

Director: Carol Black
Producer: Jim Hurst

If you wanted to change an ancient culture in a generation, how would you do it? You would change the way it educates its children.

The US government knew this in the 19th century when it forced Native American children into government boarding schools. Today, volunteers build schools in traditional societies around the world, convinced that education is the only way to a better life for Indigenous children. But is this true? What really happens when we replace a traditional culture’s way of learning and understanding the world with our own? Schooling the World takes a challenging, sometimes funny, ultimately deeply disturbing look at the effects of modern education on the world’s last sustainable Indigenous cultures.

Beautifully shot on location in the Buddhist culture of Ladakh in the northern Indian Himalayas, the film weaves the voices of Ladakhi people through a conversation between four carefully chosen original thinkers—anthropologist and ethnobotanist Wade Davis, a National Geographic explorer-in-residence; Helena Norberg-Hodge and Vandana Shiva, both recipients of the Right Livelihood Award for their work with traditional peoples in India; and Manish Jain, a former architect of education programs with UNESCO, USAID, and the World Bank.

The film examines the hidden assumption of cultural superiority behind education aid projects, which overtly aim to help children “escape” to a “better life,” despite mounting evidence of the environmental, social, and mental health costs of our own modern consumer lifestyles, from epidemic rates of childhood depression and substance abuse to pollution and climate change. It looks at the failure of institutional education to deliver on its promise of a way out of poverty in the United States as well as in the so-called “developing” world.

It also questions our very definitions of wealth and poverty and of knowledge and ignorance as it uncovers the role of schools in the destruction of traditional sustainable agricultural and ecological knowledge, in the breakup of extended families and communities, and in the devaluation of elders and ancient spiritual traditions.

Finally, Schooling the World calls for a deeper dialogue between cultures, suggesting that we have at least as much to learn as we have to teach, and that these ancient sustainable societies may harbor knowledge which is vital for our own survival in the coming millennia.
Our Social Justice Movement:
Inspiring Schools and Communities
April 15–16, 2011 • Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport, Richmond, BC

Friday night social event
No host bar with snacks
Entertainment: Tzo’Kam (Wallace Family)

FILM FESTIVAL (Friday 7:30 p.m.)
The Spirit Has No Colour
Director: Nicholas Kendall
Crude Sacrifice: You Can’t Reclaim Humanity
Director: Lawrence Carota
Schooling the World
Director: Carol Black

Friday, April 15
7:30 a.m. Breakfast and registration
8:30 a.m. Aboriginal territory recognition and
greetings from Susan Lambert,
BCTF President
8:45 a.m. Keynote speaker: Darrell Dennis
10:00 a.m. Slam poet: Kyle Shaughnessy
10:30 a.m. WORKSHOPS: SESSION 1
12:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. WORKSHOPS: SESSION 2
4:15 p.m. Social time, performance by Tzo’Kam
– 5:30 p.m. (Wallace Family)
7:30 p.m. FILM FESTIVAL
– 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 16
7:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:45 a.m. Keynote speaker: Vikki Reynolds
9:30 a.m. World Café table groups
10:00 a.m. Raging Grannies
10:30 a.m. WORKSHOPS: SESSION 3
12:30 p.m. Lunch
1:30 p.m. WORKSHOPS: SESSION 4
4:00 p.m. Taking action strategy session
5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Registration information
Register online by going to the BCTF website
www.bctf.ca. Registration will open on March 11, 2011.

The BCTF will sponsor one social justice delegate
and one Aboriginal delegate per local. Additional
deblegates can be sent at local expense.

All educators and community groups are welcome.

$75 Regular fee
$35 Underemployed, TTOCs, and student teachers

Keynote speakers
Darrell Dennis
Darrell is a member of the Secwepemc (Shuswap)
Nation in BC. His short stories have been
published in periodicals across the country. His
work has also been broadcast nationally on CBC
radio. Darrell is a produced playwright and an
award-winning writer for television. His script
Moccasin Flats was an official selection at the 2003
Sundance Film Festival and was later turned into
a series for the Showcase Network. His one-man
show, Tales of an Urban Indian, was nominated for
two Dora Mavor Moore awards: “Outstanding New
Play” and “Outstanding Performance by a Male.”

Vikki Reynolds
Vikki is a community activist, instructor, and
therapeutic supervisor whose experience includes
clinical supervision of mental health, substance
abuse, and antiviolence counselors and therapy
with refugees and survivors of torture. She has
also worked alongside transgendered and queer
communities. Vikki’s published work addresses
social justice, sustainability, ethics, group work, and
trauma. She is an instructor with VCC,
UBC, and City University where she received
the Dean’s Award for Distinguished Instruction.
(www.vikkireynolds.ca)
Friday workshops

Revisiting Brown and school segregation: The case for and against schools for Aboriginal learners
Presenter: Eric Wong (FNESC)

Making social change through experiential activism
Presenter: Stephanie Goodwin (Green Peace)

Globalization 101
Presenter: Kyla Brophy (Check Your Head)

Food justice: The impacts of what we eat
Presenter: Arzeena Hamir (Richmond Food Security Society)

Children’s rights education
Presenter: Carissa MacLennan (UNICEF)

Pink, blue and everything in between
Presenter: Myriam Dumont (Pride Education Network)

One world, our world... let’s make it better
Presenter: Michele Dekok, educator

Ending violence against women and girls
Presenter: Tamarah Prevost (We Can) and Gail Chaddock-Costello (BCTF Status of Women)

Being an active citizen
Presenter: Marylou Leung and Glenn McArthur (Justice Education Society)

Engage your students on global and environmental issues
Presenter: Sandra Kiviaho (CHF) and Susan Ruzic (CASJ)

There is no health without mental health
Presenter: Kim Bogner (Blue Wave Foundation)

Teen girls living in poverty:
Access to education
Presenter: Asha Czapska and Annabel Webb (Justice for Girls)

Exploring Social Justice 12 in the 21st century
Presenter: Demetra Kotsalits and Jyoti Penesar (SJ12 teachers)

Amnesty International in the classroom
Presenter: Don Wright (Amnesty International)

Employment equity for Aboriginal teachers

Poverty in your classroom
Presenter: Valdine Ciwko

Saturday workshops

Searching for justice in the Middle East
Presenter: Mordecai Briemberg (CanPalNet), Anne Roberts (Langara), and Sid Shniad (TWU)

Global friendship
Presenter: Maureen MacDonald, educator

Building networks for international solidarity
Presenter: Carol Wood and Steve Steward (CoDevelopment Canada)

Quilt making for peace building
Presenter: Roselynn Verwoord (UBC)

Social justice in the media
Presenter: Judith Comfort, educator

Teaching matters: YouthMADE media
Presenter: Sara Kendall (Access to Media Education Society)

La justice sociale en salle de classe/
Social justice in every classroom (bilingual)
Presenter: Helene H. Leone, BCTF facilitator

Parliamentary debating:
Peace, war, and violence
Presenter: Arthur Scott Parker, educator

Untold history: The impact of residential schools on Canada’s Aboriginal peoples
Presenter: Ilona Weiss, educator

Challenge homophobia now
Presenter: Ross Johnstone (Out in Schools)

Leaving no one behind: Inclusive leadership
Presenter: Iris Yong Pearson and Romi Chandra-Herbert (PeerNetBC)

Using Twitter and social media to build communities
Presenter: Airdrie Miller, educator

Moving from research to action on poverty
Presenter: Margaret White (BCTF staff), Ilse Hill (CASJ)

Responding to human trafficking in our schools & communities
Presenter: Melissa Hyland and Victor Porter (Combat Trafficking in Persons)

"That's so gay" is not okay!
Inclusive classroom
Being an ally when children face abuse and violence

by Janet Stephenson, CASJ—Peace and Global Education Action Group member and Joan Merrifield, BCTF staff

Sometimes the unremarkable is what has remarkable impact. Often it is not what is said, but the very fact that another human being has taken the time and made the effort to help. Sometimes, when we think we make no difference at all, we are making all the difference in the world to a student who needs us.

Abuse changes the way we think about ourselves, where we fit in life, and how we relate to others. When a child is abused by someone who should be taking care of them, loving them, and protecting them, their world is turned upside down. Nothing makes sense anymore. A child who is abused is scared to tell others because they know they may be forced to leave their family and their home. They learn to make sense of the abuse in the only way humanly possible; they learn to live in their upside-down world. They learn to keep the peace, to deny what’s happening, to pretend, or to imagine a different world. A child who has been abused learns that they have little power or control over their life. In fact it is just the opposite, they have learned how to give their power away.

What is our role as teachers?

First of all, if a student discloses that they are abused or living in a violent situation, we must report it to the Ministry of Children and Family Development based on the protocols in our schools. Secondly, we can be an ally and an advocate for that student. We can listen to and believe the student’s version of events. We can give the student empathy and support by being their advocate with the ministry and ensuring they are being treated with kindness and understanding. We can look for district and community services that will offer support to the student and ensure they get access to those services through school-based teams or critical-incident teams in our schools.

As a school staff, we can end the cycle of violence by working with our peers and our community to create safe places for students in our schools. Creating a culture of peace requires the commitment of the whole school and the school district. We can invite professionals into our schools to offer professional development training and workshops on the impact of violence on children who experience and witness abuse. As educators, we can become educated about the effects of abuse on children’s development and work to address those issues. We can make a school-wide plan to recognize and eliminate violence at school, on the playground, in our classrooms, and on our buses.

In our classrooms, we can be an ally by addressing the issue of violence directly and teaching students about the impact for families and children. We can set up peer mediators to be role
models for positive problem-solving and peaceful methods for dealing with conflict. We can bring in guest speakers who can teach about domestic violence, and then have students discuss solutions for children who are facing abuse. We can work with students to develop resiliency so they can gain self-confidence and are able to overcome the obstacles they face. The Violence is Preventable program from the BC Society of Transition Houses offers information on how to implement an effective school-based program of intervention and support. There are lessons from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that teachers can use in their classrooms.

The Duluth Model, conceived by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program, was first implemented in a small working-class city in northern Minnesota in 1980–81 by activists in the battered women’s movement. This program has been very successful and focuses on stopping the violence and providing safety for women and children experiencing abuse. They provide information on all forms of violence and domestic abuse, including child abuse. The wheel of child abuse and the wheel of child nurturing have been developed for service providers, community groups, and educators. These can be used as discussion points with students, enabling them to think about how they would recognize abuse and what strategies could be developed at school and in the classroom to deal with it. The wheel of child nurturing could be used throughout the school as part of the school’s goals, and be included in parent information. Presentations to parents at the parent advisory committee meetings would help develop a commitment to nurturing all students, moving them forward, and creating the resiliency they need to succeed. Be an ally and be an advocate for your students.

You can order a larger poster version of each wheel for your classroom or school from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program. For ordering information, go to www.theduluthmodel.org/wheelgallery.php.
Privilege in our schools — recognizing our own

by Shelley van Erp, CASJ—Peace and Global Education Action Group member

As teachers, most of us have had the experience where we are sitting with our colleagues in a large auditorium or classroom on a Pro-D day, and hear something profound enough to give us that *ah-ha* moment. It is usually part prior knowledge of something we know but have forgotten, and part epiphany. Sometimes, what we take away from these moments helps us reframe our thinking and becomes part of our professional processes while, at other times, we simply quote to our colleagues the tidbits we collect as professionals. Either way, these moments seem to be part of what sustains us.

Last spring, I heard something that can only be described as an *oh-no* moment. I attended a BCTF poverty conference entitled *Women and Children First*, put on by locals in the North Central/Peace River zones. We spent a day with Dr. Donna Beegle, an antipoverty advocate with lived experience and the author of *See Poverty, Be the Difference*. She teaches at the University of Portland, Oregon, and is an experienced international speaker. Beegle told us about her history of generational poverty and how this affected the family of her youth in the realm of education. She spoke about how hard it was for her transient family who followed the agricultural picking jobs of the West Coast states, changing schools frequently. She shared the difficulty she had with the language of school, the lack of space and utilities to make homework possible, the poor attendance as a result of crisis, and the lack of resources —financial or human—for them to draw upon to be received by the institution of school.

The story was familiar. As a special education case manager, success coach, and advocate for teens at risk, I see the impact of poverty every day. I was raised in a family of activists and have always been aware of disparity in the world and in our community. I have voiced the recognition that I am from a group of people who have privilege and have tried for years to get other members of the group to recognize the role that privilege plays. As I sat and listened to Beegle talk about how her family simply did not know what they did not know, when it came to the language and processes of school, I did so with empathy, believing that I was not a part of that group of people who did not get poverty. Her story ended and she turned to the part where she explains how teachers can help students who have lived in generational poverty to succeed in school. She asked the question that made me fall off my royal high horse, “How many of you tell your students of poverty that the reason they should graduate is so they can get a job?” When my hand went up in the affirmative, amongst a sea of others, she shook her head and said, “No. Everybody they know works. All they do is work, and still they are poor. Why would they want to be the adults they see, who struggle to make ends meet in their jobs and still haven’t got the basics they need?”

Then it hit me. From my privileged vantage point the word *job* almost always meant a career with security and employee benefits. Of course I know that many people who work live in poverty. I certainly understand that not all students get to go to poverty. I certainly know that people from families of generational poverty often
remain in poverty. And yet, not only did I use the word job as though it packed real power, I did not take into account that my eternal optimism about getting that career stems from the fact that I have been a part of a social milieu, where people have been able to set a goal to attend university, and have found a way to get the funds to do it.

When Beegle went on to explain that she did not know even one person who had a university education when she was growing up, and very few who had graduated from secondary school, I realized that I did not know what I did not know, when it came to the part that role models and mentors had played in my life. Even though I had lamented the need for mentors in the lives of some of my students, I was underestimating how critical those mentors really are.

Beegle’s message is that teachers can make a difference by recognizing that school is set up for the middle class, who have a certain language and socialization that those from generational poverty don’t understand, because they have never been exposed to it. She also wants us to know that the deficit model is particularly damaging to these students because they have come to believe they, and their families, have deficits even before they get to school. The messages of difference from their peers, and the evidence they collect from even subtle negative adult communications, solidify what they already believe to be true. She explained that as a child she saw angry-faced adults, speaking through glass windows, treating her mother poorly and even angrily. She thought that her mother must be “pretty bad” if people did not want to talk to her face-to-face or with any courtesy. And, even though people said the police were there for protection, in her experience, they evicted them and arrested her brothers. What did this mean about the worth of her and the people she loved? It therefore made sense to blame her shortcomings at school on herself; especially when people looked at her and exchanged glances, talked to her in exasperated tones, or used words such as low, less fortunate, or at-risk within earshot. Yet, understanding these two important points is just the beginning.

Beegle told us that a teacher made the difference for her. One teacher took her tentative attempts at writing and asked her if she could share it. The writing lacked conventions but was heartfelt, and the teacher told her that her strength was in writing. Years later, when Beegle was a poor young mother, and had to identify her strengths on a form for a program that could change all their lives by providing education and housing, she recalled those words and wrote: I am a writer. They placed her for work experience at a college newspaper where she met another teacher mentor. He taught her how to express herself in written form, and helped her find her way into the post-secondary classroom, continuing to help her learn how to adapt to a world that she knew so little about. His mentoring helped her find a way out of the poverty.

How can we make a difference?

Don’t use the deficit model. Focus on the strengths of students. Get to know the family. Find out the interest and skills they have, and build from there. Beegle talked about the ingenuity of the people in her community, asking how many of us could use a carrot to fix a car!

Don’t assume that because the student arrives without materials, or unprepared, that they are not responsible. This common assumption is often untrue. In fact, if anything, these students often have far too much responsibility. Those responsibilities are often what makes them late, tired, or unable to do their homework.

Be careful not to assume that families are simply poor money managers because the kids come
to school with ipods or designer hoodies, but lack money for lunches. They are trying to fit in any way they can—just like everybody else.

Remember the value of communicating orally and that we all make connections by sharing. Relationship is the key to getting people to try something out of their comfort zone and take learning risks. Storytelling is part of the natural way of communication and a good way for mentors and mentees to connect.

Remember that dialogue is a critical part of socialization. The language we speak at school may not be the language of home. Students need to hear language and practise grammar with guidance so they are not disadvantaged in job interviews and social interactions, and because it impacts their writing. Recall too, that oral and print communications differ. Students more comfortable with oral culture struggle with the linear writing process used in school because oral communication allows for spontaneity.

Students who are struggling to survive are often focused elsewhere. Repeating concepts and checking for understanding and recall is critical for all students—but especially those whose short-term memory is crowded with worries.

Mentor students with their work, rather than handing back assessments covered in words that don’t communicate to students who do not fully understand the vernacular of the classroom. Don’t tell a student to “look it up.” Young learners often can’t spell it to find it, and older students have often been unsuccessful at locating the information. Go with them, find the information in the book together, and show them how to do it.

Build a relationship that is strong and trusting and find ways to help the student see what’s good about themselves. They too often hear what’s wrong. When they are ready, they might ask for you to show them how to do something they can’t do. Find others to connect with the student to help them build a network in the community and in the school.

Don’t forget the role that privilege plays. People from backgrounds of generational poverty are not the only ones who don’t know what they don’t know.

Socializing justice to be more relevant

by James Chamberlain, BCTF staff

How relevant is the union in the Harper Era? How can we place the rights of working people at the forefront of political and public discourse once again? Those were just two of the questions posed to delegates at the “Rise Up for Your Rights Conference” hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in Ottawa.

Toronto Star columnist, Haroon Siddiqui, challenged public-sector union leaders to think outside the box as to how to make the social-justice movement relevant in the eyes of the average Canadian. To understand this dilemma, we need to think about the context of the times we are in.

Increasingly, we are seeing the Americanization of Canada in terms of foreign policy and government actions. The post 9/11 world has resulted in heightened expenditures on security measures within a climate of fear-based politics (e.g., stereotyping Muslims as dangerous). The Conservative government is spending nine billion dollars to build or expand prisons, despite their own studies that show violent crime is on a decline across Canada.

Canada has spent between 18 and 20 billion dollars in Afghanistan to date. One billion was spent on the G8 and G20 Summits where a fake lake was created for a photo opportunity of world leaders. This is a priority, while Aboriginal peoples lack safe drinking water across Canada?

The Conservative government has been very effective in using the executive authority of the...
prime minister’s office to stifle or censor debate on many topics. We are seeing an increase in the demonization of refugees coming to Canada. Did you know that Canada is the only country in the world that requires refugees to pay back their transportation loans (with interest) for the costs of arriving here? Two others, New Zealand and the USA, also require pay back of these monies without interest. All other countries accept refugees on a humanitarian basis free of charge.

Add to this, the culture of titillation and exploitation on television where 15 minutes of fame amounts to reality TV programs where people belittle one another in the name of entertainment. So, against this backdrop, how do we effectively convey the plight of Aboriginal teens living on reserves in substandard conditions without access to clean water or healthy food? In the media world of the 30-second sound byte, can we effectively convey what it means to be changemakers on any specific issue? In reality, we can’t.

Within this context, Saddiqui challenged activists to think about the ways in which public-sector unions operate. He asked us to consider how we could create campaigns that would appeal to the broadest base of Canadians. One positive example given was the Canadian Pension Plan Reform Campaign led by the CLC that calls for an adequate pension for every retiree. This campaign moves far beyond the traditional union membership and appeals to many Canadians who are worried about adequate incomes in retirement.

Saddiqui stated that placard-waving demonstrations and protests by unions were considered passé by the Canadian public. He challenged us to place the rights of all workers (not just our union members) at the forefront of our work. He said that as a journalist he saw that the politics of fear was being accepted in society and that the politics of divide and conquer is being used very effectively by the government and other groups. To make unions more relevant, he asked delegates to find creative ways to win the battle of public opinion on specific issues.

As I listened to him, one example came immediately to mind, the call for a national poverty reduction strategy with specific targets and timelines. Canadians need to see the benefits for themselves of reducing poverty for all Canadians in terms of lower healthcare costs, higher levels of education and job opportunity, and reduced homelessness, etc. Seven provinces and territories (BC not included) already have poverty-reduction plans, but there is currently no national strategy. Canadians need to challenge the federal government to have the political will to establish a national poverty reduction strategy.

Saddiqui asked public-sector unions to do four things:
1. Find allies with new partners to broaden the circle of influence (i.e., progressives, immigrants).
2. Work to restore people’s faith in the government to take care of people, rather than having people stand on their own and provide for themselves.
3. Find new ways of doing things to increase the number of volunteers to help shape public opinion (share stories, use social media like Facebook and Twitter, short letters to the editor, phone radio-hotline programs).
4. Pick two or three broad-based actions to work on at the federal, provincial, and local level in a co-ordinated manner.

His keynote address sparked heated debate by some delegates and gave hope to others. People lined up at the microphones to laud his message or chide him for suggesting that political protests were no longer relevant. Despite the variety of responses, Saddiqui acknowledged the good work and value of unions, but asked people to examine the larger picture. In closing, he mentioned that far too many people sit on their couches at night watching TV and not acting. Since “television is the modern new opiate of the masses,” we need to think about unique ways of achieving our goals beyond reacting to the latest social-justice threat. I believe that his speech provided us all with some significant food for thought as we work to create a better country for everyone.

For more on Haroon Siddiqui, go to www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/94618.
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives resources for teaching about social justice

by Sarah Leavitt, CCPA

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with social, economic, and environmental justice. We publish many online and print materials that make ideal resources for teachers, in particular teachers of the new Social Justice 12 course.

Many of these resources are free. Others are available at special pricing for BC teachers. All CCPA materials are published under a limited copyright that allows you to copy them freely.

The goals of Social Justice 12 include motivating students to think and act ethically, and empowering them to see that they have agency and a role in effecting positive change in the world. Prescribed learning objectives include analyzing the causes and describing the consequences of social injustice and implementing an action plan on a selected social justice issue.

The CCPA materials closely match the intention of the Social Justice 12 course. We are committed to not only providing solid research and analysis of social, economic, and environmental justice issues, but also to developing solutions. CCPA’s research covers a wide range of specific provincial issues (e.g., homelessness), as well as federal policy areas (e.g., Medicare), and broader overall topics (e.g., understanding economics).

Please contact Dianne Novlan at the CCPA office to order materials or to discuss pricing for teachers: 604-801-5121, local 221, e-mail: dianne@policyalternatives.ca. Visit our website at www.policyalternatives.ca.

Multimedia resources

A number of video resources are available for use in the classroom:

Poverty Amid Plenty
This 38-minute video slideshow about welfare in BC includes interviews with people who are living on welfare benefits, as well as advocates who work with welfare recipients and/or antipoverty groups. The slide-show answers questions about why welfare is important, and addresses myths about welfare and poverty, such as welfare is easy to get, life on welfare is an easy ride, poverty is inevitable, and solutions to poverty are too expensive. Available as a DVD set for TV or computer viewing. Related reading materials are also available.

The Time is Now: A Poverty Reduction Plan for BC
A slideshow about poverty and what we can do about it. Features interviews with a parent struggling to make ends meet by working two jobs, and with people working on health, immigration, and family well-being issues. Focuses on solutions. Available as a DVD set for TV or computer viewing. Related reading materials are also available.

Canada’s Growing Gap Explained
A short (3:30 minute) video about how the income gap between the rich and the rest keeps growing—in good times and bad. Available on our website, or on CD for computer viewing. Related reading materials are also available.
Fragile Rights

Speech by Maher Arar
A 43-minute video of Maher Arar speaking about the erosion of our human rights and civil liberties in the name of national security. Available on our website, or on DVD.

The Shock Doctrine
Naomi Klein on the rise of disaster capitalism
A 45-minute video of Naomi Klein speaking about her latest book, The Shock Doctrine. Available on our website, or on DVD.

To see the latest multimedia materials or view any of the above videos online, visit www.policyalternatives.ca/multimedia_interactive.

Classroom resources and teaching aids
The following include special classroom resources, or are designed for use by teachers:

Economics for Everyone: A Short Guide to the Economics of Capitalism
This book is particularly relevant given the current economic crisis. It provides a description and critique of free-market economics, without technical jargon. Economics for Everyone shows where working people fit into the big economic picture and looks at the opportunities to build a better, fairer system. The accompanying website (www.economicsforeveryone.ca) includes a course outline, lecture notes, student exercises, and a glossary.

Challenging McWorld
Today’s youth live in a wired world of corporate logos, symbols, and branding. Challenging McWorld takes up issues of globalization facing youth in secondary schools, university or college campuses, workplaces, communities, and the world. It includes lesson plans and education supplements that correspond to the more detailed chapters throughout the book. These supplements suggest activities and topics for discussion that make Challenging McWorld more interactive, and help readers use the research to engage and question the world around them.

Math That Matters: A teacher resource linking math and social justice
In Math That Matters, David Stocker has crafted 50 thoughtful and accessible lesson plans that explore the links between mathematics and social justice. This is an innovative and indispensable tool for those passionate about mathematics, social justice, civic engagement, and interactive and involved classrooms.

Taking Another Look at Class
The short, easy-to-read essays in this collection were originally published in the Carnegie Newsletter, the feisty, straight-shooting newsletter of the Carnegie Centre. The Carnegie Centre is a vibrant community centre in the heart of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside—the poorest postal code in Canada. These essays make sense of the world around us using a five-letter word that has become taboo in recent years—class.

Research reports and studies
The CCPA publishes research reports, studies, and back-grounders on a wide range of issues. All include a short summary, and many of these are available as stand-alone documents. Here are just a few examples—all can be downloaded free from our website and copied for use in classrooms, or you can order printed copies from our office:

• Working for a Living Wage: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Vancouver and Victoria
• Cultivating Farmworker Rights: Ending the Exploitation of Immigrant and Migrant Farmworkers in BC
• Workplace Rights for Immigrants in BC: The Case of Filipino Workers
• Canada’s Quiet Bargain: The Benefits of Public Spending—summary and fact sheet available
• Banner Year for Canada’s CEOs: Record High Pay Increase
For a complete listing of recent reports and studies, visit our website, www.policyalternatives.ca.

Short articles and primers
The CCPA regularly publishes short editorial-style articles and primers on key issues. All are available free on our website—here is just a sample:

• BC Commentary: A Review of Provincial Economic and Social Trends (published three times per year, includes short articles based on the latest CCPA research)
• BC Needs An Action Plan To Fight A Nasty Recession
• Most BC families are vulnerable as we head into a recession
• The Olympics, Housing and Homelessness in Vancouver
• The (Real) Bottom Line: Public-Private Partnerships
• The (Real) Bottom Line: Taxes

CCPA’s education project and Our Schools/Our Selves
The education project co-ordinates education research, monitors corporate intrusion into the public education system, creates resources for teachers, and publishes the quarterly journal, Our Schools/Our Selves. To find out more or to subscribe to Our Schools/Our Selves, contact Erika Shaker at the CCPA’s national office; erikas@policyalternatives.ca or phone: 613-563-1341, local 310.
Antiracism Action Group
Gurpreet Mahil
Susan Ruzic
Daniel Shiu
Amar Sull

Mandate to:
• promote and defend human rights
• eliminate racism from our schools
• work with the community to mitigate racism and identify emerging issues.

Status of Women Action Group
Gail Chaddock-Costello
Louise Gonsalvez
Jody Tetreau
Sasha Wiley-Shaw

Mandate to:
• promote equality for women locally and globally
• strengthen the social safety net
• improve programs and services for women
• end violence and oppression against women
• promote the participation of women in all areas of education.

LGBTQ Action Group
David Butler
Myrium Dumont
Lindsey Kingsfield
Shannon Lanaway

Mandate to:
• raise awareness about homophobia/transphobia
• challenge heteronormativity and heterosexism
• promote the implementation of board policy to protect LGBTQ staff and students.

Antipoverty Action Group
Amy Dash
Janice Falk
Ilse Hill
Julia MacRae

Mandate to:
• increase teacher awareness of the effects of poverty in the classroom
• encourage teachers to act to end poverty through systemic change
• alleviate the effects of poverty
• acknowledge the resiliency and skill sets of students living in poverty.

Peace and Global Education Action Group
Kathy Hartman
Janet Stephenson
Shelly van Erp
Karen Whyte

Mandate to:
• promote teaching from a global perspective
• incorporate peace education into classroom practice
• develop an analysis of the forces affecting globalization
• build commitment to peace, human rights, and justice.

Environmental Justice Action Group
Heather Allison
Kathy Hartman
Kyle McVicar
Karin Westland

Mandate to:
• provide members with credible information and practical resources related to environmental issues and sustainable solutions.
The Pride Education Network is thrilled to launch our latest resource:

the **Gender Spectrum**

What educators need to know

Designed to help educators and students break free from gender stereotypes, this guide provides:

1. a teacher-friendly, research-based introduction to understanding gender as a spectrum rather than a limiting male/female binary.
2. school-wide assessment tools, policies and practices for creating an inclusive school culture for gender non-conforming and transgender students.
3. everyday classroom strategies that enable all students to develop their interests and skills, regardless of gender.
4. curriculum-linked lesson plans for teaching about families, jobs, fairy tales, bullying, gender stereotypes, novel studies, Aboriginal worldviews, intersex conditions, and more—in gender-inclusive ways.
5. recommended resources (books, films, and websites) reflecting the gender spectrum for primary, intermediate, and secondary students.

To order copies of *the Gender Spectrum: What educators need to know*, send your name, e-mail address, mailing address, and payment of $7 per book to: Pride Education Network, c/o Joan Merrifield, 831 Canso Road, Gabriola, BC V0R 1X2. Cheques are payable to the Pride Education Network.

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Activist, Therapist, Instructor UBC/VCC/City University

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- International solidarity
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All educators and community members welcome.
For more information, go to bctf.ca

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