

A Letter from the Acting President, Sadikh Diaw

After the 1975^s RIDEF in Tlemcen (Algeria), after the International Mediterranean Training in 1970 in Tunisia and in Saint-Louis, (Senegal) in 2006, RIDEF 2016 holds its sitting in the African Republic of Benin. The choice of this country is not accidental, it comes from the remarkable commitment and cooperative spirit of the Benin Association of Modern School (ABEM) in order to promote Freinet teaching strategies in its school system.

In fact since the previous RIDEFs on African land, the trainings initiated by the FIMEM in the RIDEFs, the work done by the CAMEM in the RAEFs and the multiple invitations to the ICEM Congresses, the Freinet Pedagogy has experienced significant growth in our school structures.

This is therefore a just comeback of things that Benin welcomes the edition of 2016 on the topic "Citizenship education for a participative democracy." Late Eustache Prudencio a Freinet's Beninese contemporary, was the first African teacher to introduce "Freinet techniques" in the 1950's in Senegal, and later to teach them at the prestigious William Ponty School in Sébikotane (Senegal).

Eustache Prudencio deeply believed in the Modern School Movement that, in addition to be a sharing philosophy of life based on democracy, cooperation, equality and equity, has become a wide socio-educational gathering for research innovation and social transformation through school.

Movement of empathy and resilience against pervasive globalization, Freinet movement has transcended the vicissitudes of the teaching history by bringing together

teachers of various kinds from various continents who want to improve their professional practices towards a common ideal .

That is this good will for cooperation and exchange between educators, combined to dialectic between "basic research" and "institutional innovation", which makes the Freinet movement be an innovative crucible for the building of a popular, democratic and secular school.

This means that the FIMEM dynamism lies on the ability of its various movements to resist, to adapt, to adjust and to react to the most modern and attractive proposals for a more human and fairer educational world.

It is in this perspective that the African continent and the African Coordination of Movements of Modern School (CAMEM) must bring their original contribution in the new educational paradigms.

According to the UN recommendations and after the Congresses of Jomtien and Dakar, Education for All (EFA) has become an intangible requirement which gives it the place of a "universal right"

"Education throughout life" also proclaimed by the great bodies of the educational world, including UNESCO, is interested in all forms of education in school and out of school.

Meanwhile, in spite of the holistic approach that characterizes us, the right to education can't become a reality only if it is effective for all social strata. This right should be universally accepted and recognized to each and all.

In addition to the parity girl- boy underway in many of our countries, it is appropriate to ensure the sustainability of this acquisition by ensuring the retention of girls to keep on staying at school longer.

For its social role as defined in Freinet pedagogy, school should also participate, through a strong advocacy to a social and health protection of children vigorously fighting against all forms of discrimination and frowned practices as: female genital mutilations, early marriage, child labor, children soldiers, children migrants without papers, those of ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities, to mention only a few.

The Freinet movement Renovators must also have as a "creed" to contribute to the transformation of our world fiercely fighting for the elimination of poverty, for inclusive growth, to a more inclusive school that supports all children in need, special education and the protection of our environment constantly threatened.

These actions of the innovative movements cannot have a significant impact without political recognition, philosophical, pedagogical and constant institutional support.

We need to question our practical educational opportunities for peace, cooperation and desire for a better future. In this perspective, education is today, both issue and challenge.

Nelson Mandela said, "Education is a weapon that can change the world."

May the Dogbo RIDEF be the start.