

Youth Perspectives:

45 delegates participated in this three and a half hour session aimed at raising awareness of the Summit of the Americas process and the Inter-American Program of Education, identifying the aspirations of Canadian Youth and Student organizations regarding education and, from that, developing recommendations to be presented to the Canadian delegates who will attend the Hemispheric IDEA Conference in Quito, Ecuador September 29 - October 3.

Following presentations by the Canadian Federation of Students and the BC Teachers Federation about the FTAA and the Inter-American Program of Education, delegates broke into theme-based working groups. The three themes were:

- 1) The influence of transnational corporations and sponsorships in Public Schools;
- 2) Youth goals and alternatives for education
- 3) Globalization and Youth Organizing

Following the working groups delegates regrouped in a plenary session to debate, modify and adopt the recommendations of each session.

The Reports, as adopted by the Youth Plenary are as follows:

Youth Aspirations and Alternatives for Education

Moderator- Civil Society Network for Public Education in the Americas

Participants conducted a brainstorming session about what they sought in education. Then, employing document authors José Ramos and Carlos López as resource people, they examined the IDEA paper "Alternatives for Democratic Education in the Americas" to see how it matched the aspirations they had identified and to offer revisions to the documents.

The key goals for education outlined by participants and approved by the morning plenary were:

1. Education is youth's ticket to participation in society and as such must provide the knowledge and skills essential to democratic participation. It should not focus solely on training for the labour market;
2. Education should be seen as an integral part of society and not separate from it;
3. The corporate agenda is becoming integrated into the public education system affecting the focus and values development of youth;
4. Education should enable students to become independent and critical thinkers in order that they may evaluate issues and contribute to society. Learning processes and debate should take precedence over fact-accumulation and rote-learning in our education systems;