

## **Education Crisis: Agreements on all points!**

*Deep changes in education system to be implemented soon*

**Tegucigalpa, Monday, June 13 2011-** After more than two months of negotiations, the government, teacher unions and civil society observers, have come to agreements that could spark profound changes in the Honduran education system. After many years of closed-door negotiations between teacher unions and the government, this time members of Transformemos Honduras and the Evangelical and Catholic churches were also involved in order to represent the interests of students, parents and society in general.

Transformemos Honduras will continue to hold the government and teacher unions accountable for the following commitments they made in final negotiations on Friday, June 10 and which only lack the signature of the president:

1. **INPREMA:** Find and remove causes for poor administration of teachers' pension funds through an audit that holds officials accountable for illegal actions.
2. **Procedures for conflict resolution between teachers and government :** Create a panel that will try to resolve future conflicts between teachers and government; thus hopefully reducing strikes
3. **Teacher salaries no longer fixed to minimum wage:** Three alternative proposals for calculating annual pay raises. Unions will discuss these proposals with members.
4. **New Education Law:** Form a commission that will write a new education law to be discussed in Congress.
5. **Freedom for teachers arrested during the conflict:** In accordance with due process, teachers will be released and charges against them dropped.
6. **Suspend firing and suspensions of teachers enacted during the conflict:** The government ended all suspensions after two months.
7. **National Education Census:** Implement a national education census to determine how many students, teachers, teaching placements and school buildings there are in the country.
8. **National Education Pact:** Create a forum of teachers, students, parents, government officials and civil society to work on profound change in the education system.

### **TH President: "Our participation has been a success"**

After two long months of negotiations, the president of Transformemos Honduras, Carlos Hernández, shares some critiques of the process:

"In the first place, it's too bad, that in the whole process we never discussed the topic of the rights of children. Second, each teacher union has its position, and the teachers do not speak with one voice, which makes negotiations more difficult. And third, it would have been good if the teachers were accompanied by technical experts."

However, Hernández says that as a whole the experience has been a success, "In general, we reached our goal. In fact this is the first time that civil society has been involved in these negotiations." Adding, "In many of the points, civil society is an actor", which means that children and parents will continue to have a voice in the subject of education.

### **"Final impact will depend on follow-up"**

While the signing of these agreements is very important, according to Hernández, it's only the beginning of a long process whose, "Impact will depend on follow-up."

"Members [of Transformemos Honduras] and others have to continue to hold ourselves accountable in order to guarantee good results. It will be necessary to continue to pressure the government and the teachers."