



Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy

A Heart for Mission in a World of Learning

Five years ago, the General Conference (GC) Department of Education set four goals to accomplish during the 2010-2015 quinquennium. These were: (1) to strengthen Adventist mission and identity, (2) to strengthen leadership and boards, (3) to expand the capacity of teachers to achieve the redemptive purposes of Adventist education, and (4) to disciple and nurture Seventh-day Adventist students in non-Adventist colleges and universities.

During the quinquennium, divisions, unions, conferences, and schools worked together to achieve these goals with support from the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA), the International Board of Education (IBE), and the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE). The AAA surveys academic standards and other quality-assurance measures and functions as the denominational accrediting agency of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions at all levels.

It draws on the expertise of hundreds of educators who share a passion for the mission of Adventist education.

The GC Department of Education also operates the IBE and IBMTE to foster the success of new institutions of higher learning and new programs. Teacher conferences throughout the world divisions and two pub-

lications—THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION (JAE) and *Dialogue*—have helped facilitate a strong Adventist identity and mission. This issue of the JOURNAL shares the reports on the progress of Adventist education during the past five years from the 13 divisions and one attached union.

Between December 31, 2009, and the end of 2014, the total number of Adventist schools has increased by 25 percent, with 96,388 teachers now educating 1,942,828 students in 7,946 schools. Primary enrollment has remained constant, tertiary enrollment has increased 11 percent, and secondary enrollment has increased 27 percent.¹ During this same period of time, the number of

medical schools in the Adventist system worldwide has doubled from three to six.

The Adventist Church's commitment to establishing and maintaining Adventist schools remains strong. Some regions, such as the East-Central Africa Division (ECD), have carried on the work of education in the face of major challenges such as rebel activities (Congo), civil war (South Sudan), and terrorism incidents (Kenya). Nevertheless, according to Andrew Mutero, ECD education director, the sense of mission and commitment among teachers has remained undiminished.

Other regions have had to work amid severe military crises. For example, Vladimir

Continued on page 62



General Conference Department of Education Office Staff: Back row, left to right: Chandra Goff (JAE Administrative Assistant), Susana Schulz (*Dialogue* Managing Editor), Faith-Ann McGarrell (JAE Editor), Esther Rodriguez (Administrative Assistant), Beverly Robinson-Rumble (JAE Editor Emeritus). Front row, left to right: John Wesley Taylor V (Associate Director), Luis Schulz (Associate Director), Lisa Beardsley-Hardy (Director), Hudson Kibuuka (Associate Director), Mike Lekic (Associate Director). Not shown: Linda Torske (Administrative Assistant).

dress many of the current educational challenges confronting our Middle East and North Africa region as we seek to develop the potential of our young people. The challenge for every Adventist teacher is to become an expert in his or her field of work and to be a powerful witness for the true and living God we serve.

Conclusion

Change is occurring on a daily basis, and the church must continue trying

creative ways of dealing with this huge 10/40 Window region! We are praying earnestly that God will use each member to spread the good news and add new converts to the church so that an even greater work can be done. May God give us insights into how to effectively share His great love for the people of the MENA region. May we also comprehend the limitless resources He has at His disposal just waiting for willing human channels through which they may be made manifest. ✍



Donovan Cleary, M.B.A., F.C.C.A., is Coordinator of Education for the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists in Beirut, Lebanon.

Editorial Continued from page 3

Tkachuk, director of education for the Euro-Asia Division (ESD), reports that in Ukraine, the local conference in Lviv donated its headquarters to become the city's first Adventist school, and the members in Chernovtsy renovated and transformed their conference office building into the first Adventist school in that city. In independent assessments of academic performance, Adventist schools in Ukraine and Russia outperform the national average by wide margins.

The CognitiveGenesis Study demonstrated that students in Seventh-day Adventist primary and secondary schools in the U.S., Canada, and Bermuda also have an academic advantage. In standardized tests, students in Adventist schools outperformed the national average in every subject and for every grade level tested. The benefits of an Adventist education were cumulative: The longer a student attended, the higher the academic performance compared to the national average in both achievement and cognitive ability.²

During the current quinquennium, we have witnessed a range of events in Adventist education. For example, while Brazil Adventist University celebrated 100 years of continuous operation, on the other side of the world, the newly started education work in Mongolia adds a new grade level each year at Tusgal Adventist School. It will soon outgrow the building it occupies in downtown Ulaanbaatar. Elsewhere, as part of training future pastors, the eight theological seminaries in the Inter-European Division (EUD) continue to engage in outreach activities in their region and abroad. One such activity is Friedensau Adventist University's *ProMission* project among the Maasai ethnic group in Tanzania.

The Inter-American Division (IAD) took a truly bold step by designating 2010-2015 as the "Quinquennium of Education." Gamaliel Floréz, IAD director of education, describes how 80 percent of the division budget was allocated to the strategic development of Adventist education, which included the distribution of five-year, interest-free loans totaling U.S.\$5.7 million to 15 universities and 22 unions. Nearly 10,000 teachers participated in the division's first Virtual Teachers Council on

the Internet. Since pastors are vital partners for our schools, a Bible study on Christian education was added to the baptismal manual to help new converts understand its value.

Managing the demand for Adventist education is a challenge in most regions, and affordability continues to be an issue. As colleges grow in size and in the number and level of degrees they offer, the cost of an Adventist education rises. There are insufficient work-study programs for the many young people who would like to attend an Adventist school but do not have the funds to do so. But the greatest need is not for money or for students, but for qualified teachers "who love children and can see in them souls to be saved for the Master."³ As a result, we will continue to promote Adventist mission and identity through conferences and seminars, as well as our other goals. And through publications like *THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION*, we will directly support Adventist educators with articles that strengthen teachers, administrators, and boards; demonstrate how to integrate faith with learning; and provide models for nurturing and discipling Seventh-day Adventist students at every institution. Together, we will foster the best of theory and practice in Adventist education, and inspire in educators a heart for mission in a world of learning.

Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy, Ph.D., serves as the Director of Education for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. All data are from the Annual Statistical Reports for the years 2009 to 2014 (latest available) (Silver Spring, Md.: Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).
2. Jerome Thayer and Elissa Kido, "Assessing Academic Achievement and Cognitive Ability in Adventist Schools," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 21:2 (August 2012):99-115: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10656219.2012.698826#preview>.
3. Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1913), p. 166.