

Global Labour University (GLU)

www.global-labour-university.org

Newsletter No. 1, June 2006

1. Editorial – Newsletter Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of the Global Labour University (GLU) digital newsletter. This newsletter aims at informing all current and former participants and partners of the GLU about new developments, further expansion of the GLU and special events (GLU conferences, workshops et al). It is supposed to help alumni, students, organisers and GLU partners to maintain contact and exchange information. Furthermore, a specific section will be dedicated to keeping you updated about students' professional development after having finished the programme. The newsletter, for the moment, will be published twice a year. If you have any proposals and ideas of what should be covered further or changed in the newsletter, I would greatly appreciate your feedback, sent to this email address: hkroeck@gmx.de . (Harald Kröck)



Frank Hoffer

2. GLU: Current & Future Development

Shaping globalisation instead of adapting to it is the crucial challenge for the trade union movement as part of an international movement for fairer and sustainable globalisation. While critique against the current form of globalisation is growing, ideas of sustainable alternatives often remain vague. The GLU wants to serve as a laboratory of ideas for a fairer globalisation and a university network which will work to provide trade union experts with the qualifications necessary to advance ideas and policies for global solidarity and justice. The German partner universities in Kassel and Berlin are currently hosting the second masters course and are preparing to welcome a third international group of students/trade unionists in September 2006. In 2007 the University of Kassel will be launching a postgraduate college on social governance of globalisation for PhD, students.

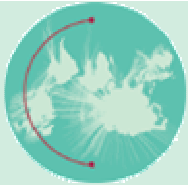
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The University of the Witwatersrand is the second campus within the GLU network that will offer a Masters programme on 'Labour Policies and Globalisation'. This programme has a special focus on labour and development and starts in January 2007. The start of a new programme in the Global South is an important step in strengthening the global perspective within the GLU and offers additional opportunities for international exchange programmes. At the GLU annual council meeting the network partners decided that the next annual conference will be held in Johannesburg from the 1st - 4th of April 2007. The conference will focus on trade-development and labour and will be hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand. A call for Paper will be circulated soon. The next GLU international workshop for curriculum and textbook development is scheduled for the 12-14th of September 2006 and will be hosted by the University of Campinas in Brazil. The University of Campinas is also exploring the possibilities of offering GLU students a programme as visiting students in 2007. (Frank Hoffer).

3. “Global Challenges for Labour” GLU Workshop 2006 in Kassel

On the 5./6.April 2006 the University of Kassel organised the international workshop “Global Challenges for Labour” in cooperation with the Masters programme “Labour Policies & Globalisation” (LPG). The 1st day of the workshop included a welcome session with speakers from the University of Kassel, the DGB, the GUFs and ILO/ACTRAV, followed by a plenary session in which Kjeld Jakobsen (Observatorio Social/CUT) acted as chairperson, Mike Waghorne (PSI) was key note speaker and Horst Mund (FES) was the discussant. The day ended with an invitation from Kassel's Mayor to a reception in the town hall.



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On the 2nd day a number of workshops took place dealing with the following topics:

- Labour's Role in Global Governance
- Enforcing Core Labour Rights
- Adjustments to Globalisation
- International Activities of Trade Unions
- Labour oriented Macroeconomic Policies
- Governing Labour Migration
- Macroeconomic Policies and Development

You can find the detailed programme and the reading material related to the workshop on the GLU website <http://www.global-labour-university.org> (Harald Kröck)

Report about the GLU Workshop 2006 from a student's perspective

This conference, drawing on expertise from the North and South grapples with global challenges from labour's point of view. Guest speakers from a diverse set of backgrounds i.e. UNIK, DGB, Education International, PSI, COSATU, University of Witwatersrand and ILO (just to name a few) addressed the comrades and discussed some of the key challenges of the trade union movement as well as offering recommendations.

A key instrument available to the labour movement -the ILO- was widely discussed and in this discussion it was emphasized that International Standards address more developed countries more than developing countries. Labour is struggling to find a solution in the wake of the balance of power shifting to global capital. Attention needs to be placed on fast developing countries such as China and India where no labour rights currently exist.

There needs to be a reduction in the gap between the rich and the poor. In attempting to solve this problem, labour has to lobby international financial institutions (IFI's) effectively. Working together with NGO's on putting a program of action in place to lobby these IFI's could be key. The fact that the IFI's do not allow for any social dialogue hampers the effectiveness of this process.

Although it is often tempting to become despondent within the labour movement, various success stories were mentioned:

- Some countries have rejected loans from the International Monetary Fund.
- The introduction of Millennium reports by the World Bank have forced member states to report on labour rights.
- The OECD guidelines and its enforcement mechanism.
- Lobbying and dialogue with trade ministers attending WTO meetings.

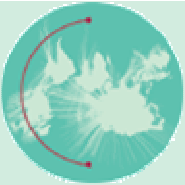
Global Labour Challenges:

- Concession Bargaining: compromise between labour standards and keeping jobs.
- Organizing in the informal sector
- Linking academic research with practical work
- Finding opportunities to gain a political view.

Recommendations

Recommendations to help address the above challenges ranged from education, linking up with NGO's, lobbying trade ministers, utilizing skills and having a joint action instead of competition between unions. There is also a need to enhance different sets of rules and to explore different traditional techniques and options such as strike action. Resources and capacity should be directed more so to IFA's as it increases the effectiveness of the ILO's core labour standards. Fully understanding different prevailing production systems could result in different trajectories of global social dialogue. Labour should be updated with key information that could influence policy making around macro-economics.

Essentially, the above are just a few of the topics discussed at the conference which brought together trade unionists, academics and students. Overall, the outcome of the series of discussions was that there was a development of new ideas and a sharpening of the skills needed to meet the challenges that lie ahead of the labour movement. The next conference will take place in Gauteng, South Africa. Short term objectives until then is that we need to have a duality of research and teaching meshed with practical aspects of trade unionism. We envisage having a research alumni of which trade unions would be key partners in being able to access information. - "Action based on knowledge is power". (Charlene Aprill)



4. ILIAS: Virtual Course Portal for GLU

For alumni activities/networking and as an online virtual portal for the Global Labour University in general, we have started to use ILIAS since the beginning of 2006. ILIAS is an open source software used by the Berlin School of Economics (FHW) and many other universities in Germany. It provides possibilities for information sharing (via files or messages) and discussions among its users on several discussion platforms. Some lecturers have already uploaded basic reading material for their courses and the course coordinators have started to use the system for providing current information to the students (e.g. weekly time tables, forms etc.). Students can share their papers, presentations, interesting reading materials etc. via file upload/download among themselves. Furthermore students' Master theses are collected and accessible for all participants of the Global Labour University (GLU). Information within ILIAS can also be shared with students, lectures and coordinators from other universities belonging to the GLU in the future. Every alumni, student, lecturer, organiser, coordinator and partner of the GLU has already got her/his own ILIAS user-id and password for accessing ILIAS. The system is based on specific user groups (e.g. LPG Alumni 2004/2005) with access to discussion forums and files allocated to these groups. Of course, every ILIAS user can be a member in several groups. This enables all user groups to share information/discuss issues in the privacy of their own group (e.g. LPG Students 2005/2006), as well as being able to participate in the discussion and sharing of information in broader groups (e.g. LPG ALL). ILIAS can be accessed via the link at the GLU website <http://www.global-labour-university.org> (click on the ILIAS box on the top right side). (Harald Kröck)

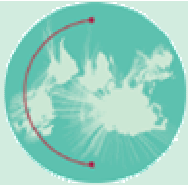
5. Experiences & Impressions of LPG Lecturers



Verena Schmidt

Seminar: Organisational Development of Trade Unions

One of the central challenges of trade unions is that the impact of globalization requires international and transnational cooperation while trade unions are organized within a national context. The aim of this course module is to look at processes of change within trade unions. How do different unions deal with decreasing membership? How is it possible to analyse the existing trade union members and their socio-cultural backgrounds? How can trade unions proactively address challenges arising from globalization? What is the impact of micropolitics in trade union organisations? The students were very enthusiastic about discussing these issues and bringing in their own diverse and rich trade union experiences. This made a huge difference to courses with "normal" German university students who usually start studying directly after school and have not yet had a chance to attain experience in the world of work. One potential conflict within our course was the importance attached to theories: Should all theories be directly useful and applicable to the trade union movement? Can it be useful to study grand theories in order to develop a classification system for mid-range organizational theories and the behaviour of actors and organizations?



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Christoph Scherrer

Seminar: Governance of Globalization

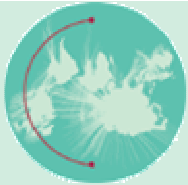
Teaching globalization to a group of labor activists from around the world is a good reality check for one's own ideas about the driving forces and the consequences of globalization. It greatly helps to overcome a Eurocentric view. It also forces me to think about the labor dimension in past and present struggles over the governance of globalization. Most of the literature treats organizations such as the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund as if these would not be in the business of governing the international division of labor. While some, though not many studies do address the impact of global economic rule-making on labor, the role labor plays, directly or indirectly, in these rule-making processes is almost universally neglected. Thus confronted with questions such as "Did labor play a role in the design of the Bretton Woods institutions?" the students could not rely on scholarly literature to provide readily available answers. To my joy, they did a fantastic job in coming up with plausible answers. Now it is up to me to check on the theoretical consistency and the empirical validity of these answers. I do hope that while writing the Master's thesis or after graduation some of the students will join in the quest to better understand labor's role in the governance of the world markets and to increase its leverage in the rule-making processes.



Barbara Dickhaus

Seminar: Political Economy of Privatisation

Teaching in the Masters course *Labour Policies and Globalisation* was a really international experience. Linking up theoretical issues of the privatisation of public services and globalisation often lead to lively discussions about the role of trade unions and the impact of privatisation on workers. The LPG students come from a trade union background and therefore they often have a common approach to issues, but as they all come from different countries and trade unions (18 different countries this year) discussions were lively and often controversial. How to engage with theoretical arguments and apply theory to real life experiences was a crucial task that the LPGs mastered very well. Also, other international students in the seminars and lectures, who do not have a trade union background, broadened their knowledge about the relevance of labour issues in these discussions - while the *Labour Policies and Globalisation* students gained insights from the other English Masters programme in Kassel on *Global Political Economy*. Thus, broadening their own views seemed to be an experience all students and lecturers relished during the seminars.

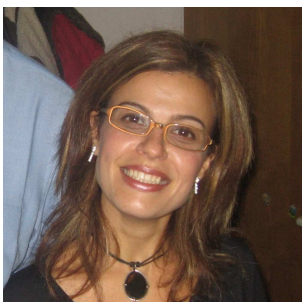


Hansjörg Herr

Seminars: Economic Policy and the role of trade unions & Development economics

The students in the master programme "Labour Policies and Globalisation" are highly motivated. Their readiness to participate actively in discussions makes teaching them very interesting. Because of their different cultural and professional backgrounds it is always a challenge to bring together such diverse knowledge and experience. I have the impression that we are on the learning curve when it comes to the development of contents and pedagogical concepts.

6. Expectations & Impressions of current LPG Students 2005/2006



Edlira Xhafa (Albania)

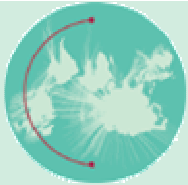
I have been working with the Albanian trade unions for the last 6 years in the area of education, research and capacity building within the unions. During the same period, I have been coordinating the international trade unions training in Albania, most of which was provided through our Centre. Among other things, I expected the program to provide me with a deeper insight of global governance and how the unions can influence this process.

At the same time, I wanted to use this time to better understand the relations between different institutions and political actors and how the balance of power works. I think the programme has pretty much responded to my expectations so far and I also have to add that the internship period has been very important and useful in this respect.



Lyudmila Volynets (Ukraine)

Before the program I used to work as International Secretary for the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) - a new trade union association established after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and thus called "alternative", meaning alternative in relation to traditional, state-controlled unions. I really enjoyed my work, which gave me the opportunity to meet a lot of trade unionists, activists and leaders, and to see what our brothers and sisters do in their countries, what trade union solidarity can achieve and how it can inspire workers in Ukraine. The ICFTU Congress in Miyazaki "Globalizing Solidarity" was really inspiring for a young, inexperienced trade unionist, like me before starting to study at the Global Labour University. Very often in my work, I experienced some problems connected to the lack of knowledge. What does EPZs mean? What does "globalisation" mean exactly? Sometimes you need an hour to understand a short document or the message of someone's speech. The announcement of the Master Course in "Labour policies and globalisation" was exactly the thing I needed in order to cope with all those unfamiliar words.



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I came to Germany with a lot of expectations, with a big desire to look deeply at surrounding events and developments. Some part of my expectations were met. Some were postponed to the 2nd semester in Berlin. So far I've got a better understanding of those developments, and I think, I started to think more critically (this aspect is often omitted at Ukrainian universities and schools). I also realize, that it is still just a drop in the sea and a lot is yet to be learnt and done. I also would like to add, that the programme is a great idea, that contributes significantly to the strengthening capacity of national unions (by looking for young committed trade unionists, delivering them a part of the world experience) and thus, making the international trade union movement stronger. And a lot of TU activists and leaders, I'm sure, are grateful for this.



Bülend Karadag (Turkey)

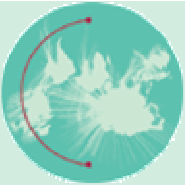
I used to work as a research expert in the Turkish Progressive Trade Union Confederation. Right before studying in the Masters programme "Labour Policies & Globalisation" my expectation was to acquire close relations with other trade union staff and to find some channels for cooperation in the future. My expectations are still the same but I can add some more points which I have reached in this programme. We are 20 trade unionists coming from all over the world, believing in the global struggle of the working class. Throughout this program, we have already come to understand that another world is possible for all people. Now we are in the very beginning of this world and I think this movement and this belief are going to become stronger every year.

I know there are thousands of people who also would like to change this world for the better, like us. At the same time, I have been experiencing many difficulties along the way. Despite this, this movement is going to be absolutely successful as we call working people to follow their dreams. It is too early to get a conclusion about my expectation but in advance I can say that we have just begun to constitute a common language among us which is a basic requirement for future collaboration.



Charlene Aprill (South Africa)

First of all, before I came here I didn't have much time to read what was expected of me. That should also have been made clear before. We would like to get an outline of the courses instead of only the name of the courses/seminars. I was very much interested in trade union strategies, because before I came to this course I was more involved in trade union research. I wanted to be more politically inclined, looking at the grass roots of trade unions, the practicality of what their roots are about and where they are moving towards in terms of globalisation for example. And I must say, the course itself on the one hand impressed me in fact that in the class with students from different parts of the world (north and south), we are getting experiences from all over, and we might not necessarily always agree. I remember very well, the first debate we had was about co-determination. And we did not understand what co-determination was about. And because we did not understand, all of us were basically against it. But as it went further on into the course, we changed our minds about it.



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Obviously, in that aspect I learned a lot. The most important aspect that sticks out for me is the fact of the international experience. Before joining the Masters programme, I just had national experience/knowledge about my trade union and what is happening in my country. Yes, of course I knew China was getting bigger but I didn't know really what was really happening. At my university (in South Africa) I learned only a very limited and national perspective. The theoretical debate in this programme is more international. I learned a lot. It was really challenging for me, not the course content itself but the fact that we do have to do everything in a certain period of time. It was not only about learning in class, it was learning outside as well: getting to know Germany, getting to know the system, and that I can only very much recommend to anybody.

7. Experiences of LPG Alumni after the Programme 2004/2005



Sven Krack (Germany)

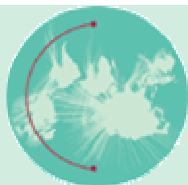
After I had finished the programme at the end of September 2005 I started to work for the DGB-Bildungswerk in Düsseldorf as an intern in a transnational CSR project. Already before I had applied for a trainee programme at the IG BCE (German trade union for mining, chemistry and energy). The main objective of this 18 month long trainee programme is to qualify trade union secretaries by giving them the opportunity to work in and run through different levels of the trade union work.

Due to this, one of my central tasks in the last month was to consult our works councils on the business level, especially in the field of conducting the 2006 works council elections but also on other economic or legal questions. Another very important task, especially in times of union membership losses, is to organize new members. After the first six months of the programme I will change to a district office and will probably work on another level of the organisation either in another district or on the regional level.



Verna Dinah Viajar (The Philippines):

My regular work on the Global Network project involves coordinating the partner organisations on their activities for the network. This requires me to keep contact with trade unions and labour NGOs in 8 countries in Asia. I also provide updates on globalisation issues through our e-group and website. I specifically make the activity reports and documentation for the activities in the Philippines and for the region while the contact persons in the other organizations submit their reports to me for consolidation. Incidentally, this project is closely related to the activities of IFWEA (International Federation of Workers' Educational Association). In addition to these activities, I sometimes function as resident writer/researcher. I am assigned with occasional papers to write such as short briefing papers such as critiques on industry policy papers, technical project proposals, press statements, news/feature articles, and political statements for labour organisations. On certain occasions, I am invited as resource speaker on specific labour seminars or as paper presenter during briefing forums for labour leaders. In the next month or so, I have an additional project which is to formulate the education modules of LEARN for publication within this year.



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Cesar Costa de Araujo (Brazil)

As soon as I came back to Brazil, I resumed my work at the Bank Workers Union of Brasilia, Brazil's capital. Besides working as a union official I started working as the leadership's advisor for general policies. In February 2006 our national federation, CUT, invited me to represent the federation at the GLU workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. I took the opportunity to be an intern at COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) for the following four weeks and collected material and conducted some interviews with COSATU's trade unionists for my research. Right now I'm designing a policy unit for my group to improve policy making to support the leadership, including different union officials such as economists and press officials.

My main task is to write a manual for all IUF affiliates that will help them in developing their own migration policies. The manual is called: "Organising, Representing and Defending Migrant Workers' Rights in Agriculture and Allied Sectors" and will be available in about 6 languages. The goal of this manual is to convince/ make some unions realise that migration is inevitable and deportation is not a solution, that they need to organise/ protect migrant workers. At the same time unions who already started to protect migrant workers, will be able to share their experience and see what other unions do for migrants. In the meantime, I am involved in different activities of my union such as gender issues, freedom of association, workers' rights, different seminars and conferences e.g. I go next week with a colleague to Romania for a meeting with the Coca-Cola union. I have about 2-3 international trips per month to different activities. Due to the fact that I studied in the "Labour Policies & Globalisation" programme, my colleagues try to profit as much as they can from my knowledge.



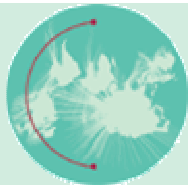
Svetlana Boincean (Moldova)

I am now working for the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), for the IUF Eastern Europe and Central Asia office, based in Moscow and my position is migration policy coordinator. But I live and work from Moldova.



Harald Kröck (Germany)

After I had finished the LPG programme at the end of September 2005, I started working as a technical advisor for the "Bureaux for Workers' activities" (ACTRAV) within the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva (Switzerland) for 6 months. The challenge for me was to build up an alumni system within the Global Labour University and to develop activities for maintaining the network created among the graduates of the 1st intake of the Masters programme "Labour Policies & Globalisation" during their one year in Germany.



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After my return to Berlin at the end of April 2006 I started my new job as coordinator in a transnational project (www.incarenet.de) run by ver.di (German trade union for the service sector). This pilot project experiments with new forms of integrated healthcare provision in Germany, Hungary and The Netherlands. Besides, I will also continue my activities within the Global Labour University in the future - focussing on strengthening the alumni network, preparing the GLU newsletters, keeping the GLU website up-to-date and administering the GLU virtual course portal ILIAS.



Nelly Botevska (Bulgaria)

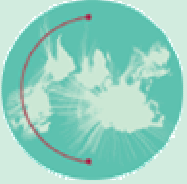
I'm working now as senior expert in the International Department of CITUB (Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria), the biggest one of the two representative TU confederations in Bulgaria. My work includes developing contacts with other TU confederations mostly in Europe, involvement in some projects of ETUC, ETUCO on social rights, globalization (we just concluded a big translation named "Europe and Globalization" for a TU handbook). Furthermore, I am involved in the work of the National Women's Committee of the Confederation, preparing some seminars especially for the target group women. My general work in the International Department is mostly doing translations, sending letters and e-mails with information about the recent developments in Bulgaria and the Confederation policies in this regard, also assisting for preparing travels of the leadership - mostly to ETUC working groups, executives, congresses and similar things.

I am also involved in the work of some NGOs which were created from people of the Confederation. For example, next week I will organise the Balkan Ethnic Children's Festival which we are preparing with my TU colleagues. We are expecting children (about 2000) from almost all Balkan countries and from Bulgaria. It will be a big event for 2 days. According to my future plans, I want to develop my thesis, probably as part of a PhD. First, I have to make some proposals for doing a teaching course with one university here in Sofia. I am looking also for other opportunities related to my academic research interests in the field of development of social/labour rights after the transition under the influence of globalisation and EU-accession.



Donna Mary McGuire (Australia)

I had heard about a 'reverse culture shock' when you return to your own country but it was worse than I expected. Everything felt strange, especially the hot tropical weather. How I have missed Germany and especially Berlin and my life as "eine LPG Studentin". I have returned home to a new job (but with the same union) and a new industrial relations system here in Australia. The current government seems determined to create a low wage economy and to achieve this they are trying their best to destroy trade unions. The new labour laws, which are ironically called 'WorkChoices', take away a lot of choices from workers, encourage employers to offer individual contracts and make it harder for workers to collectively bargain and to access their union organisers when they need assistance.



These laws also restrict freedom of speech as there are some things which workers and their union will not even be able to talk about with employers during negotiations. For example, they will not be able to ask for any leave for trade union training or suggest anything which might discourage employers from offering individual contracts or even from negotiating future collective agreements. If they do they can be fined \$30,000. It also makes it harder for workers to take any form of industrial action, with large fines for individuals and unions, although employers will be able to lock out their workers without notice. Many of the workplace rights and conditions which have been built up by unions over the past 100 years will be removed so it will be more important than ever for people to be members of a union. To fight this legislation and protect workers will be a big challenge for unions and they will really have to concentrate on building grass roots membership and collective action. This is probably the greatest threat Australian unions have faced since they started their own political party, the Labour Party, 100 years ago. So, you see it is a challenging time to be back in Australia.

8. Special upcoming Events

DGB-Seminar 6. – 8.10.2006

The DGB is the federation of trade unions in Germany (similar to COSATU in South Africa or CUT in Brazil). The DGB-seminar will be organised by the DGB-Bildungswerk, the educational office of the DGB, and will offer an opportunity for the students to get to know each other as well as some German trade unionists. The Seminar will be organised by Susanne Kim, who is the Youth Education Officer at the DGB (Susanne.Kim@dgb-bildungswerk.de). It will take place in Naumburg, a town close to Kassel, and the new students will go there by bus on Friday afternoon, 6th October, and will return on Sunday 8th October.