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1. Summary

Since the annual council meeting in April 2006 the Global Labour University was consolidated and extended. For the third time the University in Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics could welcome an international group of students to start their Master's course. The University of the Witwatersrand started for the first time a course on Labour and Development. In both programs the trade unions and the ILO are active partners through guest lectures and provision of internships.

Most students of the GLU came directly from trade unions and most of them either returned to their trade union, found another job in the labour movement or continued their studies in the labour field. (Annex I)

The University of Campinas developed a guest-semester program for GLU students. Due to time constraints unfortunately this could not be launched successfully in 2007. A partnership was discussed with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India. The Tata Institute is planning to offer a Masters Program already in 2007 on Globalization and Labour. McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada is exploring the possibilities of starting a GLU program in Canada.

Guest teaching, internships, curriculum development workshops, creation of an electronic course platform (ILIAS) and development of an Alumni network proved to be useful instruments for international networking.

Given the limited resources available and the complexity of the GLU project in the near future priority should be given to consolidate and strengthen the cooperation in the existing 5 partner countries.

2. International activities

2.1. GLU conference in Kassel April 2006

The 2nd GLU conference in Kassel in April 2006 brought together more than one hundred researchers to discuss “Global Challenges for Labour”. The conference was designed as an interchange between researchers, trade unionists and GLU students. It is also a unique opportunity for the GLU students to participate in an international conference of academics and practitioners from the trade union movement.

While the conference itself was seen by all participants as an important and fruitful meeting unfortunately the planned publication could not be realized due to a lack of time to coordinate and implement such a publication. This is unfortunate as the knowledge generated in such a conference should be shared with a broader audience in the labour movement.

2.2. Workshop in Campinas September 2006

An international workshop on curriculum development was hosted by the University of Campinas with colleagues from South Africa, Germany and Brazil participating. The workshop was used to present and discuss the conceptual ideas for the GLU course in South Africa and the idea of a one semester program for visiting students from Germany or South Africa in Brazil were discussed (Annex II). A number of papers were presented which, after revision, will be published as course reading papers.

2.3. Consultations with potential Indian partners February 2007

A GLU fact finding mission (Kassel, Berlin, Witwatersrand, ILO and FES India) had consultations with Indian trade unions (INTUC, HMS, SEWA) and the Tata Institute of Social Studies (TISS) in Mumbai.. to strengthen the Asian dimension in the GLU network. The TISS designed a draft curriculum for a Master's program that was discussed during this mission. The TISS will organize a workshop with a broad range of Indian trade unions in April 2007 to present and discuss the draft curriculum. TISS plans to launch a course already in September 2007. The course will be advertised through the GLU network and colleagues from Germany and the ILO already indicated that they could do some guest teaching in the India pilot course. However, for proper international advertising time might be too short. (Annex III)

2.4. Conference in Johannesburg April 2007

As discussed at the GLU annual council meeting in 2006 the 3rd GLU conference will take place in Johannesburg from the 1st –3rd of April 2007. Following the decision in 2006 at the GLU council meeting the conference will focus on two areas a) Labour and the developmental state and b) Labour, Trade and Development. More than 100 trade unionists and researchers mainly from developing countries are expected at this conference. For details and research papers see <http://www.global-labour-university.org/107.html>

2.5. WEB and ILIAS

In February 2007 a new www.global-labour-university.org web site was launched. It provides comprehensive information about the different programs and the work of the GLU.

ILIAS is the electronic platform for the Global Labour University. It provides a wide range of possibilities for electronic information exchange and debate. Until now it is mainly used as an electronic depository for course outlines and reading materials and as a database for the Alumni network. All lecturers are requested to upload their reading material and course outlines in ILIAS. This allows for a sharing of course reading and the development of joint course materials.

The technical possibilities of this platform are currently underused. Download course outlines and reading material on the common platform enables students and teachers from all universities to get a comprehensive overview about the different courses. Technically also the possibilities for an international online forum among the students from different universities are available and should be tested in 2007. ILIAS is password protected and interested members of the GLU network can contact Harald Kroeck harald.kroeck@global-labour-university.org

2.6. Alumni Network and Newsletter

The German colleagues have started to build an alumni network. A database of contact details is maintained. The program tries to keep a track record about the work of former students. A bi-annual newsletter is distributed electronically to Alumni and friends of the GLU (<http://www.global-labour-university.org/73.html>)

3. GLU programs

3. 1. Labour Policies and Globalization Kassel/Berlin, Germany (<http://www.global-labour-university.org/4.html>)

Since the beginning of the program a national coordination council composed of the two universities, the DGB, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the ILO is meeting regularly to discuss the course implementation.

The second group of the GLU students finished their course in September. A number of very interesting Master Thesis are published on the Web (www.global-labour-university.org) Most students of the first and the second course have returned to their organization or are in another capacity active in the labour movement.

Compared with the first year many organizational problems could be solved. Obviously some issues like multicultural group dynamics, hard budget constraints, cultural shocks, new learning environment etc. are in any case never easy tasks.

Content wise there is a certain tension between the theoretical orientation of a number of courses and the immediate practical needs of trade unions. On the one hand students do appreciate a more theoretical analysis of political and economic issues; on the other hand they would prefer a more practical link to their trade union needs back home. This is a challenge which is to some extent an expression of the conceptional design of the course that gives high priority to strengthen analytical capacity and not providing just practical skills. The competing objectives deserve constant discussion and reflection.

The Internships have proven to be a very important element of the courses in this respect to provide continuous and practical links with the labour movement. A workshop with the DGB youth organization and presentations by a number of German and international trade union leaders are opportunities to discuss also more practical trade union issues. The DGB invited the students to its congress in 2006 which gave the students the possibility to get direct insights in the German labour movement and also meet with a wide range of international trade unionist. A similar opportunity is given to this year's students as Education International will hold its congress in Berlin and has invited the students to participate. A workshop on multinational companies which will be offered together with the IG Metall and Global Unions in May 2007 will provide for another opportunity for such an exchange.

The third group of 21 students started their course in September 2006. The students are currently undertaking their Internships with a broad of range of trade union organizations.

3.2. Program in Johannesburg, South Africa

<http://www.global-labour-university.org/3.html>

The program in South Africa (course outline on <http://www.global-labour-university.org/3.html>) started with a comparatively small number of students. This was partly intended as the program need to be developed and pilot the course however it was also partly due to financial constraints and a limited number of qualified applicants from both inside and outside Africa.

The Steering Committee has been meeting on a monthly basis since the beginning of the pilot setting-up phase in August 2006 and has been guiding the process.

Students underwent a three week induction program before the beginning of the teaching semester, this helped students acclimatize to their new environment. There were a number of organizational problems which arose but were anticipated as this was the first time the course was being run, the majority of which should be resolved before the next student intake in 2008.

The process of setting up Internships has begun and a colloquium with trade unions, some GUF's and other Labour Service Organizations was held so that students could meet people from organizations who would be able to offer internships, learn about their research focus areas and network with them. There are some overlaps with areas that the students want to do their research reports on however, there are not enough overlaps with those present and we are having to do some work around allocating possible organizations for the students.

The students are settling in and began their courses over month ago. Adjusting to life in South Africa has been difficult for some students as it has taken time to acclimatize and the poor transport infrastructure makes it difficult for them to travel off campus.

Delays in their registration also led to problems with internet access and general access to the university but these have been resolved.

In terms of the feedback most of the students are engaging well in the classes and have already handed in first assignments, they have had to make adjustments to university life but all the students have been putting in effort to keep up with the work and participate in the classes.

Other than university administrative problems mentioned above, there are some particular issues which the meeting needs to discuss regarding recruiting students from the South. The issue of ability to finance studies played a significant factor in the low intake of students

The program is working closely with COSATU to address the possibility of securing further funding for grants for South African Students through the South African Sector Education Training Authorities and support for the release of more South African trade unionists to participate in the program so it is anticipated that the number of students on the program in 2008 will increase to around 15. However this problem is compounded by the fact that most trade unionists, in South Africa in particular but also in other African countries have not been able to access education especially at a tertiary level. Within the South African system there is the possibility of applying Recognition of Prior Learning but this is difficult. A possible way of establishing the level applicants are at would be to run a short certificate course in 2008.

3.3. Brazil

The University of Campinas, CUT and Observatorio developed a course outline for a guest semester for students of the German master program and Brazilian students. The idea of a guest semester was motivated by the consideration that the university has not yet offered a program in English and wanted to use this semester as a test phase. The Observatorio social is a partner in this program and would offer a special module on labour standards and multinational companies. The final decision on this project was only taken in September 2006 and time was too short to attract a sufficient number of qualified applicants.

4. Challenges and Perspectives for 2007 – 2008

4.1. Summer school, research project and alumni work

The German partner universities mobilized additional resources from the DAAD to organize a yearly summer school for GLU Alumni in Germany and Alumni workshops in partner countries. The first summer school will take place in September 2007. The summer school will focus on issues of labour and development and also involve experts from the partner universities. In cooperation with the ILO and the University of Witwatersrand it will also be used to start a comparative research on “Strengthening workers representation in small and micro enterprises”

4.2. Ph. D. program on Social Dimension of Globalization

In May 2007 Kassel University will launch a PhD school focusing on the Social Dimension of Globalization. This will contribute to the creation of a research center on issues like the Social Dimension of Globalization and will offer also the possibility to do more extensive research work on global labour issues.

4.3. GLU conference

The annual council will discuss the venue and the topic of the next GLU conference in 2008. Given that one year is a short period for preparing a conference it might be useful to make a provisional decision for 2009.

4.4. Publications

Producing teaching material and working papers should be a high priority for the next year. At the workshop in Campinas a publication committee was formed. There is a need to follow up on the practical issues of reviewing papers, designing the format, printing, distribution etc.

4.5. Memorandum of Understanding

The partners directly involved in delivering the GLU programs will sign a joint Memorandum of Understanding to create a common cooperation framework

4.6. Exchange of Students

Details for exchange programs for students of the different programs need to be developed. This is technically complicated as the teaching period at the different universities are not synchronized.

4.7. Strengthening the link between the course and strategic research for trade unions.

One of the continuous challenges of the courses is the lively link between the university program and the priorities and needs of the labour movement. The courses need to provide high-level academic qualification, but should at the same time address some more focused research needs and interests of labour. The Internships are currently the closest link between these two objectives. Students are often interested to see a closer link between their studies and its practical applicability. The challenge would be to develop some modules that combine the need for rigorous research and practical policy needs. One possible avenue could be a course project related to a global trade union campaign.