

ISSUES AFFECTING TEACHER UNIONS IN THE PACIFIC

PRESENTATION
TO THE
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THE NATURE OF PACIFIC TEACHER ORGANISATIONS

Large Unions

- AEU, NZEI, PPTA, PNGTA
- Membership of up to 50,000.
- Mostly in the bigger countries.

Medium Sized Unions

- Solomon Is., Fiji, Vanuatu.
- Membership of up to 5,000

Small Unions

- Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cooks, etc.
- Membership below 1,000.

SOME FEATURES OF PACIFIC TEACHER UNIONS (Medium/Small Unions)

- Physical/Technological isolation.
- Smallness, and inaccessibility of members.
- High costs of communications/transportation.
- Most unions do not have full time officers with no offices.

- Constant change in union leadership.
- Leadership for some has been there for too long.
- Check-off system for some unions are not in place.
- Absence of consultative processes/ frameworks/ collective bargaining, I/R legislations.

IMPACTS OF GLOBAL ISSUES ON PACIFIC UNIONS

- Global recession has not spared education systems of the Pacific; rising inflation rates, devaluation, rise in costs of education.
 - Reduction in remittances from abroad.
 - Stagnant salary levels against rising inflation levels.
 - Job loses, reduction of salaries/working hours.
- Decrease in government allocation on education budget.
 - Increased spending on military and security services. [Fiji, Sol., Tonga.]
 - Outsourcing of public services, contracting of teachers and civil servants, individual contracts.

SPECIFIC ISSUES AFFECTING PACIFIC TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

- Unstable governments/military backed governments.
- Absence of consultative/negotiation frameworks.
- Weak /absence legal/judicial frameworks.
- Lack of consistent and sustainable leadership development programmes for unions leaders.

- Violation of human/trade union rights.
- Media censorships.
- Targeting of union leaders.
- Suspension of countries like Fiji from the Commonwealth & Sth. Pac. Forum.
- Smart sanctions introduced against some countries.
- Lack of capacity to handle current global issues. [Hiv/Aids, Sea level rise, etc]

DESPITE THESE THERE ARE STILL HOPES

- Opportunities to voice concerns through various avenues are continuously pursued.
 - Networking through trade union and NGO structures are always kept alive.
 - Technology wherever possible has assisted campaigns to fight injustice.
- Support by international bodies [EI, ILO, EU, Commonwealth] has greatly assisted the plight of local/vulnerable communities/unions.
 - The clear message of democracy by large democracies of the world sends reassuring voice to dictatorship governments in our region.

What are the Pacific Teacher Unions Doing?



- Despite limited resources, we building capacities in our organizations.
- Continuing to pursue recognition at national/regional levels.
- Strengthen union activities through our women and youth members.
- Continue to promote the principles of unionism in our organizations /countries.

CONCLUSION

THANK
YOU
FOR
YOUR
ATTENTION

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DO YOU HAVE ANY
QUESTIONS?

