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The Way Forward: A Strategic Framework to Help CEE Teachers' Unions in the Struggle Against the Crisis

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**HIGH LEVEL SEMINAR
THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON
EDUCATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

**Hotel Novotel, Warsaw
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Why a Strategy?



- To help with union work at national and local level
- To empower teachers and their unions
- To protect the rights of teachers
- To share good practice
- To advocate for education as a solution to the crisis
- To protect education as a public good and human right
- To serve as an example to other regions
- To raise the profile of teachers' unions and EI

The Role of Education Unions



Starting Point

- ❑ Financial crisis was aggravated by imbalance between the bargaining power of employees and employers – leading to economic crisis (Blackwell, 2009)
- ❑ Unions involvement has led to the social dimension being included in the politics and policy of the crisis (Watt, 2009)
- ❑ Need to emulate good practice at the international level. *ILO Tripartite Jobs Pact: Agenda for Global Recovery* (ILO, July 2009). Governments, unions, employers.

Strengths of Unions

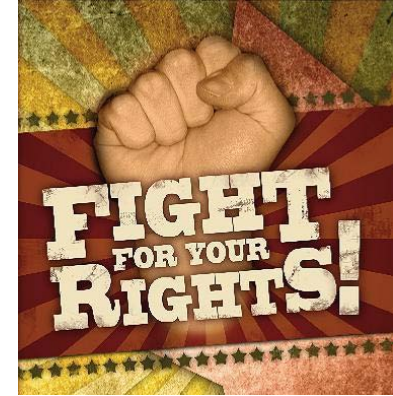
- ❑ Special view on social effects of economic policy
- ❑ Capacity to make counter-proposals, based on own research

Strength of Education Unions

- ❑ Special view on the impact of economic policy on education
- ❑ Possibility to tap into views of members working at the front line of education
- ❑ Can break down complex concepts into everyday language
- ❑ Can engage teachers/educators in debates about possible solutions

With Governments (1)

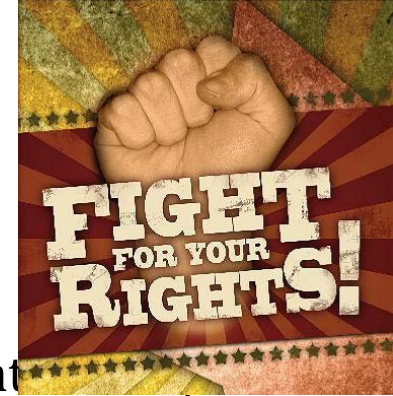
What to Go For



1. Connect quality of education, societal goals and labour conditions
2. Stress overall importance of investment in education vs. Teachers' salaries argument. Need to overcome 'mistrust' in education unions
3. To insist that negative crisis measures (e.g. cutting budgets) to be *ad hoc*
4. To insist on the need to invest in education in the long term - make the argument about investment in education (AOB)
 - Investing is better than supporting the consumer/consumption (? Consistency with teachers salaries)
 - Investing in Infrastructure brings long term benefits
 - Investing in Knowledge infrastructure has an even better return than investing in other infrastructure
5. Pressure Governments for a clear strategy to emerge from the crisis
 - And to make education part of the solution
6. Focus on QUALITY of education
7. Raise the level of the importance of social dialogue

With Governments (2)

What to Go For



8. Deal with problems not only related to education e.g. private schools, unemployment in other sectors
 9. Focus on equal access to high quality education (via well-trained teachers) /Fight against privatisation (if appropriate) of public schools– for this not to become the answer to the crisis – carries a risk of steering away from mission of education (need to focus on the human being rather than economic results) – value of public education
 10. Have a clear policy, targeting wider issues (AOB):
 - Children are the most valuable assets of Society, yet we tend to look for ever more cheaper ways to educate them.
 - Economic Growth in the Post-industrial era has to be based on intellect and knowledge
 - Equal access to education is an essential component of social stability.
- Be vigilant about pension reforms and protect pension rights

Ways and Means to Negotiate (1)



1. Find out what the government wants and be clear with your demands
2. Know the government arguments for cutting public budgets/salaries – and be prepared to counteract each one (with research)
3. Come up with a plan of your own (alternative) - based on research
4. Negotiate for pay rises/compensation to take effect *after* the crisis
E.g. Croatia
5. Collaborate with other education and general unions:
 - Present united front – so government cannot play unions against each other
 - Need to share information on own strategies
6. Leaders of unions who are members of bodies within ministries: use position to exert pressure (also in consultation)
7. Choose the right political moment to exert pressure
E.g. using period just before elections to exert pressure

Ways and Means to Negotiate (2)



8. Get into the margins of the political controversies
(do not take sides)

8. Aim for binding results:

- legislation
- collective agreements
- accords

10. Be quick in responding to the changing situation in their country

11. Be vigilant of governments' mistakes – catch them out when they cite the crisis as an excuse for their own wrongdoing

12. Use the threat of industrial action – don't necessarily go on strike



Tactics (1)

1. Hold press conferences
2. Issue Communiqués
3. Obtain international support/commitment
4. Consider bi/multi-lateral dialogue/collaboration with unions abroad
5. Work with as many political parties as possible
6. Identify levels at which lobbying is to be made
7. Develop research capabilities – with research students/higher education institutions
8. Interact with the public
 - Use the media
 - Foster social dialogue e.g. by online forms (Alma Mater)

Tactics (2)



9. Hold large Demonstrations (Strength in numbers) - organise general strikes with the public sector
E.g. 180,000 in Croatia before local elections
E.g. 20,000 in Hungary, involving all civil servants in November 2008
10. Consider different aims of strikes:
 - Education reforms
 - Government resignation
 - Increase in salaries
11. Consider sympathetic strikes with other sectors
12. Be vigilant to solutions proposed by others to Government e.g. employers - which are disadvantageous to employees
13. Work with partners
14. Inform and involve members in struggle/campaign against crisis

Partners for Education Unions At the National/Local Level



Student and Pupil's Unions

- Similar history and similar role to play
- Composed of highly active, critical young individuals

Parents' Associations

- Share similar concerns about quality and inclusiveness of education
- Well-organised, appeal to a broad audience

General Trade Unions

- Well-informed and involved in bargaining and negotiations on the crisis
- Can provide political advice

School Administration and Higher Education Institutions

- Have an interest in maintaining their activities: keeping staff and students
- Higher Education Institutions can contribute by way of research
- Organisations grouping e.g. Librarians – which contribute to education

Teacher Associations and Associations that deal with education, future of education (organisation of e.g. physics professors)

Key Role in the Crisis (1)

Arguing for Teachers' Pay



Salaries as the Best Fiscal Stimulus

- ❑ Investing in jobs stimulates consumption, boosts the economy

The Need for a More Attractive Teaching Career

- ❑ Education for All Targets to be met (6 % GDP investment in education)
- ❑ Teacher shortage needs to be countered
- ❑ A time to attract new teachers: when unemployment is on the rise
- ❑ Need for teachers' salaries to be competitive with that of other occupations

Quality Education Prevents Unemployment

- ❑ Investing in teachers leads to quality education, preventing future unemployment
- ❑ Employees in higher paying jobs pay higher taxes, benefiting the economy

Countering GDP Arguments

- ❑ No positive co-relation between growth in GDP and growth in teachers' salaries
- ❑ Investment in teachers needs to be made despite GDP decline

Recommendations on the Status of Teachers

- ❑ 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers
- ❑ 1997 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of HE Teaching Personnel

Key Role in the Crisis (2) Influencing the IMF



Highest IMF Decision-Making Body

- Board of Governors
- Consists of one Governor and one assistant Governor appointed by each State

What Can Unions Do?

- Pressure Minister of Finance/ Governor of Central Bank (usu. appointed to IMF)
- Targeted pressure to Ministers through Parliament

What is the Intended Aim?

- To reform general ethos and structure of the IMF
 - to relax conditionalities
 - to give countries taking loans more room for manoeuvre
 - to reform governance of the IMF (only US has veto)*
 - * size of economy determines amount of fees and amount of voting power*



Starting Globally Acting Locally

EI Campaign: Hands Up for Education

- Surveys and Factsheets
- Education: the Cost of Recovery
- Press Kit
- Speaking Notes: Forthcoming



World Teacher's Day: 5 October 2009

- Invest in Teachers NOW!* (www.ei-ie.org/worldteachersday2009/)
- Communiqué will focus on the Crisis and the need to invest in teachers



CEART: Expert Committee on the Recommendations on the Status of Teachers

- Tenth Session: 28th September-2 October 2009

Global Campaign for Education (GCE): Global Action Week 2010

- Focus on the Crisis
- 1Goal: Education For All!* GCE-FIFA World Cup Initiative (www.join1goal.org)

