

DON'T WASTE THE CRISIS



International
Labour
Office
Geneva

Global Labour University

Edited by Nicolas Pons-Vignon



CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

FOR A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

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Don't waste the crisis

Critical perspectives for a new economic model

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Foreword

Dan Cunliffe

The Great Recession is the worst global crisis since the Great Depression 80 years ago. The old globalization model failed. Business as usual is not an option. The damage has been done and the price for the excesses of the past will have to be paid. Whether this will be through a bitter deflationary process, the reduction of the welfare state, prolonged wage depression or a public investment and wage-led growth model based on a new balance between society, market and state is a policy choice. For trade unions, the choice is clear. The challenge for them is to mobilize in order to overcome powerful vested interests and to convince governments to make the right choice.

I am pleased to provide you with the first annual Global Labour Column yearbook, a collection of articles posted on a weekly basis on the Global Labour Column website. The Column aims to provide a forum in which labour movements and their allies around the world can connect, debate, and share knowledge and experiences. Through this sharing we hope to contribute to the development of fair and effective crisis response policies.

The Global Labour Column is the product of a close collaboration between ACTRAV and the Global Labour University (GLU) that brought together trade unionists and academics to devise new responses to the crisis. The Global Labour University is itself a collaboration of ACTRAV, trade unions, and a network of universities offering unique masters programmes to trade unionists around the world. GLU's courses are jointly developed by universities and workers' organizations and are aimed at students from trade union and social movement backgrounds in developed, developing and transition economies.

The production of the Global Labour Column and this subsequent yearbook arose from the identified need for labour-based, high-quality academic knowledge that could help workers' organizations respond to the current economic and financial crisis. Indeed, the growing complexity of a global economy requires academic knowledge and policy analysis that goes beyond workplace experience and classical industrial relations. To improve wages and

working conditions crucially depends on issues outside the traditional areas of trade union activities. Rules and regulations for capital mobility, trade and taxation directly affect the world of work.

This is why the ILO's Global Jobs Pact has been proposing a new and comprehensive policy response to the crisis. Implementation of the Global Jobs Pact gives an additional urgency to the need to strengthen the knowledge base of trade unions both to respond to the crisis and to develop new paradigms and new ideas for sustainable globalization. I am very pleased that ACTRAV is able to contribute such a space for debate and knowledge-sharing, which will strengthen the knowledge and policy capacity of workers' organizations. I would like to thank in particular our partners at the Corporate Strategy and Industrial Development (CSID) research programme of the University of the Witwatersrand for coordinating and editing the weekly Global Labour Column and this book.

I hope you will find this collection of articles thought-provoking, and I encourage you to further engage in the debate by reading the articles on the Global Labour Column website.

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