



# Global Labour University Internship Program 2005

## **Evaluation Report**

Commissioned by ACTRAV / ILO

## Findings and Recommendations

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# A. Introduction

## Context and genesis of the evaluation

As an integral part of the one-year M. A. program ‘Labour Policies and Globalization’ of the Global Labour University (GLU), the participants of the course of 2004-2005 undertook a six-weeks internship in February-March 2005 at the following institutions: DGB, ETUC, ETUI, FES, HBS, ICFTU, IFBWW, IFWEA, IG Metall, ILO, IMF, IUF, Naledi, PSI, Walsh-TUC, UNICORN, and Verdi.

The intention of the internship, as it had been discussed by the organizations participating in the program beforehand, was a three-fold one: It was envisioned to enable the student to i) gain some practical insights into the work of an international organization; ii) get integrated into the work processes, possibly into some ongoing project, of the host organization; and iii) develop ideas and gain data and support regarding her/his masters thesis and future research. As the internship program had been a pilot project in itself, ACTRAV felt that it would be helpful to make an assessment to what extent the objectives have been met and what changes might be necessary to achieve that aim also in future. Therefore this evaluation was commissioned in order to learn from the experience made by the mentors and students who had participated in this first year’s program.

## Operationalization of the evaluation

The evaluation at hand has been carried out between March and July. Its findings are based on **interviews** with all 23 students plus one accompanying partner and with 20 of 22 host organizations.<sup>1</sup> All conversations with the students and ten interviews with the mentors of the organizations that had provided an internship were *face-to-face* interviews in Geneva and Berlin, the remaining interviews were conducted via *telephone*. While the scope of the duration of the semi-structured interviews ranged from 30 minutes to three hours, most interviews took one to one and a half hours. Two **questionnaires** (*to be found in the Annex*) had been developed – one for the students and a second, rather similar one, for the mentors of the host organizations – and sent out to all interview partners beforehand, serving as a guideline for the interview. After the first two to three interviews minor modifications of the questionnaires had been made as a result of the previous discussions.

## Content, focus and structure of the report

As it is the nature of evaluations that stress on the identification of shortcomings of a project and the development of respective solutions, this survey did and does *not focus* or elaborate extensively *on what worked well*. The **emphasis** lies rather on those aspects that could possibly be improved. In order to prevent giving a wrong picture I would like to point out that the overall assessment by students and mentors alike has been a distinctively positive one

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<sup>1</sup> Several attempts to contact the remaining two coordinators/mentors and/or to make an appointment for an interview having been unsuccessful, the experience and perspectives of the latter could not be integrated into the evaluation.

The report is **structured** along the central themes concerning the internship in order to allow the reader to, at each point, understand the relationship between the recommendations for future internships within the GLU program and the experience made during the pilot internships.

In order to keep the evaluation report brief and legible, it does not contain the very detailed statements of, and references to, the respective authors but rather a **summary of the perceptions, reflections and feedback** put forward in the conversations. Thus, naturally, not all findings and recommendations would be shared by every interviewee. However, it did not occur as there had been numerous issues that had been perceived very controversially. In those cases where diverging opinions had been formulated, the alternatives have been taken up by the report. Furthermore, an attempt has been made to, also, take into account the frequency of concurring experience and assessments and the level of concern underlying the statements voiced in the interviews.

The **recommendations** offered in this report, to a large extent, comprise suggestions by the interview partners themselves or are, respectively, results of our conversations.

Obviously, the **categories** along which the report has been organized may overlap at some points. In very few cases certain issues might therefore be dealt with in more than one place, but generally, in order to prevent reiterations, they have been classified under that item that seemed most appropriate with respect to the underlying concern.

As for the **terms** chosen, *students* and *interns* are used interchangeably; *hosts* or *host organizations* refer to all organizations or their respective departments/units that provided an internship; and *organizers* comprises all institutions, organizations and individuals which have taken on responsibility in the development and implementation of the internship program and/or the M.A. program. *TUs* (trade unions) occasionally stand for *GUs* (Global Unions), *GUFs* (Global Union Federations), national trade unions and trade union federations. *Conversations* and *discussions* are employed as synonyms for *interviews* and thereby indicate the partly discursive and mostly informal interview process.

## Disclaimer

The evaluation findings might be limited to a certain extent due to the following facts: *First*, that the author of the evaluation was located at ACTRAV and therefore possibly not seen by the interview partners as an independent evaluator. Although the author felt that the responses appeared to be quite frank it cannot be ruled out that some points of criticism might have been held back or bolstered.

*Second*, the evaluation does not entail the experience and observations by the program coordinator and ACTRAV, who had been at the centre of organizing the internships. However, at the point this evaluation was commissioned, the focus was put on the mentors and interns as having been the ‘protagonists’ of the internship program.

*Third*, this evaluation report does not claim to offer all solutions possible. It is rather meant to serve as a means to continue the discussion on the objectives, the set-up and follow-up of the internship program in general and the individual internships in particular. It should be seen as a first draft of an ‘internship manual’ for future mentors and interns alike.

*Last*, I take full responsibility for any misinterpretations or omissions of assessments or propositions.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank all interview partners for the rather engaged conversations. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of you, sensing your concern and perceiving your reflections on the internship.

## Invitation

Acknowledging that there had been more details put forward in the interviews and being convinced that the findings would have multiplied if we had had more time for the interviews, I can only invite everyone involved in the internship program to complement this report by bringing missing aspects to the attention of the organizers.

# B. The Report

## 1. Assessment and satisfaction

### Interns

The *overall* assessment by the interns of their internship experience was positive:

*It was « very useful and productive », « very helpful », « very positive », « a great experience », « uplifting to be among people who want to change the world », « a real feeling of trade unionism », « I was very happy with the internship », « I felt very much integrated », ...*

The interns felt that

- the **internship provided, or resulted in,**
  - a **synthesis of theory and practice** that will inform the second semester and future work
  - **new insights** (into issues/debates, structures, strategies, methods, ...) **and inspirations useful for home organizations**
  - a **better understanding** of the situation of labor / trade unions in other parts of the world, of the interdependence of national/regional labor policies, and of the necessity of **international trade unionism**
  - **building contacts / networks** important for trade union work at home and for international trade unionism, particularly in the face of globalization
  - the **acquisition of new skills**, e. g. moving in an international environment, intercultural communication, language proficiency, writing policy assessments,

questioning and critically assessing also of close political positions, etc.

- a strong **motivation** to bring in the qualification acquired during the course and through previous work into labor movement
- most **mentors** were **very engaged and resourceful** with respect to their work *and* the internships.

## Hosts

Similarly, the mentors of the host organizations testified an overall positive experience:

*« Very positive », « very good », « that's what we need », « program absolutely timely with respect to challenges for trade unions », « this whole process is very important for the labour movement », « very useful for our work », « went very well as it was a two-way process », « nice experience »,...*

From the point of view of the mentors,

- **the internship provided, or resulted in,**
  - establishing or **strengthening** of (new) regional / **international contacts**, and in **networking**
  - an **insight** into the labor situation / **trade union work in the intern's country**
  - the **opportunity to receive feedback** on the organization's work by a (professional) outsider **and to reflect upon own work**; and the cognizance of a need for a « young dynamic » in the trade unions
  - some material **contributions by the interns** such as an article, a critical assessment of an agreement or some statement, a research paper, a curriculum, etc.
  - the **intention of future cooperation** with the intern (one intern was offered a job, others were invited to give a presentation at a conference or contribute to future publications, etc.)
- the **interns** were mostly conceived as **highly motivated and engaged**.

## 2. Selection, matching and preparations

### Findings

- Probably as the most frequent finding, it was felt that the '**prior-to-the-internship**'

**communication and preparations**' by the interns and the host organizations was not always sufficient and satisfactory.

- The **matching** was mostly good.
- The fact that the program participants are **no 'ordinary' interns** due to their work experience and regional knowledge has been highly appreciated by several organizations and quite underestimated by some others. In general, it appears that the host organizations, provided that it was made good use of the advance communication process, could much more benefit from the intern (during and after the internship) than it has been acknowledged.
- Some **host organizations** had **identified students** they were particularly interested working with because of the latter's geographical and/or work background. In those cases where this interest had been mutual and the students eventually did their internships at those places, it seems that the results were predominantly satisfactory.
- Several interns were confronted with the situation that their **mentors** were **hardly available**.
- **Decisions on the final allocation of internship places** were, in a few cases, felt to be insufficiently transparent or 'just' which left some students dissatisfied with the selection process.
- In a few cases of just **one student interning at a locality**, the students, particularly when they came from non-European backgrounds, felt rather lonely; the mentors and other colleagues of the respective host organizations tried to compensate for that beyond average by invitations to common meals, sight-seeing tours, etc.
- In most of the cases where **non-German speaking students had been assigned to German organizations**, the communication went rather well due to the circumstance of the mentors and other colleagues in the immediate environment speaking English. However, as soon as the internship TOR required making telephone calls or working with internal written material that is usually only available in German, the limitations became quite obvious and, in one case, rather frustrating. To a certain extent, that could be balanced out by German-plus-English-speaking interns and colleagues.

## Recommendations

**As the internship is very tight, it is very important to prepare and undertake the internship as focused as possible!**

The **host organizations** can optimize the matching also to their own benefit by, *before the selection,*

- **providing as specific information** as possible, such as
  - options of projects or issues to be worked on
  - the expertise of the mentor
  - required qualification, e. g. language proficiency
  - learning objectives
  - expectations, e. g. certain results,

*on which the students can base their choice of a particular internship on*

- **discussing the internship design among colleagues** ahead of time
- **identifying a contact-person (mentor)**
- **possibly pre-contacting student(s)** who are interested in, or who appear to be interesting for, the organization;

*after the selection,*

- **communicating and providing information (material) ahead of time**
- **‘tailoring’ the intern’s assignment** (and relevant information material)
- internally **discussing and/or briefing the colleagues on the internship assignment and intern** prior to the arrival of the intern
- **identifying a ‘deputy mentor’** – even more important in the case of the frequent absence of the regular mentor; it is important that one of both or some other clearly identified colleague should be easily available for questions, discussions and feedback

To enable themselves to co-shape the internship as much as possible according to their needs and interest, the **students** should

- **provide specific information** to the organizers and host organizations in line with the schedule given; this should entail an indication of their
  - clear expectations (e. g. interest in particular projects of, or expertise within, the host organization, certain results or learning objectives such as specific skills to be acquired)
  - background (work experience, TU/other professional/activist/regional background)
  - skills
  - strengths and weaknesses (including language proficiency)and serves as the *basis for host organization’s assessment of the extent of mutual matching and for a best possible tailoring of the internship.* It makes the internship much more fruitful when the intern knows before the actual beginning of the internship why (s)he is joining that particular organization and what (s)he wants to get out of the internship.
- **communicate** their interest and experience **ahead of time**
- do some **background research on the organization** (size, history, political affiliation, executive structures, agenda, projects, etc.) **and on the labour situation and issues in the country of internship** ahead of time.

The **university / lecturers** could

- reserve some time slots during which students could prepare themselves comprehensively for their individual internships, and/or
- incorporate the preparations into the class assignments of one particular or several courses.

### Mentors, students and organizers

- The earlier the **prior warning** as for the exact **time period of the internship**, the better can the host organization ensure to provide the intern with everything necessary.
- At the stage right after some initial pre-selection decisions, it was felt that the matching could be considerably improved by means of
  - a «**market place**», in which all students and representatives of as many host organizations as possible would participate, and
  - a structured and instructed **telephone communication** between the students and the mentors.

Not only could both sides (students and mentors) deliberately seek out potential internship partners, clarify open questions and check out the mutual suitability, but everyone would also already have a *face* or *voice* in mind which would ease any further communication ahead of the internship. It was stressed by most of the interviewees that the contact before the internship should go **beyond e-mail communication**.

- It should be a **two-sided selection process** *with priority on the choices made by the students*, facilitated by the organizers. The experience made indicates that also the active participation of the host organizations already in the pre-selection process can contribute to a more focused and purposeful internship. For example, in a case the host organization was to carry out a certain project in a particular country, a student from that region or with a matching work experience could be approached whether this proposal would also match her/his internship objective.
- It should be discussed whether students should be enabled or even encouraged to identify **places of internship outside the official list** offered by the program. In case should be deemed an option students were to be made aware of that possibility.
- The organizers should communicate more clearly to those host organizations with no or little experience in employing rather mature interns that the **assets of the participants of the GLU internship program** should be **taken into account** in the selection and tailoring process. Generally speaking these are a TU background, that could include expertise in international relations, TU education and organizing; regional knowledge; an academic training comprising of analytical skills and a theoretical understanding, particularly on globalization, labour issues and related subjects such as human rights; work experience in fields like law and journalism; and, last but not least, the fresh look of an ‘outsider’ on the host organization.
- In order to ensure sufficient communication prior to the internship and the exchange of concrete and expressive information between the students and the mentors,
  - a **manual and/or schedule** could be provided that would indicate the various steps required for the process (that could be one element of the ‘internship guideline’ recommended under 3. *Content*)
  - the institutionalization of an **internship coordinator** may be helpful; s(he) could give a hand in cases where the ‘prior-to-the-internship communication’ is not satisfactory for one or both parties.
- The ‘prior-to-the-internship communication’ between the mentor and the intern

should result in the **definition of TOR and/or some schedule**. At the latest, it should be formulated during the first week of the internship and, possibly, also submitted to the internship coordinator. This would lead to a real commitment on the part of both, the intern and the host organization and reduce the feeling of insecurity of the intern.

- **Previous internship reports and evaluation findings** will be helpful assets for the preparation of a new internship.
- The organizers and mentors should convey a **realistic picture** to the interns what can, within the short period of the internship, realistically be accomplished and what not. That may prevent disappointments and frustrations.

To avoid unnecessary anxiety and unpleasant group dynamics, everyone responsible should aim for

- **transparency** with regard to the **distribution/assignment of internship places** in case of multiple applications for a particular internship;
- **timely clarification of possibilities and limitations to support interns beyond the academic and the internship program;**
- **timely preparations and discussions** regarding the **accommodation** of the students during the internship; interns should definitely be involved in that process and also should be checked out whether and to what extent the hosting organizations could contribute with contacts or by co-financing (it was indicated by some host organizations that they could possibly bear the costs for accommodation).
- In a pre-dominantly non-English speaking internship environment it should be considered to **place a native speaking intern together with a non-native speaker** at one organization (provided the capacity of the organization and a good matching of all interns concerned). The same goes for interns who have not yet acquired proficiency in the English language but are supposed to intern in an English-speaking environment.
- Depending on the life experience, cultural background and personality of the students concerned, it should be considered to designate at least **two students to each locality** to enable them to support each other in managing their daily lives at a new place.

## 3. Content

### Findings

- The **content varied** from the development of a tool kit, position statements and research papers, including case studies, to the curriculum development of a summer School.

- Due to
  - a) 'internship' being an unknown concept to several students
  - b) the GLU internship program having been a pilot project
 → some mentors and several students felt unclear on
  - **objective** of the (particular) internship
    - preparation and development of thesis (*topic, scope, material, contacts, feedback, interviews, writing, etc.*), or
    - practical exposure of intern, or
    - delivery of result to host organization / home organization and utilization of student's expertise and skills, or
    - all of that and/or with what priorities?
  - and their **roles and the expectations towards them.**  
*This 'vacuum situation' led, in some cases to anxiety, a feeling of insecurity, guilty conscience, frustration and disappointment for both parties involved.*
  
- With regard to concrete **results** of the internship, there had been high **expectations** on part of most interns in contrast to a low expectation on part of a substantial number of organizations.
  
- Most interns *do* offer TU or other **professional experience, regional background and academic skills** and want to give *something* – many organizations regarded internship as mere exposure, less than half expected results (discrepancy in the internships at ILO even stronger!).  
*Where the competence of the interns was incorporated, in one way or the other, into the internship, it produced high levels of motivation, satisfaction and self-esteem on the part of the interns; in cases where the qualifications were not being seen, the students felt highly frustrated and 'useless'*
  
- Maybe due to the different levels of expectation, it was more mentors than interns who felt that the internship had been, directly or indirectly, **beneficial to the organization.** Here, again, this assessment was noticeably more dominant within the unions than the ILO.

## Recommendations

- It needs to be clearly pointed out to the mentors and students alike that the **particular objective** of the internship should be **developed in the 'prior-to-the-internship communication'** between the *student* and the *host organization*. There is no one else to define it.
  
- For a most satisfactory outcome, the **internship needs to be tailored to the needs of both sides.**  
*It would make the internship more fruitful for both, the host organizations and the interns, if the work experience, academic qualification and regional background of the student would be more deliberately utilized for ongoing or future projects. For example, the student could be asked to give a presentation or some advice on a topic of her/his expertise that would also be relevant and/or interesting to the host organization, whether it be on globalization, human resources management in their TU, or journalistic tools, during a staff meeting, a workshop, or any other adequate forum.*

- **Clear communication prior to the internship**, particularly on expectations and resources, is essential for a successful and satisfying collaboration. This is valid for both directions in the communication flow between *organizers-mentors*, *organizers students* and *students-mentors*.
- In order to generate more transparency regarding the expectations, requirements and rooms to maneuver,
  - the organizers should be developing an **‘internship guideline’** that could serve mentors as a check-list
  - the request was put forward to establish some informal, yet institutionalized **exchange forum** between **mentors-mentors** and **mentors-organizers**.
- More internships should be offered by, and priority given to, TUs rather than ILO.
- The **information sessions** for the intern group in Geneva should be maintained; wherever there should be more interns also in some other localities, it could be considered to organize similar meetings as well.
- One output of the intern’s work could be some **presentation of her/his internship ‘project’** (e. g. research findings, an article, a syllabus, etc.) in a staff meeting.

## 4. Inter-linkage of the internship with academic program

### Findings

- The **intertwining** of the internship with the academic program has been considered successful and **mutually beneficial**. According to the assessment by students, the experience of the internship made them
  - realize the **relevance of testing theory models or policies** (such as international agreements) **against** the background of **‘real life’ conditions**
  - see to what extent and *how* **theoretical models, analyses and methods** are, or could be, **implemented**
  - assume that the second semester, and their **academic understanding** in general, would be **informed by the practical experience** and an increased knowledge of the field.
- It was felt that there was a **lack of understanding** on the part of the interns in respect to **the socio-economic and political situation and of the TU policies in the host countries**. Concern was expressed whether the masters’ program would sufficiently cover the practical problems and issues trade unions in Germany and Europe<sup>2</sup> are

<sup>2</sup> where the academic program and the majority of the internships take place.

currently facing.

- The **students** were **extremely exhausted** during the first weeks of their internship. This was due to several facts:
  - There had been *no brake between* the end of the, obviously rather extremely intense, *course and the internship* (as there had been none for most of them after all their individual preparations before moving to Kassel);
  - several students had *brought along university work* that had to be completed parallel to the internship;
  - the *first semester* was felt to be *highly demanding and intense*, particularly for those students who had either come from a ‘hands-on’ work background and who had get to re-adjust to the academic environment or who had yet to acquire a proficiency in English;
  - starting the internship meant for almost every student to *settle*, within a short period, *for a second time at a new place* which, in many cases, also comprised to find an orientation in a new country and culture, including setting up and managing one’s daily life in a foreign language and within unknown bureaucratic structures.

## Recommendations

- The working group responsible for the academic curriculum should consider including
  - **seminar modules or lectures on the socio-political situation in Germany**
  - more information on practical problems and issues of TUs in the country where the internship takes place; that could be achieved by a **higher integration of TUs** (particularly those participating in the internship program) **into the curriculum** of the first semester.

*In addition to thereby widening their political horizon, the students could settle into the internship more quickly and it would be more probable to be able to effectively contribute to the work of the host organization as it was desired by the vast majority of the interns.*
- ‘Encouragement’ and enabling of students to participate in **‘hands-on’ activities** (e. g. demonstrations) to mediate ‘feeling’ for local problems.
- Extended **information on the content of the academic courses** should be given to the **mentors**. This would enable them to better utilize and complement that knowledge to the benefit of both sides.
- Due to the given time constraint of the one-year M.A. program, **links between the internship and the master thesis** should be encouraged. However, taking the variety of interest and needs on the part of the students and their home organizations into account, that inter-linkage should nevertheless be seen as optional.
- In the planning of the first semester it should be considered to allow for **some time off in the transition to the internship**
- Students should be strongly **discouraged to bring course papers into the internship phase** in order to avoid mental constraint and distraction from the objective of the internship.

## 5. Setting

### Findings

- The setting is **extremely important** for the well-being of the students and the level of success of the internship.
- Interns want to **feel welcome** at, and integrated into, their host organizations.
- The **information flow** between organizers, host organizations and interns (located at the same place) regarding interesting events (conferences, seminars, lectures, demonstrations), material available and access to facilities was not always functioning well.
- In cases where interns, during their internship, attempted to initiate **contacts** for their research or their home organizations they were, particularly within the ILO, frequently **not given any response** or only little time and attention.
- Several students had not been **aware of the** extent of the **financial burden** due to multiple moving, high costs of living in Geneva, Brussels, etc., partly no cooking facilities at the accommodation, **and of the bureaucratic difficulties** (visa and other requirements). That produced a high level of stress and anxiety on their part.
- It was felt that there was not sufficient **practical information** given on Kassel, Berlin and the internship locations.
- The **duration** of the internship (six weeks) was felt too short by almost every intern and mentor (even more, if one considers a settling period of one to two weeks *and* the overlapping with the Easter holidays during which also several mentors were absent for one to two weeks)
- It was, personally and politically, **highly appreciated** that **parents had been enabled** by the internship program **to be accompanied by their children** and partners. However, the respective unequal distribution of support resulted in a certain discomfort among the interns.
- Due to the extremely difficult housing situation in Geneva and despite an intensive search by the program organizers for suitable rooms, several interns were facing a number of problems relating **accommodation** (such as having to share a room with up to three persons without any choice of the room-mates, no privacy *at all* for six weeks, no cooking facilities, remote location with inconvenient transport facilities, etc.)
- A substantial number of **individuals** (at the university and host organizations and among the organizers) **went out of their way** in the attempt to balance out the burden and difficulties the interns were facing. Although, on the one hand, being appreciated by most of the students, this combination of structural difficulties and individual efforts, on the other hand, catapulted them into the situation that they felt they ought to be repeatedly grateful for choices not being made by themselves.
- A certain level of communication obstacles, misunderstandings and misinterpretations are inevitable in a **multi-cultural environment**. While there had been a number of incidents where that factor played a role, everyone involved seemed to have made an

effort to let her/himself let in for, and learn from, those cultural differences.

- In the case of one student, it proved to be extremely difficult to get a **visa for the accompanying partner**. It appears that no support was given by the program. If the visa would have been denied by the embassy, the female Muslim student would have had to quit the program after three months.

## Recommendations

### Host organizations

- **Make the intern feel welcome, useful and integrated!** This can be accomplished by
  - an **advance information of the staff** on arrival and ‘project’ of intern
  - an **introduction to all colleagues** at the start of the internship
  - **making yourself available for discussions** as much as possible, for example by establishing **regular informal and/or formal meetings** (*morning coffee*, ‘*one question-per-day discussions*’, *regular discussions on progress of work*, etc.).
  - **invite the intern to, or inform her/him on, staff meetings, seminars and conferences** (also at other organizations, if relevant and feasible).
- For contacts the intern needs to make (within or outside the organization) for her/his research or her/his trade union, it can be quite helpful that the **mentor** or some other colleague gives **support in establishing the connection**. Because of the short internship period it might even be advisable to pre-contact the persons/organizations in advance of the internship.

### Organizers

- It should be conveyed that the **support of parent-interns** is politically wanted and not an act of individual preferential treatment.
- Assuming that it is wanted to enable women from Muslim societies to participate in the program, it needs to be acknowledged that this may require the **accompaniment** of their husbands. The organizers should check the **possibilities of giving support** in that matter, e. g. issuing a letter to the embassy.

### Organizers and host organizations

- Conditions as well as the **possibilities and limitations to support the students** outside the academic program need to be **clearly communicated** as soon as possible in order for the applicants, to
  - i) make a well-informed decision whether to participate in the masters program or not, and to know what contributions are expected of them and what support they can count on
  - ii) to minimize stress and frustration for all parties involved
- **Inclusion of students in the process of ‘solution finding’ and decision making**

wherever applicable and whenever possible as to

- i) utilize their resources, give them the opportunity to co-shape the setting and make them feel responsible members of the program
- ii) reduce the burden of the staff among the organizers and the host organizations

#### Organizers, students, host organizations and universities

- At internship locations with more than one intern at the same time, it would be helpful to determine one person (could be an organizer or an intern) **in each internship location responsible to collect and distribute information** on relevant events, material and facilities.
- All relevant **practical information on Kassel, Berlin and on the internship locations** that have been collected so far by the various organizers, host organizations and the previous students should be **deposited at one place**, e. g. the program coordinator at the University of Kassel, and complemented by information material published by the tourist offices, the public transport authorities, etc. The **participants of the 2004-2005 course** should point out significant issues they had not been given sufficient information on, and could possibly **provide the respective information**.
- The fact that the multi-cultural setting does not appear to have caused dramatic misunderstandings within the previous internships and the course of 2004-2005 as such, the potential of difficulties should not be taken lightly.
  - Therefore it is suggested to offer a **workshop on intercultural communication** as early as possible during the first semester.
  - In addition, it should be considered to include that aspect also in the **annual GLU conferences** or organize a session immediately after or before the conferences, e. g. in the form of a working group, a lecture, some coaching unit, etc.
- With respect to **accommodation**, the recommendations are as follows:
  - **The earlier to look for accommodation the better!** Efforts to find an affordable and adequate place should start as soon as it would be clear how many interns would be staying at which place.
  - The students need to be **aware ahead of the internship**, and if possible even prior to their decision whether to participate in the masters program, of the **possible costs for accommodation**; it should be transparent under which circumstances and to what extent financial support could be given.
  - The students should be informed about the situation regarding accommodation, and it should be up to them, depending on their capacities during the first semester, to what extent they want to become active to **find some accommodation on their own**.
  - In those cases where the accommodation should be arranged by the program, the apartments/rooms should have **cooking facilities** in order to keep food expenses low and allow for the preparation of that kind of food (s)he is accustomed to.
  - Participating in a demanding program requiring a high level of flexibility and dealing with new situations and environments requires a minimum of space and privacy. It should **not be more than two persons** having to share one room. And it should be taken care that the guesthouse would leave it to the interns' own

choice with whom to share a room.

- If no other accommodation may be found for interns in Geneva than the one from the 2005, they should be informed of the situation beforehand (previous experience should be shared with them as well).
- If students feel that the living circumstances that can be provided to them by the program would not work for them, they could be **provided with lists of links and addresses**, along with an indication of the limit of the financial support by the program.

## 6. Evaluation

### Findings

- The question was raised how the ‘flash lights’ of **realizations and ideas** resulting from the internship experience could **be preserved for future internships** despite the daily demands and work pressure in between the internships.
- It was noticed that certain non-western **cultures** do not seem to consider an active shaping of the internship, an offensive defending of one’s own interest or open critic as particularly appropriate. The question that occurred was how mentors and organizers could deal with that in the attempt to ensure a satisfactory outcome of the internship.

### Recommendations

Considering the strategic and individual value of a successful internship for students and host organizations alike, the usefulness of an evaluation should not be underestimated:

- All host organizations of 2005 as well as future hosts should be provided with this **ACTRAV internship evaluation**.
- Host organizations are recommended to conduct **internal two-way evaluations** (mentors↔interns). These could be based on the questionnaires that served as guidelines for this evaluation; the questionnaires could be modified to the particular circumstances of the individual internship.
- The request to be provided by the organizers with an **evaluation guideline** (which could be part of the ‘internship guideline’, see 3. *Content*) was put forward. It could indicate the central principles, methods and required steps regarding evaluation

processes. Possibly some of the host organizations with frequent internships or summer schools have already developed an evaluation guideline and would be willing to make it available.

- Several mentors showed interest in
  - a **collective evaluation by all participating organizations\*** and
  - **class feedback** (possibly mediated by the course representatives).

Both were regarded useful tools to improve upon the internship. Even if certain problems at one place did not occur within other organizations, becoming aware of potential issues and being provided with feedback on the chosen ways of handling the situation, go hand in hand within a process of mutual learning for future internships. These collective evaluations could be envisioned as one element of the annual meetings or, possibly, also via some group discussion via the internet.

\* For the Geneva internships, a feedback meeting en miniature could be organized for the interns, mentors and ACTRAV in an informal manner, similar to the welcome meeting in 2005.

- As for **cultural idiosyncrasies** it is referred to the intercultural workshops suggested before. In addition, it might help to consult colleagues having, or being experienced with, the (same) cultural background.

## 7. Follow-up

### Findings

- A few interviewees expressed concern regarding possible obstacles to the successful **re-integration of the participants into their home organizations**. At some places the program participants might be seen as threatening present structures and positions and therefore be sidelined within their organizations. This would obviously not only maneuver these colleagues into difficult personal situations but might also prevent the trade union movement in their country taking advantage of the perspectives and skills they have acquired in the course of the *LPG* program.
- Similarly, the issue of the **integration of participants** who had not worked for TUs before joining the internship was raised, particularly how it could be ensured that the trade union movement would benefit from their participation in the course.
- Many questions were formulated as to *how* the established contacts between the host organizations and the students and the expertise on both sides could be utilized for **future cooperation**.

## Recommendations

- Independent of that scenario introduced before, the issue of **(re-)integration** appears to be a central point of measuring the success of the program.
  - The concern should be **taken up by hosts and organizers and in class discussion**. **Individual advice** should be given by the organizers and mentors to those participants of the program who might be at risk of facing the problem outlined before.

It is proposed to conduct a **follow-up evaluation** on what happened to the students after the completion of the course, best possibly at the end of the first year after their return to their home organizations and maybe again after another one or two years. This evaluation should not only cover the perspective of the former GLU students but also include the perceptions by the home organizations on the benefits and/or problems in respect to the participation of their colleague in the ‘Labour Policies and Globalization’ program. The outcome of this evaluation would be a significant indicator for the level of the latter’s success.

- To ensure a high level of (re-)integration of program participants into the TUs,
  - the latter should be **encouraged to delegate interested and eligible staff** to the program
  - it is recommended that the LPG program should **raise the official age limit** for participants, as it is assumed that in many unions there are not too many eligible trade union officers to be found below the age of 40
  - **to link a coverage of the university fees for an outsider with a future work contract.**
- The **future involvement of the students** and the utilization of their qualification for the work of TUs and the ILO should be
  - put on the agenda of **every executive meeting** and of the **annual workshops**
  - deliberately examined within the **host organizations**
  - discussed within the **alumni network** that is envisioned to be built up; this could be one component of the network which would need to be linked with concrete issues and interests in order to become and maintain active.

It should be considered that timely clarifications regarding a possible follow-up could give an additional drive to the internship.

*As for short-term cooperation a number of questions should be clarified such as whether the students would have the capacity to do some follow-up work for the host organizations during the second semester, or whether there would be funds to enable the student to participate at a conference after the internship.*

## 8. Participation in the program

Logically, this item should stand at the beginning of the report findings. However, as the matter of participation as such was not subject of this evaluation and, furthermore, goes rather beyond its scope, the survey cannot offer any encompassing and representative findings. Nevertheless, given the fact that the issue was taken up and regarded as a significant matter by several interviewees, the author of the evaluation felt that it should not be omitted.

### Findings

- It was pointed out that even within those TUs which are participating in the internship program **no strategic decision** has been made, so far, **of utilizing the *Labour Policies and Globalization Program*** as *one* opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of globalization policies and to establish international TU contacts.
- It was felt that the program was, despite the majority of students coming from countries of the Global South, **too ‘north-heavy’** with the academic program and almost all internships being located in the industrialized countries.

### Recommendations

- In the **executive meeting** of the program and also in further meetings of the organizations being part of the GLU, regular discussions should be **put on the agenda, how the members of the GUFs and GUs could be approached and better informed** of the program.
- It is felt that it would be timely for the **members of the GUFs to strategically participate in the program** by means of *delegating a TU officer* to the latter as well as by *providing a place of internship*.
- In a long-term perspective, the ***Labour Policies and Globalization Program*** should be **extended** so that trade unionists from Europe should also study and do an internship in countries of the **Global South** in order to adequately understand and deal with globalization.
- Also **students from circles closely affiliated with TUs should be directly approached** and recruited. In case of promising applicants to the program, it was suggested to stimulate a discussion within TUs as **to link a covering of the university fees to a future (re-)integration of the program participant into the trade union**.

## 9. Concluding remarks

By having had the opportunity to gain an insight into the involvement of all the actors who contributed to making the Internship Program 2005 possible, the immense deal of preparations and an extraordinarily high level of engagement became obvious. This might explain, along with the internship experience of several mentors, why that venture, despite the fact of having been a pilot project, appears to have been considerably successful if one takes as a yardstick the satisfaction concerning the **content** of the internships and the fulfilment of the expectations. At the same time, there is obviously also need of improvement with regard to a number of aspects of the internship program. Most *mentors and interns* alike shared, *first*, the perception that more attention should be paid to the '**selection, matching, and preparations process**', and, *second*, some feeling of discontent with the short period of the internship. While the internship, nevertheless, enabled most interns to better link theory with practise, get a feeling for international trade unionism in the context of globalization, gain insight into new issues and areas, acquire new skills, and also produce some results, and gave several mentors the opportunity to develop a better understanding of trade union issues and strategies in other places, establish or strengthen contacts, and to reflect upon the work of their organizations, more deliberate and focused preparations of the individual internships would certainly render the internship more purposeful. The *interns* stressed, on the basis of their mixed experience, the importance of the **setting** of the internship with its impact on the course of the latter and on their personal well-being. On the part of the *host organizations*, a strong interest was expressed in developing a concept regarding a **follow-up** to the program, mainly concerning the issue of (re-)integration of the students into the trade union work and future cooperation between the host organizations, the ILO and the students.

Although believing that the interviews in themselves already contained the opportunity of reflecting upon the internship experience with its positive effects and short-comings, everyone wanting to make the next internships (even) more mutually beneficial and pleasant should feel invited to go back to the detailed findings and recommendations in this evaluation report.



## C. Annex

### Questionnaire - Interns participating in the GLU internship programme

#### A) General satisfaction

What is your overall feeling how the internship went?

1. What were your expectations towards the internship?
2. Did the internship help you to gain
  - a) an overview on the work the organization is doing (*what are they doing?*)
  - b) an insight into the working (structure, procedure) of the organization (*'how' the organization is working*)
  - c) some knowledge on xy (subject) (*overview, more complex insights, ...?*)
  - d) some skills/capabilities (*which skills?*)?
3. How may this particular internship, and what you have learned there, concretely contribute to your academic studies / your professional goal / your socio-political activities?
4. Did you feel that your mentor and your colleagues
  - a) had prepared themselves for your internship (*how/what; why not?*)
  - b) had been available (*at the beginning of your internship/when needed otherwise: did you have regular meetings/conversations and how often?; did they try/manage to make themselves available when you had a question or a problem?*)
  - c) had been responsive to your questions and problems (*how/how not?*)
  - d) had been accommodating your particular interest in this organization
  - e) were interested in tapping your qualification/regional background/etc.?
5. Did you have access to the infrastructure necessary for pursuing your tasks? (*Library, archive, PC, telephone, experts,...?*)
6. Did you feel
  - a) being challenged to little (*why/how?*)
  - b) you could not cope with the expectations (*why/how?*), or was it
  - c) just rightw/ respect to the tasks assigned, and the information given, to you?
7. To what extent have your expectations (see answer 1.) been met?  
*Completely – mostly – partly – not at all*
8. To what extent are you, overall and despite of or maybe because of unexpected developments, satisfied with your internship?  
*Completely – mostly – partly – not at all*

9. What, before or during your internship,  
a) went well and should be maintained for future internships within the programme  
b) problems have occurred (for which one would need to look for solutions/modifications next year)?

### **B) Tasks – definition, clarity, changes**

1. What were the tasks / projects that had been assigned to you?
- 2.1. How were your tasks determined:  
a) solely by the institution  
b) along with, and according to, your initiative  
c) through some communication between you and the institution?
- 2.2. Where the tasks formulated at the beginning of your internship clear to you? (*Scope, aim, procedure?*) *If not, have you been able you clarify them? How and when?*
- 2.3. Where the tasks that were agreed upon before the start of your internship changed during your stay? (*Substantially – partly - not at all?*) *By whom, why and when? Where you happy with those changes?*

### **C) Preparations and background**

1. What made you join this particular organization?
2. Did you have some background knowledge on the issue that your internship was about? (*Academic, work//NGO/other practical experience?*)
3. Did you prepare yourself for the internship? If so, how?
4. What issues regarding the internship were you able to clarify with your e-mail communication before your arrival in Geneva?
5. How much would some kind of ‘market place’ in advance of your internship have helped you to  
a) be able to make a good choice regarding the organization where you will be doing your internship, and  
b) make the internship more fruitful?  
(‘Market place’ to be understood as a meeting between representatives of the organizations offering an internship and the students. Organizations could be providing information on their work, setting, interests, limitations and expectations regarding the internship as well as students could mediate their interests, backgrounds and expectations in one-to-one conversations.)

### **D) Organizational gain**

1. Do you think the organization/your mentor  
a) did expect some particular results/outcome of your internship / intended/intends to utilize your work (*if so, how?*), or  
b) considered it to be a mere training or exposure for you?

2. What do you think you had been able to offer the organization?

**E) Suggestions for future internships**

1. Would you recommend that future interns should be placed again in this organization? (*If not, why?*)

2. Which departments/mentors/colleagues were particularly supportive/helpful?

3. Could you think of meaningful issues that future interns could be working on in this organization?

4. What further preparations on

a) the part of the organization

b) the part of the intern

would help to make the internship more effective?

5. What (other) concrete changes could you think of to make the internship more effective?

6. Do you have further comments and/or suggestions that could improve the internship programme?

# Questionnaire

## - Organisations participating in the GLU internship programme

### A) General satisfaction

1. Could you please give us your overall assessment of the internship?
2. Would you think that the intern was able to gain some
  - a) overview of the work your organization is doing
  - b) insight into the working (structure, procedure) of the organization
  - c) knowledge on subject xy (*overview, more complex insights, ...?*)
  - d) qualification/skills/capability (*which?*)during her/his internship?
3. What was your expectation
  - concerning the internship?  
Did you/your organization
    - a) expect some particular results/outcome of the internship
    - b) considered it to be a mere training for the intern?
  - towards the intern?  
Did you deliberately draw on the intern's background?
4. Do you think your organization will be able to utilize the work the intern was doing?  
*If so, how?*
5. Was there something that you were, or your organization was, able to learn from the intern?  
*Could you, please, elaborate on that?*
6. Does this current internship experience change your expectation regarding future internships?

### B) Tasks – definition, clarity, changes

1. What were the tasks / projects the intern was assigned for?
- 2.1. How were the intern's tasks determined:
  - a) by your institution
  - b) along with, and according to, the intern's initiative
  - c) through some communication between you and the intern?
- 2.2. At what point before, or during, the internship where the tasks to be performed by the intern formulated? (*Scope, aim, procedure?*)
- 2.3. Where the tasks changed during the internship? (*Substantially, partly, not at all?*) *Why and when?*

### **C) Preparations, evaluation and follow-up**

1. a) Did it cost you extra time to
  - organize the internship? (*How much time?*)
  - carry out the internship? (*How much time?*)b) Did you have some prior e-mail exchange with the intern? If so, what had you been able to clarify with that? Was that sufficient?  
c) Do you think that, in case of a continuation of the cooperation between your organization and the internship programme, it would take you more *or* less time next time?
2. How much would some kind of ‘market place’ in advance of the internship have helped for a better matching of the intern – host organization?  
(‘Market place’ to be understood as a meeting between representatives of the organizations offering an internship and the students. Organizations could be providing information on their work, setting, interests, limitations and expectations regarding the internship as well as students could mediate their interests, backgrounds and expectations in one-to-one conversations.)
3. Have you had other interns before? Did that help you in organizing and supervising *this* internship? *In which way?*
4. Was it difficult to convince your colleagues concerned to provide an internship place?
5. Did you do a final evaluation together with the intern?
6. Do you think there will or could be some follow-up with the intern?

### **D) Organizational gain**

1. Independent of the course of the current internship, could you think of meaningful issues/projects that future interns could be working on? (*What could they be?*)
2. Can you imagine / would you be willing to accept interns in future? (*If not, why not?*)

### **E) Suggestions for future internships**

1. What further preparations on
  - a) the part of your organization
  - b) the part of the internwould help to make the internship more effective?
2. What (other) concrete changes could you think of to make the internship more effective?
3. Do you have some concrete ideas how ILO/ACTRAV could support your organization / the intern in order to make the internship work / better work / even better work?
4. Do you have further comments and/or suggestions that could improve the internship programme?