

Founding resolution of the Action Committee, Nurseries & Education, Berlin, Germany

Education instead of war! Skilled workers instead of austerity measures for our nurseries and day-care centres!

Action Committee, Nurseries & Education
18 August 2025

In recent weeks, the rank-and-file “Action Committee, Nurseries & Education” has been founded in Berlin to take up the fight against the ongoing deterioration of conditions for nursery and day-care-centre workers, children and parents. One result of the first discussions is the founding resolution below.

Dear colleagues,

We call on you to join us in building the Action Committee, Nurseries & Education. We nursery and day-care workers, teachers and all employees in the education sector must become politically active in order to address and improve the problems we confront. We can no longer accept that nurseries, day-care centres and schools are degenerating into mere holding facilities and that our work resembles a permanent state of emergency rather than foundational educational work.

The overriding principle of our action committee is that the interests of staff, children and parents take absolute priority over the so-called imperatives of austerity and profit, which are only put forward to shovel society’s wealth further and further from the bottom to the top.

Together we fight for the following demands:

- More staff and uniform adjustment of the staff-to-child ratio!
- Higher professional standards in child care!
- Uniform high standards for educational qualifications instead of confusion and competition between state and private vocational schools in training!
- No statistical tricks with part-time work, but minimum staffing according to number of children for every single day!
- Clear definitions of duties and responsibilities for assistants, interns and volunteers. They must not serve as stopgaps for missing trained staff!
- Increased and standardized salaries regardless of provider or federal state, so that they are sufficient even in expensive major cities!
- More money for materials, toys, equipment, facilities and decent meals for every child!
- At least one dedicated housekeeping staff member in every

nursery/day-care centre!

- Less bureaucracy in applying for support and funding. Good education is a basic right!
- Not a cent cut from education—billions for nurseries/day-care centres and schools instead of higher military spending!
- No militarization of education! We educate children for cooperation, not confrontation.
- Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) out of schools! Immediate stop to Bundeswehr recruitment of minors!

For years, if not decades, the problems have been growing. Working at the limit has become the sad new normal for many. The growing demand for childcare places and the growing expectations for children’s education are not matched by the necessary increase in resources.

There is a lack of staff (including trained professionals as well as sufficient hours due to tight staffing ratios), and equally a lack of money for material resources and the funding of external services that are part of everyday day-care life.

Everyday problems include, for example:

- Nursery/day-care staff must carry out housekeeping tasks, which takes away time with the children and the group.
- Staff absences due to illness or even just vacation often reduce work to mere custodial and supervisory duties, leading to overtime or the loss of all breaks.
- Unqualified or untrained staff are forced to take on responsibilities, at the expense of the children, leading to overload and increased risk of accidents.
- Cost pressures lead to inadequate nutrition.

The essential purpose of the institutions is being lost: the educational mission. There is hardly any time or staff left to offer developmental activities and to help children acquire basic skills such as handling scissors, holding a pen, or practicing reasonable and cooperative social behaviour. Instead of promoting development from the very beginning, problems are carried over from one age group to the next, often multiplying.

The result is an ever-decreasing equality of opportunity.

Especially children with disabilities, from precarious circumstances, refugee children or children with a migration background are having an increasingly difficult time.

Education is a human right, and inclusion means realizing the democratic principle of equality for all in education. Education policy is full of lip service to both. Yet in reality, we see structures deteriorating further under the guise of inclusion.

Instead of focusing on the needs of the child, we often have to focus on the needs of bureaucracy. Complex applications are followed by long waiting times before funds and/or staff are approved. Most of the offices responsible (youth welfare offices, social pediatric centres, etc.) are themselves overloaded due to staff shortages. Problems meet more problems, shortages meet shortages, overwork meets overwork.

Thus, early childhood education institutions are gradually turning into mere holding facilities where children are placed so that parents can go to work.

Education policy must do more than transmit knowledge—it must give children courage, self-determination and resilience so that they can actively shape the future and their society.

The current system prevents opportunities. It creates problems and destroys support and promotion. It labels people as “problem cases” from childhood through adulthood and leaves them behind.

On top of the acute problems in schools and nurseries/day-care centres, further sweeping cuts are now coming at the municipal, state and federal level. The money saved is flowing into Germany’s “defensive strength.”

The insane spending on rearmament, for which all social needs are now to be sacrificed, reveals the treacherous role of the trade unions more clearly than ever. Whether public service union Verdi or education union GEW, they bear direct responsibility for the problems and deteriorations.

Time and again they have broken off struggles, agreed to rotten compromises and thus piled up structural deficits at the expense of staff.

Often they belong to the same parties as the government and state representatives, whether the long-time Verdi chief Bsirske of the Greens or the many Social Democratic Party (SPD) trade union leaders.

It is impossible to reconcile the unions’ support for war and militarization with the most basic social interests of the population. The unions have long since ceased to be even limited representatives of workers’ interests and have become mere auxiliaries of the ruling class.

The fig leaf of the union bureaucracy is almost always the Left Party, descended from the East German Stalinist party of state, the SED/PDS.

Especially in the capital, this party, after bailing out the *Bankgesellschaft Berlin*, played a key role in over a decade of state government in imposing social cutbacks on the population. Everywhere else, too, their radical sounding social words are always followed by right-wing, antisocial deeds.

We have no illusions that an apparatus of officials closely intertwined with the establishment parties will represent our interests.

The action committee is being established to bring together

educators who want to take up a serious fight, whether they are still members of a union or not.

We will not allow ourselves to be divided between public and private providers, between federal states, or by origin.

We also aim to join forces with those affected in all other social sectors suffering from cuts and job losses, whether in nursing, higher education, supply services or industry. An action committee has already been formed in public transit at transport operator BVG in Berlin.

Everywhere you hear the claim that “there is no money.” If not already during the era of multi-billion bank bailouts, then at the latest with the pro-war policy of the “new era,” it became clear that this lie must be rejected without compromise.

When it comes to the “security” of the financial oligarchy or to rearmament, billions or trillions can be provided in no time, and laws and the constitution changed at lightning speed. But when it comes to the interests of working people, we are told to accept sacrifices and compromises.

We reject the propaganda that the rearmament of the Bundeswehr “into the largest army in Europe,” as Chancellor Merz declared, serves to protect democracy and freedom.

The war in Ukraine, just like earlier in Afghanistan or Yugoslavia, is about economic interests. The events in Gaza show that even supporting genocide is no longer shunned for such interests.

We firmly reject the militarization of society!

Children should neither be raised to be soldiers, nor indoctrinated by officers in schools and told that the Bundeswehr needs new heroes to fight (and die) for “peace and freedom.”

Especially in Germany, with its history of two world wars, we say to the ministers and generals: we protect and educate children not as cannon fodder for your future wars!

In every country, working people are facing similar attacks. We therefore not only stand in solidarity with all struggles against cuts and closures but will also seize every opportunity to link up with educators from other countries in the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, to learn from shared experiences and struggles.



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