

# FOR JUST GO

A COMPENDIUM OF BEST PRACTICES  
FROM ALL OVER EUROPE

ON INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE  
IN TRADE UNIONS

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## CONTENTS

### 2 FOREWORD

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 3 A fragmented labour market
- 3 Young workers and trade unions: a difficult relationship
- 5 Goal of the guide

#### 2 YOUTH AND LABOUR MARKET

- 6 Young workers and the economic crisis:  
between unemployment and precariousness
- 8 Youth policies: a short overview of what has been done at EU and national level
- 9 Involvement of trade unions in youth employment policies:  
a short overview of what has been done at EU and national level

#### 3 YOUTH AS AN ADDED VALUE

- 11 What can young people bring to the trade unions?
- 11 Internal transformation(s) of a trade union through young members
- 12 Preparing future trade union leaders

#### 4 YOUTH STRUCTURES IN TRADE UNIONS

- 14 Youth structures at European Industry Federations' level: a short overview
- 16 Youth structures at trade unions' national level

#### 5 BEST PRACTICES

- 18 Making trade unions more attractive for youngsters in the EU
- 20 Shaping innovative ways of communication through new technologies  
and social networks
- 22 Recruiting young workers to the trade unions in a fragmented labour market
- 23 New mobilization techniques
- 26 Young workers' needs: making trade unions advocacy more representative
- 28 Improving young people's role in the trade union structures

### 30 6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES

### 40 7 CONCLUSIONS

#### 8 APPENDIX

- 42 Workshop methodology
- 45 Glossary of abbreviations
- 46 Acknowledgement
- 47 References
- 48 Project partners

## FOREWORD

This booklet is one of the results of an EC funded project aimed at “Empowering the integration of younger workers in the European Metal, Manufacturing, Transport, Food, Services, Construction and Wood industries” which was implemented by the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) in cooperation with the other Industry Federations – the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the European Transport Workers’ Federation (ETF), the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), industriAll European Trade Union and UNI Europa.

The title **JUST GO FOR IT!** was chosen by the participants of the European Youth Conference, which was organized in Croatia in May 2015. During the Conference, around 150 young trade unionists from all over Europe and all economic sectors gathered to share experiences and discuss challenges on the inclusion of young people into trade unions. Following the discussions, recommendations to improve the situation were put together. These are listed at the end of this booklet, the gist being that young people need to be the driving force of the change, take the lead ... they have to **JUST GO FOR IT!**

This booklet also provides an overview of good examples coming from different unions in different parts of Europe on how to integrate young people. The examples were collected through questionnaires and interviews carried out among young unionists and workers of the affiliated organizations of the 6 Industry Federations, but also from the examples shared during the Conference. Even if situations vary from country to country, there are common trends and experiences that can be compared and applied to different realities. This collection of examples can be inspirational, provide ideas or simply push people to connect and share initiatives all over Europe. Contributors and Conference participants agreed that “in a world which is increasingly interconnected, exchange, networks and contacts are the best way to get things moving, both at National and at European level”.



## A fragmented labour market

Within the European labour market, the integration and inclusion of younger workers has gained increasing attention from EU-policy makers and trade unions. The economic crisis has hit all the economic sectors and all the workers have suffered from this. But data show that young workers and young people have in general suffered more from the economic downturn. They are not only more vulnerable to unemployment than older age groups, but they are the most affected by precarious conditions.

A young (potential) worker can nowadays be entangled in many different and differentiated working conditions compared to an older worker. Unemployment is also one of the possible conditions characterizing the current situation for young people. The term “flexibility”, which is increasingly used by policy makers, seems to have become the panacea for all the problems of the youth labour market. Temporary and unstable jobs are disguised behind this term. Therefore, we face an increasing number of people “in transition” between jobs. At the same time we have young people in transition from school to work, drowning in a huge offer of unpaid internships, striving to find the long desired first and paid job. Recently, acknowledging social risks and high economic costs, policy makers have also started paying more attention towards people *Not in Employment, Education or Training* (NEETs).

This complicated and multi-faceted situation could be an important arena for trade unions (TUs) to become engaged and acquire new members. This would also help to reverse the trend of declining and ageing membership. We often see that TUs strive to adapt and give answers, but despite increasing attention to the youth issue, trade union strategies for the recruitment of young workers are not always successful and the organizing is lagging behind. Good examples exist though.

Even if it is difficult to find long-term comprehensive statistics on the issue, studies have shown that, throughout Europe, TU membership rates have been declining since the 80s. Overall, no TU movement has implemented an effective strategy to restore the levels of the late 70s<sup>1</sup>. Accounting for some differences in countries with specific situations, e.g. Germany and Belgium, this applies even more to young people<sup>2</sup>.

The graph on page 4 provides an overview of the TU density<sup>3</sup> in EU Member States from 2001 onwards.

It shows that the majority of EU Member States have seen a steady decline in TU density. The same source reports that the TU density rates for young workers are lower than those for older workers. This can be considered in a way a paradox as TUs should be seen as the ally of young people in the fight for decent jobs. Young people should then have a strong motive to be represented and organized, but, overall, this is not happening. Why?

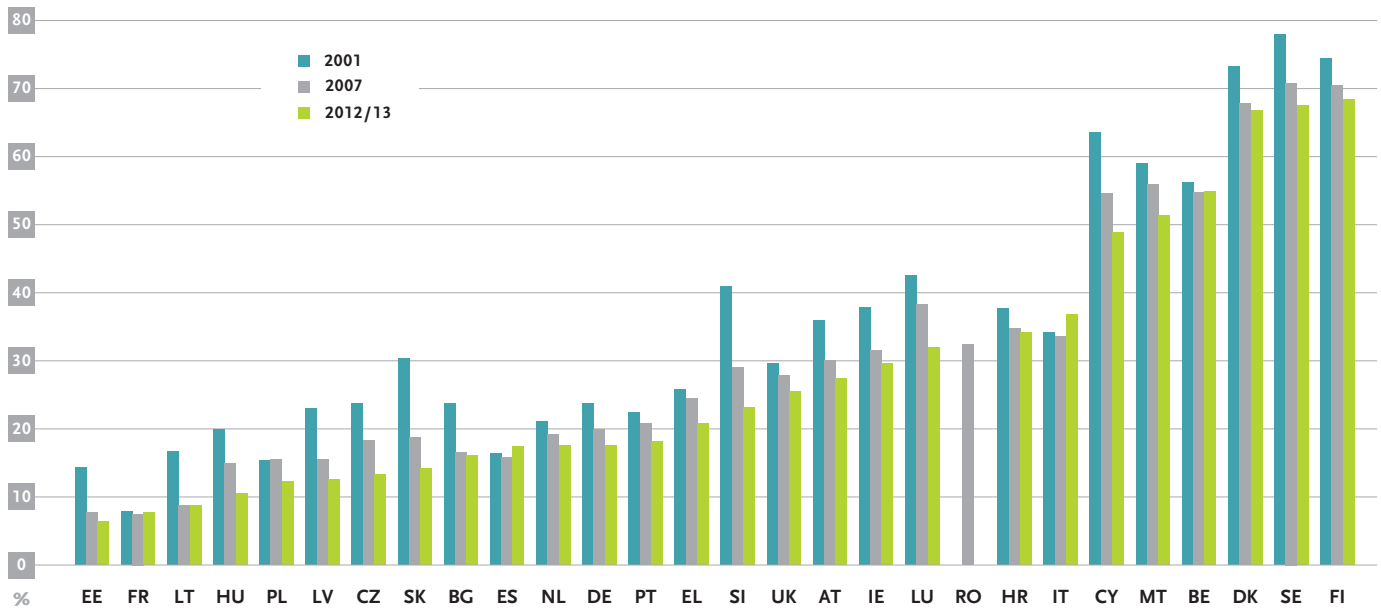
## Young workers and trade unions: a difficult relationship

When talking about young people, we often hear that they are disenchanted, disillusioned, frustrated, disengaged towards politics, social life, and traditional forms of political and social participation. This kind of approach is used also to explain the low level of unionisation among young people. According to this theory, they see TUs as obsolete and irrelevant and they oppose to the views of their parents. But different studies and articles have shown that “there is no serious evidence that young workers have negative attitudes towards trade unionism”<sup>4</sup>.

The EC report on Industrial Relations in Europe 2014 also reports on studies analysing the responsibilities of TUs for the low youth membership<sup>5</sup> rate. Some studies stress that the composition of

- 1 Waddington, J. *Trade Union membership retention and workplace representation in Europe*. ETUI, working paper 2014.10.
- 2 Keune, M. *Trade Unions and Young Workers in Seven EU Countries*. YOUunion – Union for youth project, final report.
- 3 As per *Industrial Relations in Europe 2014*, TU density is the proportion of all wage and salary earners in employment who are members of TU (excluding retired workers, self-employed, students and unemployed).
- 4 Vandaele, K. Youth representatives' opinions on recruiting and representing young workers. A twofold unsatisfied demand? In: *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 18 (3), pp. 203–218.
- 5 European Commission, 2014. *Industrial Relations in Europe 2014*. Brussels.

## Union density in EU Member States, 2001–2012/13



Note: RO: no data for 2001 and 2012/13; 2013 for AT, DK, DE, EL, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, PT, SE and UK; other EU countries: 2012  
Source: ICTWSS database (Visser, 2015)

the workforce has made it difficult for TUs to recruit young workers. They are generally employed in less regulated service sectors or smaller companies, under insecure or atypical jobs which are not conducive to TU membership. Other studies note that TUs were slow, if not absent, in responding to the changes experienced by young people and that they failed to formulate an agenda which would be attractive for them. Another issue for TUs is the inability to reach and represent trainees. This is particularly important considering the fact that workers either join a TU within the first years after entering the labour market or they do not do it anymore. This is why it is particularly important for TUs to address and attract students, precarious and atypical workers.

These studies are mirrored by contacts and interviews with young unionists and by the discussions at the European Youth Conference in Croatia. Young unionists and workers feel that TUs are struggling with communication. Young people do not know what a TU is and does and, if they heard about it, they are influenced by the bad image that traditional media and public opinion provide. TUs do not invest enough, neither in reach out activities in workplaces or schools, nor in

attempts to change the public opinion. They are closed in their ivory tower and perceived as a paralyzed old structure, impermeable to the changing world. TUs are considered to take care of the interests of older or retired workers and of those with permanent contracts. There is no space and interest in organizing people that can disappear the week after. They lack the capacity and the interest to differentiate their approach towards the different kinds of workers. They use old fashioned ways of communicating, using an obsolete vocabulary. Young workers see TUs as bureaucratic monsters, with a patriarchal and pyramidal structure, which have not changed in years and have no interest to modernise. They are perceived as static and difficult to access, with a top down approach impermeable to any request or proposal coming from outside its walls. Their leaders are often assimilated to politicians both in the way they act and live. TUs are incapable of listening and addressing issues that are of interest to young people. Sometimes membership fees are too high for people who just started working. On top of this, young workers are often afraid that, if they join a TU, they might be perceived as potential trouble makers by employers, be discriminated or lose their jobs.

At the same time, respondents proved to be quite aware of the importance of joining a TU. Many of them acknowledged that, especially considering their working conditions, joining a TU would be beneficial. However, they need to feel that there is a real interest, that TUs are willing and keen to have them within their structures and that they can speak the same language and understand each other. Young workers need to feel that their concerns and needs are recognized and that TUs take ownership and will fight for them. Young workers recognize that TUs can be a place where they can find information and look for support. At the same time, joining a TU would mean joining a community of people with common interests and possibilities to participate in all the activities that are organized.

Therefore there is room for the two parties to come together: for TUs to enlarge their base and for young people to be recognized and to fight for their rights.

## Goal of the guide

This guide is intended to help the two parties come together. Having recognized that there is space for TUs to get involved and engaged within this new difficult working situation and that young people and young workers are interested in and acknowledge the important role of the TUs, the guide wants to provide examples of what has been done in the past and therefore what could be done to recruit and involve young members in the future.

The following chapter is meant to be an introduction to the problem of youth unemployment, giving an overview of the labour market for young workers, of the policies and discussions which have taken place and also the role of trade unions in this process. This introduction is important to understand the proportion and the complexity of the situation and the enormous workload ahead for TUs. Even if the 6 European Industry Federations acknowledge the graveness of the issue, the goal of the guide is different. Therefore the introductory chapter will not be as complete and exhaustive as other specific studies.

The third and fourth chapter will discuss more in detail the role and importance of youth in TUs, also providing some examples of existing youth structures in TUs.

The fifth chapter provides practical examples of how different trade unions in different countries and in different sectors have tried to increase the recruitment and the involvement of young workers. The chapter is divided into 6 topics: Making trade unions more attractive for youngsters; Shaping innovative ways of communication through new technologies and social networks; Recruiting young workers to the trade unions; New mobilization techniques; Young workers' needs: making trade unions advocacy more representative; Improving the role of youngsters in the trade union structures.

The last chapter will be dedicated to recommendations coming from 150 young workers and trade unionists following discussions in the different workshops of the European Youth Conference that took place in Croatia on 14–15 May 2015. This conference was part of the project *Empowering the integration of younger workers in the European Metal, Transport, Food, Services, Construction and Wood industries* under which also this guide is drafted.

This guide has been prepared in cooperation with youth representatives of the affiliated organizations of the EFBWW, EFFAT, ETF, EPSU, industriAll Europe and UNI Europa, who kindly replied to a short questionnaire. Further input came from the discussions held during the above-mentioned conference, supplemented with desk research.

Young workers and the economic crisis: between unemployment and precariousness

Since the onset of the economic crisis in 2008, the unemployment rate at European level has steadily increased. However, statistics show that young people were hit harder by the crisis: on average in the EU 27 the youth unemployment rate in 2011 was twice as high as the overall rate<sup>6</sup>.

From a gender perspective, an ETUI/ETUC research shows that young women were more affected by unemployment in the first years of the crisis. Since 2010 these data show a reverse trend with men having higher unemployment rates. This is mainly due to the sectors affected by the crisis<sup>7</sup>.

Despite announcements proclaiming that the economic recovery began, high unemployment rates especially for young people are still to be expected. In addition, we will have to face the legacy

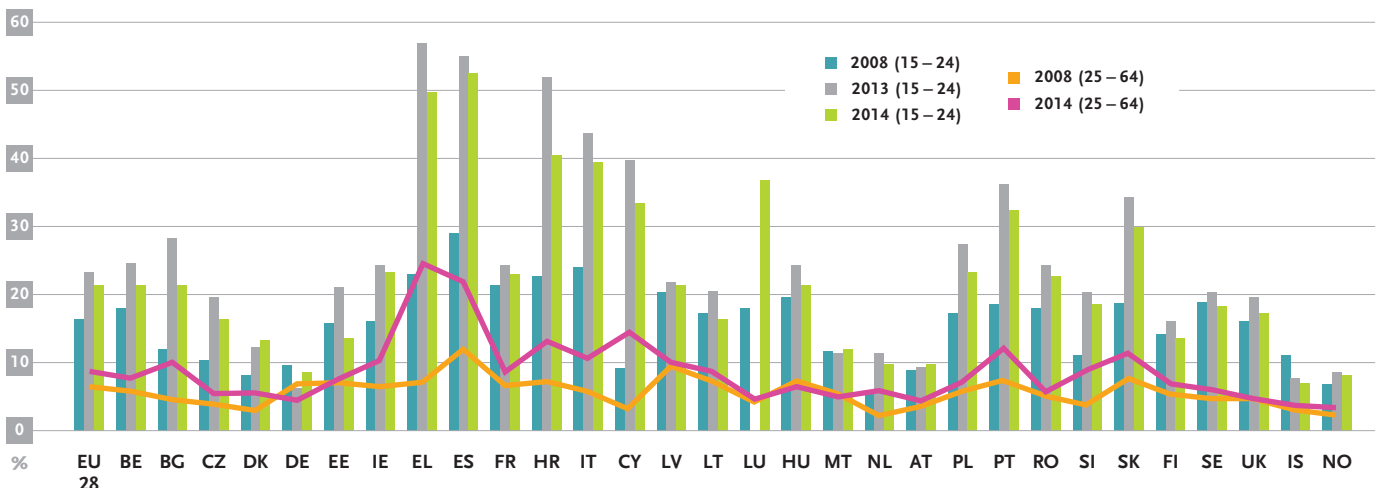
of this crisis: deregulation or “flexibility” of the working conditions, mostly affecting young workers.

The data below show that, in the EU 28, the number of temporary contracts offered to young workers is on average almost 3 times higher than the temporary contracts<sup>8</sup> offered to the overall population. Within the temporary contracts there is a universe of non-standard forms of work such as fixed-term contracts, temporary agency work, part-time work, non-standard working hours, etc. varying also from country to country.

Policy makers have also increasingly turned their attention to the “Not in Employment, Education or Training” (NEETs) category which normally includes young people aged between 15 and 24. This group of people is heterogeneous in its composition and can include people looking for a job, in school-to-work transition, long term sick or disabled, people with responsibilities towards children or relatives unable to work, highly educated people, etc. This group is considered to be at high risk of labour market and social

6 Eurofound 2011. *Foundation findings: youth and work*. Brussels.  
 7 ETUC/ETUI, 2014. *The youth Guarantee in Europe*. Brussels.  
 8 Eurostat defines workers on temporary employment as those who declare themselves as having a fixed term employment contract or a job which will terminate if certain objective criteria are met, such as completion of an assignment or return of the employee who was temporarily replaced.

Comparison unemployment rates 2008–2014 (age 15–24 and 25–64)



Source: LFS Eurostat



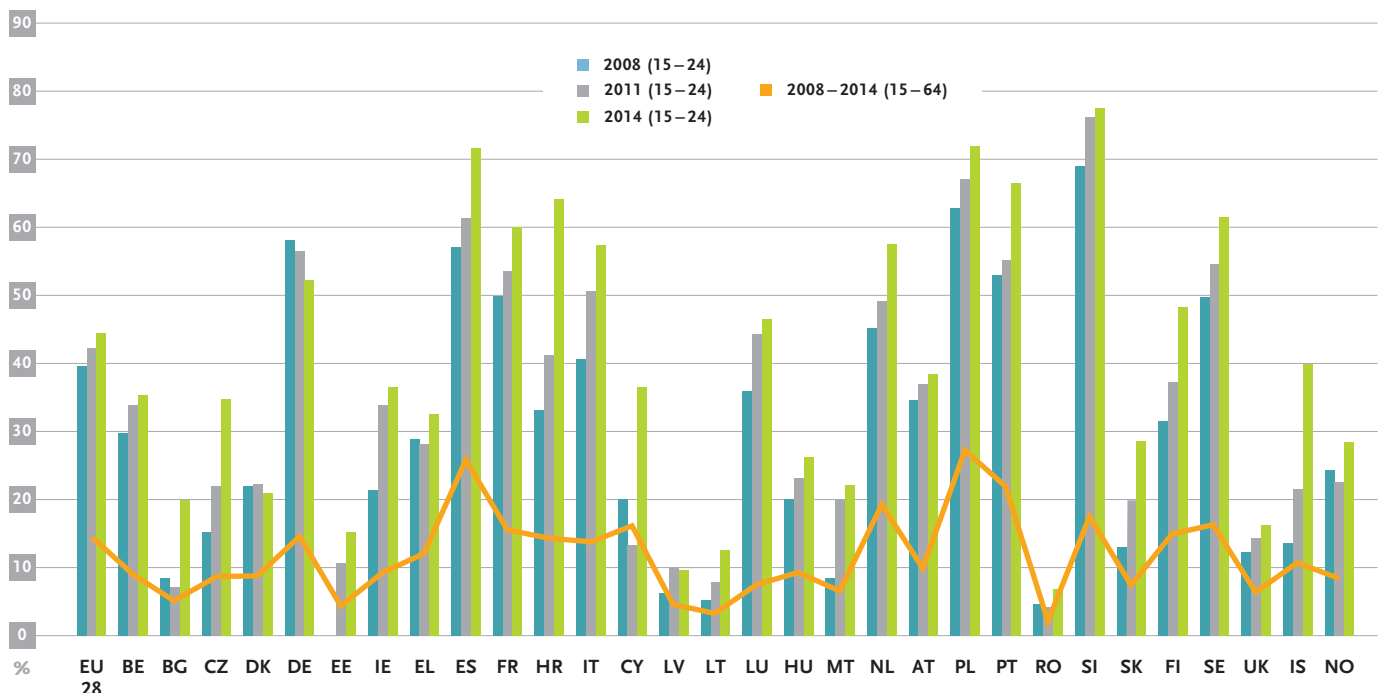
exclusion. The social and economic costs for the States resulting from these situations can become high. It has been estimated that the economic loss, due to the inability of integrating NEETs into the labour market, corresponds to 1.26% of EU GDP, over 150 billion Euro<sup>9</sup>. This is why the phenomenon is being monitored by researchers and why policy makers try to address the issues focussing on specific policies (further education, apprenticeship schemes, etc.)<sup>10</sup>.

The group of young people in school-to-work transition are also the object of specific attention. A Eurofound study has highlighted the importance of a successful entrance into the labour market and investigated the consequences of a protracted disengagement, such as disruption of human capital, risk of social exclusion and poverty,

disaffection and an increased risk of pursuing dangerous lifestyles. One of the main determinants for a successful transition to adulthood is having access to paid work and stable jobs in order to be able to live independently<sup>11</sup>. The last available statistics date back to 2009 when about 68% of European School leavers were employed one year after completing their education. But data might change according to the different systems implemented in different countries to support transition from school to work. As it will be showed further, policies based on a successful system are supported at European level in order to facilitate school-to-work transition (Youth Guarantee, Apprenticeship schemes, etc.).

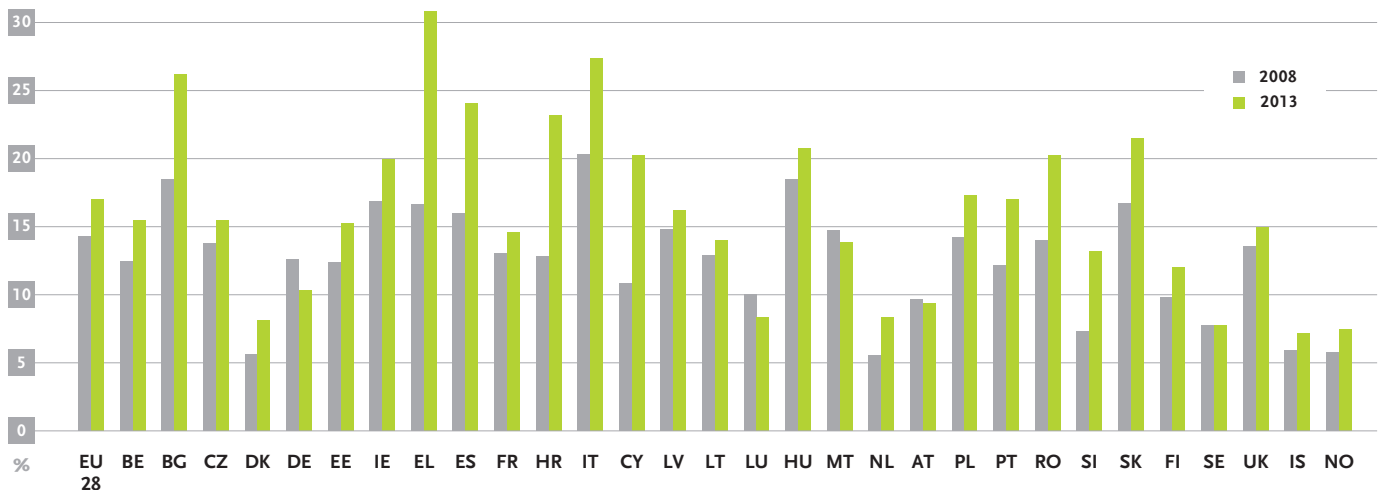
- 9 Eurofound 2014. *Mapping youth Transition in Europe*. Dublin.
- 10 Eurofound 2011. *Foundation Findings: Youth and Work*. Brussels.
- 11 Eurofound 2014. *Mapping youth Transition in Europe*. Dublin.

Comparison temporary employment 2008–2014 (age 15–24 and 15–64)



Source: LFS Eurostat

## NEETs (15–34 year olds)



Source: LFS Eurostat

## Youth policies: a short overview of what has been done at EU and national level

### AT EU LEVEL

With the EU growth strategy within the framework of Europe 2020, the European Union has set a target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20–64). To achieve this goal, the Commission is supporting and financing different initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment.

In 2012, the Commission launched the *Youth Employment Package*, to help Member States tackle unacceptable levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion. Within this framework in 2013 the European Council adopted a Recommendation on establishing the *Youth Guarantee* (YG). Based on the “Nordic model”, the Youth Guarantee seeks to ensure that “all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed”<sup>12</sup>.

To financially support the Member States in their budgetary efforts to prioritize youth employment policies, the European Union will top-up national spending on these schemes through the European Social Fund and the *Youth Employment Initiative* (YEI). Acknowledging the high social and economic costs of NEETs, the Youth Employment Initiative

was also launched in 2013 to help this specific group of people to integrate in the labour market.

To facilitate school-to-work-transitions, the Youth Employment Package also launched a *consultation of European social partners on a Quality Framework for Traineeships*<sup>13</sup> so as to enable young people to acquire high-quality work experience under safe conditions. Furthermore, a *European Alliance for Apprenticeships* was announced to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships available by spreading successful apprenticeship schemes across the Member States and outlining ways to reduce obstacles to mobility for young people<sup>14</sup>.

The efficacy of all these measures has yet to be proven. Many critical voices were raised especially towards the YG. In 2012, the International Labour Organization (ILO) suggested that implementing a YG across the Eurozone would cost 21 billion Euro, around 0.22% of EU GDP<sup>15</sup>. But the European Commission has committed only 6 billion Euro over a period of seven years (Youth Employment Initiative + EU Structural Funds) to top up national efforts. In 2014, an event organized by 6 European Trade Union Federations under the campaign “Enough of their crisis. Back to our Future” and hosting young workers as well as young MEPs from S&D, GREENS criticised the failure of Member States and the Commission to oversee the proper implementation of the YG. They agreed that, “although a good initiative in principle, [the Guarantee] is leading to an increase in precarious work and is being used to justify the exploitation of young labour in some instances”<sup>16</sup>. It is important

12 European Commission: *Youth Guarantee*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

13 The Quality Framework for Traineeships was adopted by the Council in March 2014.

14 European Commission: Youth employment: Commission proposes package of measures. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1036&newsId=1731&furtherNews=yes>

15 ILO, 2012. *Youth guarantees can boost Eurozone recovery*. Geneva. [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/WCMS\\_185166/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/WCMS_185166/lang-en/index.htm)

16 *Enough of their crisis. Back to our future*. Press release. Available at: <http://www.back2ourfuture.org/young-workers-describe-emergency-situation-to-all-major-european-parliament-groups/>

to mention that, at the time of writing this, the European Youth Forum is about to publish a report on the effects of the Youth Guarantee in Europe which will provide an updated overview of the situation. Meanwhile the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) published a report called “The Youth Guarantee in Europe”. Some of the main findings are that the YG, if not supported by long-term national plans and financing, might limit the scope and effective implementation of structural reforms as well as reduce the sustainability and coherence of the interventions. Also the report highlights that, even if explicitly foreseen by the Council Recommendation, the involvement of TUs in the design of the YG at National level was partial and sporadic, often not effective<sup>17</sup>.

On 24 March 2015, also the European Court of Auditors raised concerns over the implementation of the YG. The Court affirms that the initiative, though well prepared in theory, lacks in terms of monitoring of its current implementation, impact analysis and cost evaluation of the financial resources required at national level and a clear definition of what it should ultimately offer to young people.<sup>18</sup>

#### AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Through the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), the European Commission and Council assess the Operational Programs adopted by Member States to develop the European Social Fund’s priorities, including the project under the YEI. In 2013, 7 countries received no recommendation to deal with youth unemployment or youth issues (Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia and the Czech Republic), while 12 countries received specific recommendations to implement the Youth Guarantee (Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom and partially Sweden). CSRs in 2014 showed that some countries should increase their efforts to meet the requirements of the Youth Guarantee (e.g. Bulgaria: improvement of PES; Croatia, Italy, Portugal, Poland and Spain: more apprenticeships and outreach activities; Ireland and Slovakia: better measures for long-term unemployed and low-skilled and disadvantaged young people<sup>19</sup>). As the ETUC report on the Youth Guarantee in Europe states “several countries used the YG as a framework for existing measures and for improving specific features [...]

Others have used the concept of the YG promoted at the European level for broadly framing national pilot projects aimed at young NEETs”. This is for example the case for Spain where in 2013 the government presented the “Estrategia de Emprendimiento y empleo joven 2013/2016” (strategy for entrepreneurship and employment for youth 2013/2016) based on the recommendations of the EU’s YG and on social dialogue.

### Involvement of trade unions in youth employment policies: a short overview of what has been done at EU and national level

At European level, in March 2014, during the run up to European Parliament elections, the six European Trade Union Federations (EFBWW, EFFAT, EPSU, ETF, IndustriAll and Uni Europa), representing around 30 million workers across Europe, launched a joint campaign called “Enough of their Crisis – Back 2 our Future”. With this campaign the Federations intended to push EU institutions, policy makers and employers to put youth at the top of their agenda as well as to build the capacity of their members to better organise young workers. Since then, several events – such as demonstrations, flash mobs, open hearing at the EU Parliament, etc. – have been organized involving young workers, unionists and members of the European Parliament to raise awareness and discuss issues linked to youth unemployment and its social and economic consequences as well as to propose solutions. Demands towards the EU policy makers can be summarized as follows: creation of quality jobs, respect for Social Partners’ agreements, mobility as a choice and not a necessity to find a job, no to precarious work, access to education and training as universal right, recruitment of young people as key component of Collective Bargaining, internship used as a means to find a decent job and not as a means to be exploited, investment in new technologies and investments in new skills<sup>20</sup>.

Also, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), in cooperation with the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the support of the European Commission, recently launched a website with a collection of

<sup>17</sup> *The youth Guarantee in Europe*. ETUC 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Agence Europe, 25 March 2015. Bulletin Quotidien Europe 11281. Brussels.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Available at: <http://www.backourfuture.org/bzof-materials/enough-of-their-crisis-back-to-our-future/>

national best practices concerning tools/ initiatives in favour of youth employment and for improving their working conditions in the construction industry. Users can find – by country, type of initiative, target groups – which tools are available in 13 European countries to tackle youth unemployment in the construction sector. Contact details of national focal points are also available for those who wish to receive more information: <http://www.construction-for-youth.eu/en/>

Both the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), through its Youth Committee, and the European Youth Forum (EYF) regularly advocate for the creation of QUALITY jobs. The emphasis on quality is very important, as they consider that the idea that for young people “any job is better than no job” must be eradicated. The mentality needs to change. This is why the ETUC youth committee has adopted a youth employment policy paper called “Quality Jobs for youth: our way forward” in June 2015 and the EYF has passed a resolution called “Time to act: more quality employment” in April 2015. Both documents take into consideration the transition from education to work (internship, apprenticeships, etc.); provide a definition of a quality job; discuss issues linked to mobility and continuous training and education. These documents are the basis for each policy discussion at European level on youth employment.

One of the examples of the involvement of TUs in youth employment policies at National level comes from Italy. CGIL, the biggest Italian TU confederation, is engaged to fight unemployment and precarious contracts. The organization, very critical towards the new “Jobs Act” that the Italian government approved, proposed back in 2013 a comprehensive Job Plan (“Piano del Lavoro”). This document made concrete proposals on how to create more jobs with special attention towards youth policies.

[http://old.cgil.it/Archivio/EVENTI/Conferenza\\_Programma\\_2013/Piano\\_Del\\_Lavoro\\_CGIL\\_gen13.pdf](http://old.cgil.it/Archivio/EVENTI/Conferenza_Programma_2013/Piano_Del_Lavoro_CGIL_gen13.pdf)

In Slovenia, Mladi Plus (Youth Plus), the cross sectoral organization representing young people used European funds to finance projects to inform young people about the possibilities offered by the EC Youth Guarantee. Conferences, workshops, seminars, evaluations, etc. were organized. The organization managed also, with the support of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia of which they are part, to participate in the discussion of the Slovenian Economic Social Council meeting and present the needs of the young people.

### What can young people bring to the trade unions?

There is potentially a lot of work for TUs in the area of youth employment. Despite low youth membership, it has been proven that there is an interest from the youth side to be involved. While the advantages for young people to join a trade union have been mentioned already, let's see what could be the advantage for TUs to embed young workers.

Most of the respondents to our questionnaire agreed that if TUs have to engage in issues concerning youth (un)employment, the input from young workers in the discussion of actions and requests are fundamental: they are the ones who know better how unemployment and precarious working conditions affect their lives. At the same time an important presence of young workers, driving the fight from inside, would make it much more representative and incisive.

Young people would also bring new and innovative points of view, refresh the ideas and approach, prepare and implement more daring actions. The respondents to our survey made it clear that a bigger number of youth representatives would push TUs to become more dynamic. In general, the overall opinion is that TUs need new activism and energy otherwise they will eventually implode.

Furthermore, young unionists may attract even more young people as they would talk the "same language" and have the same aspirations and concerns. This is important to try to reverse the ageing and membership reduction trends, currently a burning issue for TUs. The recruitment and involvement of young unionists may, in the long run, save the entire Union movement from slowly disappearing.

But it will also have a positive impact on the industrial relations and society at large. The benefits of an increased representation of young workers during bargaining with employers can bring about better agreements. Young active members will have

a positive impact on participation in social and economic life, will improve and strengthen democratic principles and foster the implementation of new ideas and solutions. New young political leaders can also be created from the TU experience.

### Internal transformation(s) of a trade union through young members

We have tried to imagine how a TU would look like if young people would be given more space. What would the main changes be? This is how our youth respondents see it:

TUs would have young members represented at all levels, including the decision making bodies. Women would also be elected in higher numbers. Youth structures would be present and organized at all levels, with permanent staff. There would be more decentralized (local, regional) branches and there would be a "youth board" or a similar structure for all the sectors with a certain degree of autonomy and decision powers. Youth structures would be involved in decisions and actions at central level. There would be less bureaucracy and all the processes would be faster.

Young members would bring in new and fresh ideas in terms of both objectives and procedures for the actions. Therefore, there would be more investment in new technologies for communication, campaigning and recruitment purposes. Workers would be able to contact discretely their representatives through ICT tools and at the same time they would be able to get access to on-line training and capacity building. There would be a change in the public opinion toward TUs. They would be more appealing and would look as a group of people keen on leading the change and caring for the interests of all the different groups of workers.

TUs would also invest more in reach out activities, internally and externally. Internally they would meet new workers, in particular young ones, as soon as they are hired to explain what TUs are and do. They would organize regular meetings with workers to listen to their concerns and propose and promote actions. Externally, they would put in place good communication channels with media, organize campaigns with broad interests and social events to attract new members. They would organize reach out activities in schools and training for non-members.

But in order to aim at this kind of organization it is necessary to involve and invest in the training of future young leaders.

## Preparing future trade union leaders

Positively enough, almost all the youth representatives that participated in the drafting of this guide, reported that their organizations are providing training for young members. Only a few of them said that the organization does not consider it a priority, and more should be done.

Below we report on some examples of training organized in different countries and organizations.

### CGIL – ITALY

For over 30 years CGIL has invested in continuous formal learning and training for its members. A specific unit (Ufficio Formazione) with a network of trainers has been established. This Unit is able to offer all year long different types of courses where participants can learn from the basic rules of being a trade unionist to upper level courses where they are trained to become General Secretary. These courses can be even a year long.

This is the link to the courses that the confederation organized in 2014:

[http://www.servizi.cgil.milano.it/ARCHIVIO/Formazione/PIANO%20CORSI%202014\(1\).pdf](http://www.servizi.cgil.milano.it/ARCHIVIO/Formazione/PIANO%20CORSI%202014(1).pdf)

### RAKENNUSLIITTO – FINLAND

The Finnish Trade Union of Construction workers, Rakennusliitto, organizes courses to give young members tools and knowledge to identify and exploit their own potential as future union leaders.

<http://rakennusliitto.fi/koulutus/>

They have national youth courses organized twice a year in addition to one course organized in the south and one in the north of Finland. These courses last 2–3 days and cover different topics: how to influence within and outside the Union, leadership and teamwork, solidarity, campaigning, etc. The courses aim at being as practical as possible, limiting classroom time as much as possible. For example, a course on solidarity ended up with the production of a calendar supporting the Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland's initiatives and their development cooperation projects around the world.

In addition Rakennusliitto organized the “Vaikuttajat” (leaders) course. Open to everybody, including current leaders, this year long course

includes 5 weekends in its training centre Siikaranta-opisto and home learning assignments. As reported in the recommendations part (chapter 7), young people are also supporting the idea of organizing courses for older leaders who need to get closer to the new and fast changing reality. This course goes for sure in this direction.

SAK, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (national confederation) launched a pilot project called the “Future Makers” course. This year long course was designed for young unionists from all trade unions in Finland. Participants engaged in different topics every weekend, from the functioning of TUs to current burning issues, and they could discuss with other unionists from different sectors and areas. The program included visits to all the TU training centres in Finland. This gave also the opportunity to create a big union network. The course was organized only once even if a second edition was announced.

#### **CGA CFDT – FRANCE**

The General Agri-food Federation of the French Work Democratic Confederation (CGA-CFDT) has a centralized training centre, the CEFA (centre d'Etude et de Formation des salariés de l'Agroalimentaire), which organizes courses for people working in the agri-food sector. It has a well-developed and diversified offer of different courses to obtain or improve TU skills. There are different areas, such as how to strengthen TU work and how to become a trade unionist, how to develop within a TU, how to become a player within a company, how to carry on demands, how to communicate, etc., and for each area different courses are offered. Most of the courses are concentrated in Paris on specific dates and the youth group of the CGA-CFDT complain that this does not help young people to attend. A more flexible organization, with more courses organized flexibly on different times and location as well as the establishment of on-line or video-conference courses would help to increase youth attendance. Some economic support towards young people to attend the courses would also be a good incentive. The list of courses can be found here:

[https://fga.cfdt.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2015-02/catalogue\\_cefa\\_2015.pdf](https://fga.cfdt.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2015-02/catalogue_cefa_2015.pdf)

**Youth structures at European Industry Federations' level: a short overview**

At European level, the European Industry Federations have worked to establish youth structures representing young workers of different affiliated organizations from the different countries.

The European Transport Federation (ETF) has established a Youth Committee in 2013 with the structure as shown below.

Since its establishment the ETF Youth Committee formulates ETF youth policies and addresses all issues of importance to young transport workers.

The ETF Youth Committee works to improve the situation of young transport workers in the labour market and to better integrate young activists in trade union structures and activities. Being part of all ETF decision making bodies, the youth representatives play a key role in including youth perspectives in ETF policies and its affiliates' organizing strategies. To fulfil its role the ETF Youth Committee monitors developments in the European labour market with regard to youth employment and young transport workers' social conditions; puts forward proposals and resolutions to the ETF Management Committee, Executive Committee, Sections and the Congress; formulates recommendations for European Sectorial Social Dialogue Committees for which the ETF is the recognized social partner; Represents the Committee in international organizations and participates in transnational networks to deliver the Committee's views on a wide range of issues and develop common strategies; Applies for and undertakes EU co-funded projects on issues relevant to young transport workers to provide members with the means to build their capacity for action.

UNI Europa is one regional branch of UNI Global Union<sup>21</sup>. UNI Global Union seeks to fulfil its Objectives by developing structures within UNI to promote the participation of young members in its work. A UNI Global Union Youth Committee is established at world level. The World Youth Committee elects from its own members a World Youth President. The World Youth President serves as a full member of the World Executive Board. UNI Global Union promotes activities for Young People which are focused both at global and regional level and involve the development of committees, conferences and campaigns. The Regional Executive Committee establishes a Regional Committee for Youth, which reports to the Regional Executive Committee. The Regional Committee for Youth elects from their own number a Regional President. The President of the Regional Committee for Youth is a full member of the Regional Executive Committee. The regional youth group holds an





annual event with a seminar or conference and holds elections every two years. The UNI Europa Youth Committee has its own President and Vice-Presidents, each of whom are elected by their respective Regional Conference. UNI Europa Youth also established a UNI Europa Youth Steering Group to assist the preparation and workings of the UNI Europa Youth group.

IndustriAll European Trade Union is the European federation representing the workers' interests in the metal, chemical, energy, mining, textile, clothing and footwear sectors in the EU political arena. Since the industriAll European Trade Union's Congress 2016, held in Madrid, a permanent Youth Working Group is tasked with discussing all subjects related to the specific situation of young workers in our industries. This Working Group shall have the right to draft and present motions to the Executive Committee. Each member organization may nominate a representative and a substitute to this Working Group. The Chair of the Youth Working Group is also a member of the Executive Committee without voting rights. IndustriAll Europe's Youth Network meets twice a year to discuss and plan actions covering general Youth critical issues.

The EFFAT (European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions) Youth Committee was set up in different phases. The first step was a working group on trade union youth work in 2011 followed by a conference on youth employment in December 2012 in Vienna and by the adoption of a Charter and a roadmap for the employment of young workers in the EFFAT Executive Committee. The EFFAT Youth Committee is today an official and permanent structure within EFFAT. The political agenda of the EFFAT Youth Committee contains the following main priorities: Organizing young workers; Youth unemployment; Promotion of quality jobs; Fostering solidarity; Fostering the role of youngsters in trade union structures; Improving the image and attractiveness of trade unions. Its President has a permanent seat in the EFFAT Management Committee and both

the President and the Deputy President have a seat and the right to vote in the EFFAT Executive Committee.

The EFFAT Youth Committee, which meets twice per year, is composed of 2 official representatives and 2 deputies from the 7 EFFAT regions. Additional young participants that meet the necessary criteria can always attend the meetings as guests. During the days of the meetings training sessions on campaigning, organizing, trade union leadership and communication skills are also organized. Youth is a permanent item on the agenda of the EFFAT bodies and affiliates have to regularly report back to the EFFAT Executive Committee about actions tackling youth issues. EFFAT also discusses youth related issues in sectoral social dialogues and promotes their inclusion as permanent items in the agendas of the EWCs.

The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) Executive Committee of 8–9 November 2010 approved the establishment of an EPSU youth network following a decision of the previous EPSU Congress (Brussels May 2009). This network is a voluntary body that tries to mainstream young workers' issues within EPSU and its affiliates. The EPSU Youth network has been undergoing a programme of mentoring to develop capacity amongst young trade unionists. After the 2014 EPSU Congress in Toulouse, the EPSU youth network decided to create a steering group that will run its own work. The EPSU Youth network has about 50 representatives from 35 countries and the steering group has a regional balance.

The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) has established a Working Group Youth at its Congress in 2011. This Group is an informal and voluntary network composed of around 20 young members of the affiliated organizations. The Group has a biannual work programme and participates to activities and discussions within the organization, giving special attention to the specific employment and working conditions of its young members.

<sup>21</sup> UNI Europa is the European trade union federation for 7 million service workers in sectors such as Commerce, Financial Services, Gaming, Graphical and Packaging, Hair and Beauty, Information Technologies and Communication, Media, Entertainment and Arts, Postal Services and Logistics, Private Care and Social Insurance, Property Services, Industrial Cleaning and Private Security, Professional Sport and Leisure and Temporary Agency Workers. With its headquarters in Brussels, UNI Europa represents 272 national trade unions in 50 countries.

## Youth structures at trade unions' national level

It is difficult to provide a European overview of the different methods of youth representation, taking into account local, regional and national levels, as well as sector union, federation and confederation levels. From our small survey it is clear that every organization, even within the same country, deals with the youth issue in a different way. However, there was a general pattern we could identify: when allowed to participate, youth representatives have the right to speak, but no right to vote in the decision making bodies of their respective organizations.

Some examples: one from a sector union, one from a confederation and one supra national organization. Some more examples will be provided in the best practices chapter.

### **HANDELS – SWEDEN**

Handels, the Commercial Employees' Union, is Sweden's third-largest blue-collar union, with some 154 000 members. Almost a third of the working members are young people under 30 (2/3 of which are women). In each of the 19 branches of Handels there is a local youth committee and a young representative in each board of each branch. These bodies are in charge of organizing reach-out activities, recruitment campaigns, policy campaigns on issues affecting youth, etc. At national level, Handels has a central youth Committee with 6 members and it has the right to appoint one representative to the national board (the union's highest decision-making body between congresses) with the right to speak, but not the right to vote. The central committee supports local committees and works to create and maintain a network within the different branches. It also works to address political issues affecting young workers and fights to make young workers more involved in the union. Currently, one of the internal aims of the Youth Committee is to reflect on the proportion of young members with the seats in governing bodies and Congress' delegates.

### **UATUC – CROATIA**

The Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (UATUC) has 17 affiliated TUs from different sectors. It established the Youth Section in 2000 as an interest group within the UATUC. Its members are

members of the affiliated TUs under 36 years of age. The youth Section has an Assembly, which meets every two years, and an Executive Committee whose members are elected by the Assembly. The Youth Section has a representative in the UATUC Council and the youth Section President takes part in the work of the Presidency of the UATUC Council with no right to vote. The Youth Section activities include recruitment campaigns of young workers, training activities, assistance to young workers to see their rights respected, etc. UATUC youth section cooperates with youth structures of other Croatian TUs and civil society organizations (it is member of the South East European Youth Network) and it participates in the work of the ETUC Youth committee.

<http://www.sssh.hr/en/static/uatuc/youth-section-7>

### **NBTF – DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN**

NBTF (Nordic Federation of Building and Wood Workers, NFBWW) represents construction, wood and forestry workers in the five Nordic countries. At present the federation has 24 affiliates and 410,000 individual members. NBTF has established a youth network with 5 young focal points for each of the 5 countries who work in different unions and deal with youth issues. They have one member (in rotation) who is allowed to participate in the Executive Committee without the right to vote. The youth network organizes youth seminars every two years with youth representatives from the five countries. The main goals of the Youth network are to organize cross-border experiences, train young members on trade union issues and working methods, discuss issues linked to youth working conditions, etc.



## **MLADI PLUS (YOUTH PLUS) – SLOVENIA**

Mladi plus is a cross sectoral organization lead by, working for and with young people. It has its own statute and it is part of the association of free trade unions of Slovenia (ZSSS). It was established in July 2011 as a way to reach out to young people who do not know what trade unions are or what is their function. The whole idea started from the observation that there is a low percentage of young people affiliated to trade unions and that the trade unions do not properly represent youth. Among Mladi Plus' targets there are therefore young people in traineeship, internship or who just have a student job. But also university students who, by the age they enter the labour market (around 25), do not know anything about Unionisms or they get only (negative) information from the media. Through the work of Mladi Plus, young people are brought closer to trade unionism while still in the educational system. By doing this, they will more likely join a trade union once they get a full time job.

Mladi Plus members, which are around 1400, are pupils, students and young unemployed and precarious workers up to 35 years. They pay a symbolic yearly membership of 12 Euro. Mladi Plus finances its work through membership fees and projects. There are no employees, but only activists working there.

Most young people join because of the services the organization offers:

- Legal counselling,
- Career counselling,
- Tax counselling,
- How to (properly) use social media,
- Counselling on studying and/or living abroad.

Through project funds (allocated by Ljubljana Municipality) they also organize workshops and individual counselling to increase youth employability.

In 2014 the organization acquired the status of “organization working in the public interest” in the youth sector and became a social partner. Mladi Plus is indeed active at policy level. Some examples include: work with NGOs to develop the Slovenian Youth Guarantee programme; carry out research and surveys to analyse the situation of interns and young women, and to propose policies to the Slovenian Parliament, Economic and Social Council, Ministries etc.; analyse and evaluate and give advice on public policies including: labour market reform, Resolution on the National Programme for Youth, Scholarship Act, Youth Guarantee, Slovenia's Development Strategy and operative documents; campaigns to abolish unpaid internship in the public sector in Slovenia.

Mladi Plus established a good relationship with government, ministries, media representatives and they created a network with other non-governmental organisations.

### **TRADE UNION YOUTH PLUS SINDIKAT MLADI PLUS**

[www.mladiplus.si](http://www.mladiplus.si)

[www.sindikatzsss.si](http://www.sindikatzsss.si)

[info@mladiplus.si](mailto:info@mladiplus.si)

Facebook & Twitter: @mladiplus

## Making trade unions more attractive for youngsters in the EU

As previously discussed, TUs are losing their attractiveness towards young people. TU membership is generally decreasing throughout Europe, but this trend is particularly evident in the age gap 18–25. How can TUs become more attractive in the eyes of young people? The overall problem could be summarized as a communication and market issue, touching upon three different aspects: language issues; reach out activities and change of TUs image; “benefits” issues. These three points are not at all separated, but they should be part of an overall strategy to make TUs more attractive to young people.

When we asked our respondents why young workers would not join a TU, one of the recurrent answers was that TUs speak a different language, far from that of the young people. Often the message and the methodology to pass on this message is considered old-fashioned. To communicate with young people it is important to show empathy towards their situation using a new language, more familiar and closer to their ways of communicating. Young people are attracted by flash mobs, instead of traditional protests; by short clips or movies which can be uploaded and shared on the Internet instead of written communiqués, etc. In other cases, due to historical reasons, e.g. in Eastern European countries, TUs simply expect people to knock on their doors: there is therefore no need to go out and talk to them. However, it is clear from the answers received that young workers need to be attracted, need to know about TUs and the easiest way is through the message and the experience of other young workers or young unionists. The youth needs to see that TUs are “updating” their programs and taking care of the needs of young workers. Young people speaking to young people is, according to our respondents and some research<sup>22</sup>, the best way to make trade unions more attractive. One of the options is that TUs

participate in events where they can get in contact with many young people, such as concerts, festivals, etc. In Italy, for example, the Italian Federation of construction workers FILCA-CISL, became partner of the “European Music Festival”, an International event which takes place every year on 21 June in many cities in different countries. In **Italy**, different cities organize social and cultural events with the support of FILCA-CISL local structures. The logo of the TU is therefore appearing on all the promotional material of the events and the TU is allowed to place a stand where young unionists approach and talk to young bystanders in order to increase its visibility and promote its work.

Another possibility is that TUs organize reach-out activities. In **Denmark** for example, as per the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions’ (LO) initiative, the HK and 3F unions organize and implement the “Job Patrulje” (Job Patrol) to inform young workers of their rights. Every summer, the trade unions conduct thousands of visits to workplaces likely to employ young people, try to uncover any stories of exploitation, and disseminate brochures about minimum wages and other entitlements. This initiative is so well-known that young activists freely come forward to volunteer their services and help out. Also, in the region of Turnhout (North of **Belgium**) every year between 1 December and 31 January, ACV bouw – industrie & energie, the Flemish construction, industry and energy union of the Christian Confederation of TU, organizes reach-out activities in 36 different places such as pubs or public places after working hours. In a relaxed environment, young and old workers can meet other construction workers, discuss issues and get directly in contact with trade unionists. In **France**, the youth group of FGA CFDT, organizes sport competitions, such as karting competitions. Reportedly, through this kind of activities they managed to recruit people.

The strong presence of young TU activists on the first line to promote the activities and enhance the participation of young people would probably help to change the image which the media often

<sup>22</sup> *Our time is now. Young people and unions: lessons from overseas.* Unite the Union.

portrays: TUs just organize strikes, they cater to the needs of the old establishment, they will support you only if you have a permanent job, etc. Some of the contributors to this paper emphasized the incapacity of TUs to properly respond to this kind of picture which contributes to the overall public opinion. One good response came from **Belgium** where the FGTB/ABVV, the socialist union federation, ran the “Detox” campaign. The Union prepared a pocket size brochure, ready to be distributed, where they dismantle, with figures and explanations, the most common TU stereotypes (the intoxications) and where they present their campaigns and explain which groups of workers they support. This brochure is available also on their website at:

<http://www.vlaamsabvv.be/art/pid/25150/Voter-aux-%C3%Aglections-sociales-%21.htm>

In **Finland**, Raksanuoret, the youth branch of the Finnish construction union Rakennusliitto, prepared a calendar featuring the young Union members with their work tools. The calendar was sold to the public in order to make the union and the construction work attractive and, at the same time, to do some fundraising. Also, the organization has their union magazine:

<http://raksanuoret.rakennusliitto.net/raksanuoret-lehdet/>

The magazine is published twice a year in 30,000 copies. It is prepared by young members for young people. Topics, interviews, editing, etc. all is decided and prepared by young members, on current issues relevant for young people. The magazine is distributed among members, but also during Union events and “lessons” in schools.

The other aspect to take into account is the importance of giving some “incentives” to young people to join TUs. On the one side we have the “fees issue”. Many TUs in different countries have different fees according to the different “status” of a young person (student, unemployed, part-time, precarious, etc.). In **Sweden**, for example, Handels – the Union of Commercial Employees – to

encourage precarious workers to join, has established a system of reduced fees for precarious workers who normally have an uneven income. Furthermore, the Swedish Trade Union confederation LO has also started a discussion for a joint union membership for young people who change jobs frequently or who work in several sectors simultaneously. In **Norway**, Fagforbundet, the union of municipal and general employees, has free membership fees for high school students and apprentices as well as a very low fee for students with part-time jobs. In **Belgium** ACV-CSC, the Christian Confederation, has a free membership scheme for young workers and students aged 15 to 25 known as “Enter”. Enter members receive most of the services offered to full union members. Here is the flyer:

<https://www.acv-online.be/Images/Enter-WKF---3004-tcm183-295273.pdf>

On the other side social and educational incentives have to be considered. Young people might be attracted by the possibility of networking, meeting or sharing common interests. In **Ireland**, the Service Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU) has established a Young Workers’ Network, a youth structure open to any young worker, whether they are a SIPTU member or not. Young workers can network with each other on a range of workplace/community issues and organize common activities and actions. In **Norway**, Fagforbundet provides to members favourable insurance schemes and scholarships. There are many cases of TUs organizing training or non-formal education activities for members, non-members and students too. Some examples will be discussed in the “new mobilization techniques” part.

## Shaping innovative ways of communication through new technologies and social networks

People born after 1990 are defined by many researchers as digital natives<sup>23</sup>. The concept of digital native is close to the concept of native speakers. We can define digital natives as those who grew up and have been “speaking” new technologies’ language since they were very young. These persons are around 25 years of age maximum today and have been using digital tools, social media and video sharing platforms since their teenage years. All these tools play an important role in defining social interactions and means of expression within the group of young people. This is why it is so important for TUs to be able to change and modernize their communication approach in order to reach young people and workers. This is also part of the process of changing the old-fashioned approach of communicating that was previously discussed.

Some TUs have already made some steps into this direction. Young people have asked and pushed their TUs to increase the use of new technologies and social networks to recruit and organize young people, to communicate internally and externally and to organize campaigns and actions. Our respondents were quite clear on the fact that if TUs want to reach a younger and bigger audience they need to invest in this kind of approach.

An example of how new technologies could be used to attract and recruit new members comes from the **United Kingdom**. Unite, Britain’s biggest union, has developed a very light and user friendly

app that can be freely downloaded onto every smartphone and tablet. Through this APP it is possible to sign up to Unite in two minutes. This possibility is advertised on the Unite website, but its promotion is mainly done by young unionists and volunteers during festivals, concerts and events: in some cases they have even managed to recruit people on the spot. The app is also used to communicate the latest news, the events and the campaigns Unite is running. In addition, through an interactive game, users can learn more about the Union’s work.

Another example of innovative ways of recruiting and publicizing TUs to young people, and students in particular, comes from the ACV program “Enter” in **Belgium**. ACV Enter organized a competition called “Graaf een gat win een vat” (Dig a hole and win a barrel). The competition was organized in Brussels and in the Flanders region for students only, from 15 years of age. Students had to reply to questions concerning the law on student work. Every question answered correctly would bring participants closer to the place where a 50 litres beer barrel had been buried. The competition was published on social media and a specific website was created where the questions were posted. Organizers also launched an innovative promotional campaign to advertise the competition and publicize the work of ACV. The most creative advertisement (picture, clip, etc.) posted on Facebook would win an additional barrel. The competition ran for a month and distributed 35 barrels.

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are also mentioned by our respondents as important tools to communicate and organize campaigns/actions, internally and externally. In **Sweden**, Handels has a closed Facebook group as well as an open profile. The closed one is mainly used as a means to communicate internally with youth members and activists all over Sweden and to organize actions, campaigns, sharing best practices, etc. Reportedly it works better than email and it reaches more people. The open profile is instead used a lot to communicate with young workers and young people to make sure that one of the main priorities of the TU – fight for secure jobs for young people – is well known by the beneficiary group. Precarious workers are an important target of the information and the posts on Facebook. For example, the social network was used during the last electoral campaign to raise awareness on the conditions of workers under “general fixed-term contracts”. A short clip was

23 Helsper, E. and Eynon, R. Digital natives: where is the evidence? In: *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, June 2010, pp. 503–520.



Image from the Handels campaign against text message employment

prepared and posted. A young girl had only 15 seconds to answer to a text message carrying a work-shift offer before this offer would go to the following person in the list.

<https://www.facebook.com/handelsfacket/posts/681308698594075>

The text on top of the post says: “Elin has been working for the same company for four years and has only 15 seconds to answer the text message with the offer to get a work shift. Share this film if you think young workers deserve better and if you would like to stop the abuse of unsecure employments”. This post had 250 shares and reached 45,000 people. Thanks to the success, the national television interviewed this young worker and the problem of “text messages employment” became known to the public.

Furthermore, Handels has also a YouTube channel with many videos on different issues related to youth employment.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Handelsfacket>

YouTube is also used in **Italy** by CGIL. The Italian TU Confederation has recognized the importance of showing empathy towards the situation of young people using a new language, more familiar and closer to their ways of communicating. One example is the production of a short and ironic video on precarious contracts called “Italian contract”, published on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgHie7lKv10&feature=youtu.be>

But the Internet can also be used as a tool to “modernize” traditional ways of organizing campaigns and actions. This is what in Italy one of the structures of the CGIL dealing with atypical and temporary forms of work, NIdiL, is doing. After the different national job reforms which, according to NIdiL, are increasing instead of reducing the number of precarious workers, the TU organized an on-line petition to extend the protection of the “Workers’ statute” to all the different categories of workers. In this way a very traditional form of protest took on a different connotation which might facilitate, accelerate and reach more support compared to what a traditional stand on the streets could do.

In general, the use of the new technologies and social media is seen as the best way to quickly pass on a message to a big and, generally, responsive audience. But there are some aspects that need to be taken into account. As many researches have demonstrated<sup>24</sup>, when people are highly connected and are used to be able to share information and

receive prompt feedback, the expectation of “institutional” responsiveness is increased. Therefore, it is important that when TUs use this kind of tool, the communication is not unilateral and questions, comments or requests coming from the users are answered. This is possible only if investments and resources are made available for this kind of work. Also, it is important to ensure that the social media do not become a goal in itself, but that they are only used as a tool. Offline and online activities should be linked as much as possible in order to make sure that TUs’ actions and campaigns reach as many people as possible. A good example of the use of both online and offline tools is the “Dental care for all” campaign which took place in **Norway**. The campaign was organized by Fagforbundet Youth to include very expensive dental care into a deductible health scheme. The campaign, organized in 2014 and still running online, included an online and an offline part. For the online part, Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/tannhelsepaalvor?ref=hl>

and the Internet

[http://www.opprop.net/tannhelse\\_inn\\_i\\_egenandelsordningen](http://www.opprop.net/tannhelse_inn_i_egenandelsordningen)

were used to communicate about the goals and to keep followers informed. Social media were also used to promote the offline actions which included a collection of signatures on campaign postcards all over the country. These postcards were then handed over to a member of the Christian Democratic Party in front of the parliament during a demonstration.

Another offline-online interaction example is the one of the **Slovenian** TU Mladi Plus. The organization is about to launch a campaign to give a voice to the different situations precarious workers are facing. The organization created a mascot – a mannequin called “Sindi” – which will be photographed in different parts of Ljubljana. Next to it, there will be different quotes from precarious workers describing their working situation. These pictures will be posted on social media and will form the bulk of the campaign.

Other examples will be further discussed in the “new mobilization techniques” part.

Mannequin “Sindi”, the mascot used in the Mladi Plus campaign against precarious work



24 Kahne, J., Middaugh, E. and Allen, D. (2014). *Youth, New Media, and the Rise of Participatory Politics*. Working paper 1. Youth participatory politics research network.

## Recruiting young workers to the trade unions in a fragmented labour market

“I don’t know what a TU is”. “Nobody has ever asked me to join”. How many times have people heard these sentences? According to our respondents the fact that young people do not know what a TU really is, does and what it could offer, together with the inactivity of TUs towards young workers’ recruitment are two of the main reasons for not joining a TU. This is part of the communication issues we discussed previously. Filca-Cisl, in Italy, has created a comic strip to give information about what a TU does, how trade unionists work and fight for the rights of all workers. Max, the “hero”, is represented as a young unionist who manages to solve different work issues on behalf of the workers. The strip has been produced in two versions. A longer one explains, through Max’s actions, what a trade unionist does on behalf and for workers:

[http://www.filcacisl.it/sindacato/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Fumetto-filca\\_definitivo\\_web.pdf](http://www.filcacisl.it/sindacato/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Fumetto-filca_definitivo_web.pdf)

This version is mostly produced for didactic purposes and paper copies have been printed to be distributed during summer camps or school visits. There is also a shorter version in the form of a monthly issue (6 to 8 drawings) where Max engages on different specific topics (health and safety, equal rights, etc.).

<http://www.filcacisl.it/sindacato/category/le-storie-di-max-fumetto/>

This strip is on the Filca-Cisl website, but is also posted on Max’s twitter account which has been created ad hoc.

But recruiting goes even beyond communication and information. It entails actions and some organization, it implies having a strategy and targeting different groups of young people such as students, job seekers, precarious workers, workers in transition, but also people with permanent jobs. With such a differentiated and fragmented labor market it is fundamental for TUs to have a proper strategy in order to recruit members and being able to keep on making a difference for them.

Unite in the **United Kingdom** is trying to reach all kinds of workers in different ways. They target young people before they get to the job market, normally during the last years of secondary schools,

i.e. 15 to 18 year olds. They organize sessions in schools where they explain what TUs do and have done historically; they explain that workers’ rights are acquired thanks to the work, commitment and fights of trade unionists, etc. In this way young people are able to understand why it is important to be part of it. To target job seekers and workers in transition, Unite has established community branches (see more in new mobilization techniques), local offices bringing “people together from all walks of life”. Through these branches and a reduced “Unite community membership” (50p per week), they try to recruit young people involving them in different kinds of social activities. These local offices also support people to go back into work or education and also help them to know what their rights are. Through the membership, job seekers and people in transition can also benefit from different services that are offered: free legal counselling, support to write CV, interviews tips, discounts for different services and in different shops, etc. Also, to cater to the needs of precarious workers Unite is making attempts to organize workers in the most vulnerable sectors where the precarious contracts are more prevalent (food and catering services, hospitality, etc.). The approach used to organize different sectors is to find common identifiers at business level and to build the fight around those issues. The involvement of permanent young workers passes once more through branch offices: they are requested to put forward names of young active people, to talk to them and try to nominate them for specific positions.

Also in **Belgium**, the ABVV/FGTB, the socialist General Trade Union Federation, has become active to reach all groups of workers. The ABVV-Jongeren/Jeunes FGTB, the part of the TU which deals specifically with young people, is organizing meetings in Universities, high schools and vocational training schools. The agency workers on the other hand are mobilized through the “interim coordination” group within the ABVV/FGTB (which includes representatives of different TUs and federations fighting against short-term contracts). Temporary and permanent workers are mobilized through TU delegations at company level. They distribute leaflets, brochures and all kinds of material, but the best way to recruit new members in this case is through personal contacts with young shop stewards. As previously mentioned, it is easier to convince a young worker to join a TU if the “ambassador” is another young worker who speaks the same language and probably faces the same obstacles and problems.



It is still too early to say which kind of results these comprehensive strategies will have. But some clear results have been achieved by Handels in **Sweden**. Reportedly, in the last years Handels contacted around 20,000 persons a year, mainly young workers and managed to increase its membership by around 3000 members per year. In 2014, 70% of the new members were under 30 years of age. This is also thanks to the activities in secondary schools. In 2014 the Union visited 416 secondary school classes and organized presentations lasting from 1 hour up to the entire day, met 4,980 students and recruited 2,257 student members (free membership). After graduation, Handels organized a phone campaign between mid-August to mid-September to get in contact with the newly graduated. They managed to talk to more than 65 % of them and, out of those, 1,023 people (66 %) decided to stay on as paying members. Of the remaining only 7% did not become a full member because not interested. Handels also organized spring and Christmas campaigns to meet unorganized workers directly at the workplace. TU local branches are involved in these campaigns which, reportedly, are very positive. In the spring campaign, Handels recruited 151 workers (15.6% of the contacted unorganized workers), out of which 57 were precarious or student workers, while the Christmas campaign produced 203 new members (23.4% of the contacted workers) out of which 84 were precarious or student workers.

A different recruitment approach has been chosen by Filca-Cisl in **Italy**. Filca-Cisl has established a national network of help-desk offices to support unemployed, first time job seekers and workers in transition in the construction and wood sector to find a job. This free of charge initiative, called "Amico lavoro" (Job Friend), is managed by Filca-Cisl solely (without any support by the PES) and it aims at facilitating the matching between job demand and offer. Thanks to personalized support, every job seeker learns how and where to look for a job, how to write a CV, how to prepare for an interview, etc. Also, these offices provide information on workers' rights. Through this service the worker gets to know the TU and has an incentive to become a member. This service has a website: [www.amicolavoro.it](http://www.amicolavoro.it) and a twitter account: @AmicoLavoro where job offers are sometimes posted.

Also, as previously mentioned, to reach precarious workers, in Italy CGIL established in 1998 NidiL an Italian acronym that stands for "new work identities", which specifically focuses on the rights of agency and precarious/atypical workers. The fees vary according to the status of the worker and/or his/her income. NidiL created a guide for atypical workers to inform them on the different kinds of available contracts, workers' rights, social security, etc..

<http://www.nidil.cgil.it/biblioteca/guide-e-dossier-nidil/2014-collaborazioni-and-co-pubblicata-la-nuova-edizione-della-guida-nidil-al-lavoro-parasubordinato>

## New mobilization techniques

Another important issue to be analyzed is the capacity of TUs to mobilize young workers in realities where the lack of trust in TUs, their insufficient organizing capacities and the fragmentation of the labour market, makes youth participation difficult. Mobilizing issues must take into account both the methodology and the issues at stake. It is time to switch from a "service model" where TUs wait for workers in need to come knocking at their doors, to a "mobilizing model", where proactive actions are taken to recruit members.

Many of our respondents and some research<sup>25</sup> tend to agree that young people are no longer attracted by old-fashioned mobilization techniques, such as protests and demonstration. Wearing old style t-shirts and carrying banners during traditional parades is not any longer stimulating. Even the celebrations for the First May are sometimes considered to be a meeting for old traditional unionists and workers who sing old songs and shout scruffy slogans<sup>26</sup>. If TUs want to mobilize young workers, they need to use new techniques and cater to burning issues of youth concern.

In **Italy**, CGIL tried an innovative approach to involve and mobilize young people on an issue that directly touched upon their future: precariousness. CGIL launched a campaign using "Guerrilla marketing" techniques. The aim of the campaign called "*Giovani non + disposti a tutto*" ("young people no longer ready for anything", where + in Italian stands for "no longer" in sms writing style) was not only to raise awareness, but intended to

<sup>25</sup> Unite the Union. *Our time is now. Young people and unions: lessons from overseas.*

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

oppose the opinion, often triggered by media, that youth unemployment and precariousness is young people's own fault. Also, CGIL wanted to reverse the opinion that TUs were partially culpable for the increase of employment precariousness due to their inability and unwillingness to deal with youth issues. In addition, this action aimed at making young people take the lead of the protest. This is why at the beginning the campaign was launched without showing that it had been organized by CGIL. In brief, a fake labour agency was created online, publishing fake job announcements for indecent and provocative job offers. "Clothing chain seeks attractive interns prepared to strip off their rights" or "Financial Group seeks MBA graduated for coffee-making and walking the CEO's dogs" or "Real Estate company seeks graduates

happy to live in their parents' home forever" job advertisements appeared on the Internet and posters were spread all over Rome. The phenomenon went viral on the Net and young people reacted writing to the fake agency, telling their stories and reacting to the really indecent job announcements: a big mobilization took place spontaneously. Shortly after, a fake hacker attack took place against the website of the fake agency and a "NON +" (no more) red label appeared on the advertisements. To make the entire campaign "real" and known "offline", a flash-mob outside the parliament followed the online campaign and a press conference revealed that CGIL was behind the entire operation. This is an important example of how social media and new technologies can help to involve young people and how it is important to mix online and offline techniques for a successful campaign or protest. TUs can become very attractive and mobilize a huge number of non-affiliated members, even overcoming job market fragmentation.

Another good example is the "YOUNG and UNITED" campaign organized by Netwerk Jongeren FNV – the youth network of FNV (the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions) – in the **Netherlands**. The campaign aimed at raising awareness about and fight for the right of young workers (between 18 and 23) to receive an "adult" salary. In the Netherlands, an 18 year old worker's wage is only half of the wage of a worker aged 23. The main sectors where young people are employed are retail and hotels/restaurants. According to Netwerk Jongeren FNV there is no political debate and not enough public awareness about this problem. Also from the Union point of view there is not enough interest to tackle the issue through collective agreements in these sectors where mainly young people are working: in FNV the share of young people is only around 3%. Therefore the Netwerk Jongeren FNV organized a campaign around the concept that if an 18 year old has the right to vote and to get elected he/she also has the right to get the same wage. The campaign was composed of three steps. The first one was to visit stores to conduct a survey among young workers and look for potential activists. The survey was conducted through an application on mobile devices. This part lasted ca. 13 weeks. The second step was collecting signatures through a petition via Facebook and to raise awareness about the problem through provocative messages (see left).

De CEO van Ahold (moederbedrijf van Albert Heijn) is

**DICK BOER**

Hij verdient per jaar

**€ 3.720.333,-**

Jij zou voor dat geld

**299 JAAR**  
moeten werken (full-time!)

Jouw uurloon verdient hij in

**12 SECONDEN**

**DEEL DIT OP FACEBOOK**

The CEO of Ahold  
(mother company of Albert Heijn – a supermarket chain) is  
**DICK BOER**

He earns **EURO 3,720,333** per year

You have to work **299 YEARS** full-time to get that money

He earns your hourly salary in  
**12 SECONDS**

**SHARE THIS ON FACEBOOK**

This part lasted also 12 weeks. The third step was a public phase which lasted around 16 weeks. This part included different public actions such as: sit-in inside a McDonald's in Amsterdam on global FastFood day; an intervention of a young leader during the shareholders' meeting of Albert Heijn; Storming of the Social-Economic Council to deliver a big diaper to the chairman of the employers' association; handing over of a petition to the Minister of Social Affairs; posters, etc.

This campaign was very successful in terms of public mobilization and awareness raising. Netwerk Jongeren FNV reports that almost all young people between 18 and 23 were reached through Facebook (they had 2,500,000 views), 130,000 people signed the petition and 500,000 people looked at the campaign YouTube videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPkBFMYvoi4>

This action made some mainstream media give a different point of view on the work of trade unions affirming that with the involvement of young people the union work looked more attractive and that a change was happening. The public interest and political debate was also enhanced thanks to many debates and talk shows on TV and articles in newspapers.

A completely different method to mobilize young people takes some inspiration from the community organizing model (or US model). This model was created and first used by Saul Alinsky in Chicago in the 1930s as a method to revitalize the TU movement transforming it into a social movement<sup>27</sup>. The idea behind it is that social change necessarily involves conflict and social struggle in order to generate collective power for the powerless. At the base of it, there is a coalition of social forces locally organized and mobilized and some grass roots activism.

In the **United Kingdom**, Unite is following a similar approach. The Unite Community Membership initiative, which was previously mentioned, aims at bringing people together from different parts of the society to fight for common causes in order to build a society "that places equality, dignity and respect above all else."<sup>28</sup> Unite, thanks to its community branches and offices, aims at organizing people outside working places, in local communities, to fight together for social concerns and issues, to support each other. The pinning idea is that only together improvements can be achieved. This is particularly true for young people, especially those unemployed or in precarious conditions, who often feel emarginated. Reaching

out and involving them in a collective action to improve their lives and the lives of their families, around issues of interest will empower and give them the strength to fight and get involved. This, as mentioned above, is also a very powerful way to recruit young people to the TU. With this idea Unite participated in different campaigns to tackle social issues, such as the "no bedroom tax<sup>29</sup>" campaign or actions to make housing costs more affordable for families.

The idea of creating synergies between TUs and different sectors of the society to mobilize young people is also developing in other countries.

In **Italy** for example, the Italian Federation of construction workers FILCA-CISL, organizes every year a Summer Camp where young trade unionists and students meet and discuss about issues concerning different topics related to the society (legality, ethnic tensions, migration, etc.). The overall idea is to facilitate the exchange of different experiences coming from different and complicated realities. The participation of NGOs, local organizations or social enterprises facilitate the exchange and the connection between different sectors of the society. Thanks to this kind of events many young people, often foreign to the TU world, have the opportunity to get to know and get engaged to solve or fight for burning social and civic issues. At the same time, they meet and discover what FILCA can do for them, how they work, what their values and fights are.

27 Coppola, A. Lezioni americane. Ovvero come rilanciare il sindacato facendone un movimento sociale. In: *Organizzare i non organizzati – Idee ed esperienze per il sindacato che verrà*. 2013.

28 See: <http://www.unitetheunion.org/growing-our-union/communitymembership/>

29 From April 2013, any social housing tenant who is judged to have extra bedrooms in their property will see deductions being made from their housing benefit. The deduction will be 14% for the first extra bedroom and 25% for those with more than one spare bedroom.



Picture from the **YOUNG and UNITED** campaign "Youth wage is half wage", showing how the Dutch Cabinet with the King would look like if they would get a youth minimum wage

In **Spain** the Youth Department of UGT, the workers' general Union, is member of the "Consejo de la Juventud de España" (CJE: Spanish Youth Council). The CJE, created in 1983, is a youth platform which gathers the youth councils of the Autonomous Communities of Spain and the youth organization at State level. The CJE provides a platform for young people to meet, discuss, get some training and cooperate on projects and activities. CJE's activities tackle different subjects such as health, education, gender equality, international cooperation, immigration, childhood, etc. There is also a specific space dedicated to employment and this is where the UGT cooperates and participates the most. Under this topic, position papers, studies and campaigns are carried on in cooperation with different partners, and special attention is dedicated to precariousness, undeclared work and the youth guarantee. Also at local level, the different branches of UGT cooperate with youth associations in order to mobilize as many young people as possible on different topics that are of interest for them.

## Young workers' needs: making trade unions advocacy more representative

As previously discussed, young workers think that TUs are not interested in youth issues and problems. During the Transunion Young Transport Workers' conference which was held in Riga in 2011, for example, young activists of 36 TUs of 22 countries prepared a list of the reasons why a young worker would not join a TU. Many activists focused on issues already discussed such as TU's image (old-fashioned, part of the political establishment, etc.) and lack of knowledge about TUs. But another important perspective was the perceived lack of attention for young workers. "There is a lack of help from TUs", "there is a lack of feedback coming from TUs" were some of the complaints conveyed during the conference.

Even if it is recognized that since 2000 and, especially since the start of the economic crisis, almost all TUs and TU confederations across Europe have given increasing attention to the youth issue, this does not necessarily mean that Unions have invested (enough) in it. Often TU strategies, structures, communication and internal democracy are not aligned to the needs and interests of young

workers<sup>30</sup>. Young workers consider organizing<sup>31</sup> activities one of the most important elements to make sure that their needs are represented. But researches have shown that for example at Unions' Confederation level the efforts to plan and implement organizing campaigns targeted at young workers are insufficient<sup>32</sup>. Instead the basic idea should be that, in order to be a credible advocate for youth issues and workers' needs, TUs need to believe and commit completely to the cause. If this is not the case, the entire fight would turn out to be weak and ineffective. The best way to do it is to have a bottom up approach, to empower and involve youth as much as possible.

Some organizations have taken steps in this direction and some examples have already been discussed in the previous paragraphs. In **France**, the FGA CFDT, established 3 years ago a youth group composed of 6 persons. Reportedly it is still too early to make an evaluation of the results, but the group is facing difficulties to raise awareness and involve the different TU departments into youth issues, to make them completely understand what is at stake and why it is important to invest in it. Every year, the group organizes actions for the development of youth issues involving, on a voluntary basis, the departments which are available. The actions range from internal awareness raising activities for departmental secretaries, to visits to training institutes, sport competitions, etc. But more work has to be done to break the resistance still present within TU structures and to make youth issues one of the priorities. The youth group will try, in view of the next Congress, to put in place a "Charter" between the FGA and the Departmental structure to agree on the role and the mission of the people under 36, the role of the overall structure and its obligations in terms of mentoring and youth policies in order to oppose the fake involvement of young people "just to satisfy statistics".

In this paragraph it is also important to highlight the experience of some organizations which invested in comprehensive plans to organize young workers and cater to their needs; organizations which have created space for youth empowerment and involvement.

This is the case for example in MCA-UGT, the Metal, Construction and related trades Federation, and its confederal organization UGT in **Spain**. Reportedly, one third of the affiliates of MCA-UGT is under 35 years of age. In order to cater to their needs and involve them as much as possible, the

30 Keune, M. (2015). *Trade Unions and Young Workers in Seven EU Countries*. YOUunion – Union for youth project, final report.

31 Organizing is defined here as per ITF Organizing Manual: organizing is increasing the participation [and involvement] of workers in our unions, with a goal of increasing union power within our workplaces and industries. The Manual is available here in different languages: [http://www.itfglobal.org/media/344925/Org\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.itfglobal.org/media/344925/Org_Manual.pdf)

32 Vandaele, K. Youth representatives' opinions on recruiting and representing young workers. A twofold unsatisfied demand? In: *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol.18 (3), pp. 203–218.

organization has invested into an intensive use of social networks to facilitate quick communication and discussions between all young members all over Spain and increasing their participation in TU issues.

MCA-UGT has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Flickr, Google+ and YouTube. For young people in particular, MCA-UGT created a specific Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ugtficajuventud/> which allows the union to detect faster and provide answers to the issues concerning young workers. Training and capacity building activities organized for young workers go in the same direction. MCA-UGT invests a lot in courses for young people on TU history, structure, functioning, etc., as well as in the production of supporting didactic material. In addition, MCA confederal organization, UGT, has a specific webpage for its youth where they gather all the interesting information concerning young people. As previously mentioned UGT Juventud is also part of the CJE which is part of the European Youth Forum.

On a similar path we find the FGTB/ABVV in **Belgium**. The organization has created separate structures for students and young workers, namely the Jeunes FGTB/ABVV Jongeren. The Centrale Jeunes FGTB for example is working specifically on youth issues and it has the power to raise issues concerning young people at Union level. The FGTB/ABVV website has a specific section on youth issues and the Jeunes FGTB level has a dedicated website for the youth organization dealing with youth matters only<sup>33</sup>. Jeunes FGTB is also very active on social networks such as Twitter<sup>34</sup> and blogs where they organize campaigns and actions.

The FGTB/ABVV works also at company level to support the representation of worker's needs. The organization runs a campaign called "Working Class Heroes". The campaign pushes young workers to both vote and put themselves forward as candidates for workplace representative elections. <http://www.workingclassheroes.be/>

The campaign is accompanied by cartoons, posters, leaflets and videos stressing the importance of unions in workplaces. Supporting young workers running for leadership positions at company level can have a positive effect not only for those encouraged to participate, but also for the entire union establishment which can be resistant to change. As our respondents have stressed, in

order to change the policies and increase attention to youth issues and needs it is important to have young people within TU structures, in decision making bodies. This is the way to convey and make sure that the message from young people is heard and that action will be taken.

In **Finland**, Rakennusliitto established Raksanuoret, the youth group within the mother organization. Raksanuoret was established to try to get in touch and work with young Union members. The organization has a website: <http://raksanuoret.rakennusliitto.net/>

It also has very active Twitter and Facebook accounts as well as a Twitter channel. More traditional tools, such as messages and paper letters, are used to involve young people into the different activities. Raksanuoret also tries to be active outside the Union, organizing activities and informing people in members' working places. They also have "bigger scale" activities to reach out to a wider public: they take part in public debates via social media or by writing articles on traditional media. This way young workers and unionists have a say and they feel they are listened to: the main Union is benefitting from their activities and at the same time they can better concentrate their policies and actions towards the real needs of young people.

In some other cases, young unionists have taken the lead and run campaigns on issues concerning young people. This is the case of Netwerk Jongeren FNV in the **Netherlands**. The campaign was called "Jongeren wille echte banen!" (Young people want real jobs). The starting point of the campaign was that there are not enough jobs, especially for young people. If young people cannot get a job they cannot become independent. Young people start blaming themselves for their unemployment and precariousness, mirroring the view of the society. The government does not invest in new jobs, but rather subsidizes job application courses or unpaid internships.

To oppose this, the young unionists have prepared a "Black Book" with the subtitle "youth unemployment: collective problem, individual shame"<sup>35</sup>. The book contains stories of young people with no job or no decent work as, for example, people doing two years of unpaid internship to get experience. The book provides a description of the necessary elements to have a decent job. It concludes suggesting measures in which the Government, the unions and the society at large should invest. The Black Book was distributed internally during

<sup>33</sup> <http://jeunes-fgtb.be/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://twitter.com/jeunesfgtb>

<sup>35</sup> It can be found here: [https://www.fnv.nl/site/alle-sectoren/sectoren/flex/88o851/Zwartboek\\_FNV\\_-\\_jeugdwerk\\_loosheid\\_okt\\_2014.pdf](https://www.fnv.nl/site/alle-sectoren/sectoren/flex/88o851/Zwartboek_FNV_-_jeugdwerk_loosheid_okt_2014.pdf)

the FNV congress and well received by the Union structure. Netwerk Jongeren FNV managed to be received by the Ministry of Social Affairs to present the book. The book was widely publicized through the Union magazines and the mainstream media also mentioned the initiative. This is an example of how young people used the space that was given to take the initiative and influence the Union's policies. However the organizers reported that it was very difficult without proper funds and support from the mother organization. The campaign was run by volunteers only, without much experience in mobilization and campaign techniques and, despite some interest within the Union, some people in the Union tried to undermine it defining the campaign as not very interesting.

This is one additional example of how important it is to have a young participation in the decision making structure. This will be discussed in the next paragraph.

#### THE EFFAT PLEDGE

During the 4th EFFAT Congress held in Vienna (Austria) on 20–21 November 2014 the EFFAT Youth Committee organized and lead a session dedicated to youth employment issues, entitled “Enough of their crisis – Back to our future!”. The outcome of this successful session was a signed pledge by which all EFFAT members committed to better integrating young people in trade union work and to taking at least one initiative to attract more young members.

The EFFAT Youth Committee together with the EFFAT Executive Committee are now responsible to monitor the concrete implementation of the pledge signed during the Congress.

In addition, youth is a permanent item in the agenda of the EFFAT bodies. Affiliates have to regularly report back to the EFFAT Executive Committee about the Youth actions they are implementing. EFFAT also constantly promotes the inclusion of youth related issues as permanent items in the agendas of the European Works Councils operating in the EFFAT sectors. Youth issues are also permanently discussed in EFFAT's sectoral social dialogues.

## Improving young people's role in the trade union structures

Is it really possible to change the image of the TUs, their ways of communicating, their approach to problems, their strategy and vision and their priorities without changing their paternalistic approach? Is it really possible to attract more young people without giving them the space and the possibility to have their say, to contribute and eventually to make a change? In general, when youth policies are discussed, too often the participation of young people is marginal and the different actions are imposed from the top. As far as we could discuss in this paper, this is the case for TUs as well. Our respondents explained that only few steps in the right direction have been taken, but they are neither at the right pace nor enough. There are a lot of discussions on the importance of youth issues, of youth participation, of investing in young people, but there are too little actions to actually give some power to the youth. The power structure is strongly in the hands of the older members and, as mentioned before, there are very few cases we were able to find where young representative have their say in a TU decision making body.

In **Belgium** for example, the ABVV-Metaal has revitalized since 2005 their national and provincial youth committees under the impulse of its General Secretary. ABVV-Metaal has youth representatives at company level, a youth committee in every region as well as the ABVV-Metaal national youth committee. The members meet 2 or 3 times a year and they managed to establish an annual youth day, where issues concerning young people are debated. Since 2008, 2 members of the national youth committee are allowed to take part in the Congress and the National committee of the Union (main decision making body between Congress periods) and have the *right to vote*. This right is a very positive, but almost unique case! Since 2005, ABVV-Metaal has also supported and pushed for the revitalization of the work of ABVV jongeren, the youth organization at confederal level, which has structures at regional and central (Flemish region) level.

As previously mentioned, in **Finland**, Rakennusliito, the Finnish Trade Union for construction workers, has a well-established youth structure called Raksanuoret. There are 3 youth officers mainly

dealing with youth issues. They have their specific areas of responsibility (North, Centre and South Finland) and some specific tasks: one is dealing with international relations, another is in charge of the preparation of a magazine and the other one with IT issues, such as webpage and mobile apps. These officers are supported by a national Youth Group, composed of representatives of each region or city and chosen for a 4-year mandate, and active members, who are taking over responsibilities in the Union's youth work. The youth structure has a yearly budget and they are free to choose which activities are funded. The activities are free and open to members only and they are mainly networking and teambuilding activities. Often they are organized in cooperation with other trade unions. The youth group does not have the right to attend or vote in Union board meetings, but, reportedly, the board member often consults the youth officers.

In the **Netherlands**, the Netwerk Jongeren FNV is a cross sectoral network within the FNV confederation. It is not a union itself, but it is part of the organization of FNV. The structure organizes young members working in different sectors on issues interesting for young people. The network does not have a place in the Executive board of FNV, but a board member is responsible for the network. Requests and policy decisions are ultimately discussed and approved/rejected in the highest decision making structure, which is the Union Parliament. The Union Parliament consists of representatives of all sectors of the FNV federation. In the future, if the network will have 1,500 members, it will be able to speak but not vote in the Union Parliament. The network does not have a fixed budget, but it gets funds every year based on an activity plan. Unfortunately, there is very limited support by paid professionals, which makes it hard for the network to organize effectively. In addition, young workers have often flexible jobs and precarious contracts and this makes them vulnerable as union members.

In **Sweden** as well, Handels has worked to establish youth structures and to have youth representatives in decision making bodies as discussed in chapter 4. As mentioned, at national level, Handels has a central youth Committee with 6 members and it has the right to appoint one representative to the national board (the union's highest decision-making body between congresses) with the right to speak, but not the right to vote.

The right to vote in decision making bodies is considered as crucial by our respondents. Youth structures can be strengthened by having youth committees at local/branch level, as well as at regional and national level; also they can be strengthened by recruiting a youth secretary/officer at all levels in order to ensure a consistent and continuous work on youth policies within the TU. But all these structures cannot be effective without a real representation and real power for youth representatives within decision making bodies.

Therefore many questions remain open: how to make sure that TUs systematically work to improve the involvement of young workers? How to make sure that gate keepers will open the fortress and allow younger voices to obtain some real power?

One alternative approach is the one that Mladi Plus in **Slovenia** is trying. The organization is part of the association of free trade unions of Slovenia (ZSSS), and it deals with youth issues only. Mladi Plus has prepared a survey which is running in all 22 TUs that are member of ZSSS. The survey asks about methods (if any) to approach young workers, precarious and unemployed young people; how young people are involved, etc. This approach obliges respondents to think about the approach of the TU to youth issues and to motivate and justify actions or inaction. Once finished the result will be presented to the presidents of the different unions and of the Confederation. This internal reflection might be a good way of rethinking the structure and youth involvement.

# 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The following recommendations have been discussed and agreed upon by the participants of the Youth Conference in Croatia in May 2015 during the 6 thematic workshops.

They have been grouped into 3 categories to facilitate consultation and further discussion. But the three categories presented overlap as the subjects are interconnected. Thus some recommendations will be similar if not the same for different categories.

The involvement and empowerment of young workers into TUs goes necessarily through strategies involving organizing and recruiting, internal and external communication and proper youth representation.



# RECRUITING AND ORGANIZING

## TRADE UNIONS NEED TO RECRUIT YOUNG WORKERS

As previously seen and confirmed by the participants TUs need to have new young members in order to survive. TUs need to be more proactive in this sense and they have to work to improve their image as well as their inclusiveness.

1. **Involve young people from an early stage:** going to schools and vocational education and training institutes, to universities and talk to them even before they become workers. The sooner you start, the better it is. Educate, promote the values of trade unions, which will make it more likely that these values will be adopted and applied in adult life as well.
2. **Apply a student fee** or even free membership.
3. Offer a **discount or benefit cards** to young members.
4. Offer **dedicated services** that nobody else is offering yet. E.g. help young people to find a quality job (See e.g. Amico Lavoro in the best practices part) or information on work and everyday life related issues.
5. **Go to places where young people are:** festivals or events that you can join or organize, where it is possible to combine fun with relevant topics and TU “education” in a relaxed and friendly environment. Tackle precarious workers and unemployed people.
6. Organize social **networking events**.
7. Youth based approach in communication: **peer to peer** approach. Young people should talk to young people, as they speak the same language and they have the same problems.
8. New communication approach: **social media**, as young people are primarily present on Internet.
- ▶ **Keep in mind:**  
Social media are important. But it is necessary to keep in mind that not only the tool is important, but also the message. It is essential to concentrate on what a TU wants to communicate and to whom. The choice of the means of communication comes at a later stage. (see internal and external communication strategy later on)
9. **Invest in “marketing” campaigns.** TUs are not companies, but they need to be known and seen. To become attractive especially towards young people they need to put in place a marketing campaign, to raise awareness about their work and look interesting. Young people need to be attracted, they are the only possibility for TU survival.
10. Have a supporting **youth structure**. At least a “youth officer”, somebody fully employed, who can work directly with young people and for young people. The work of this person should be fully dedicated: s/he should put in place specific mechanisms and strategies to address young people, go “in the field”, be present where and when needed, etc...
- ▶ **Keep in mind:**  
Young people must be active and enthusiastic members, in order to attract new young members
11. Empower young workers in trade unions for **greater participation in decision making processes** (within the trade union and within the social dialogue), involve them and listen to them, give them power to decide and the opportunity for taking up responsibility.

### CHALLENGE 1 EXTERNAL OBSTACLES

Best practices can be replicated, but it is always important to take into consideration the country differences in TU structures and legislation. In some countries, e.g. in France, the law does not allow the recruitment of students to TUs. This should not be an excuse. Efforts should be made to keep them involved and informed. The sooner the contacts and education to TU values is passed the more likely it is that those values will be applied in “adult” life as well.

### CHALLENGE 2 LACK OF ATTRACTIVENESS

Trade union leadership should be rejuvenated and charismatic people empowered in order to attract young people. But it is difficult to dismantle the old system and methods and unhinge the old elite. TUs should be transparent, democratic and inclusive in order to have a good image in the society.

## TRADE UNIONS MUST INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADVOCACY<sup>36</sup>

1. Organize **training and mentorships** for young workers to develop their knowledge and skills concerning TU work. Some training activities could take the form of video-conferences or on-line tutorials in order to fit better in the planning and free time of young people.
2. Organize **training for the current leadership** to learn organizing and communication strategies towards younger generations.
3. Invest time and resources in **needs analysis**. In order to be able to know what is best for young people, it is important to ask them. Some simple mechanisms should be in place to ensure that decision makers know what young people need and want (e.g. online surveys).
4. Provide **“Voice and Vote”**. Young people need to have the same rights and the same opportunities within the Union as older ones. They need the right to be voted/elected/nominated as the older colleagues. In some cases reserved seats or “quota” mechanisms should be in place<sup>37</sup>. And they need to be able to have their say on all TU matters and strategies, not only on youth employment issues.
5. **Provide a person of reference** within the Union for young workers.
6. Youth **participation** should start and be guaranteed already at **local and company** level and go up to every level.
7. **Give space** and listen to young people so that they can feel part of something.
8. Include young people’s issues on **collective bargaining agendas** with employers, including establishment of youth workers’ councils in companies.
9. Invest in youth policies.

► **Keep in mind:**  
There are no miracle solutions to organize and mobilize young people, but small things all together can help.

<sup>36</sup> ADVOCACY: in this context we define advocacy as the actions aimed at defending the interests of the workers; actions to influence the decision making process in favour of the interest of workers.

<sup>37</sup> This point on quota was really a controversial one during the discussion. Many young unionists affirm not to look for “shortcuts” others stress that without quota mechanisms young people will find it very difficult to have a voice within TUs.

### **CHALLENGE 1 YOUNG PEOPLE AS A THREAT**

Many “old” unionists and workers might feel that their position and ideas are threatened by young people who, in their minds, do not know enough and want to turn things around. They are therefore opposing any change. The different “language” spoken by old and young unionists, as mentioned above, is not helping. It is difficult and takes a lot of time and patience to eradicate a long-established model and to change the mindset of the old elite.

### **CHALLENGE 2 LACK OF RESOURCES**

Despite increasing attention, at least in intentions, to youth issues by TUs, there is a lack of dedicated resources. This is due to a shrinking of TU resources in general, but also to a bad or inexistent distribution strategy according to priorities.

### **CHALLENGE 3 LACK OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE**

This is applicable to some countries only, where TUs do not have enough power to influence in an institutionalized way political elites and State policy makers. Some young unionists consider this as a big problem as without political influence it is not possible to change things around and protect workers’ rights properly<sup>38</sup>.

## **YOU! JUST GO FOR IT!**

1. Young people should **take the lead**, take initiatives, express their opinions without asking older colleagues and ask for permission ... later!
2. Start organizing **small** and **manageable initiatives** and campaigns, be patient and increase your ambitions step by step.
3. Establish a **network** within and across unions and sectors and across countries.  
It is easier to organize impacting initiatives if you have a bigger number of persons supporting you.
4. **Ask** young people from other countries, unions and sectors for **ideas and advice**.

<sup>38</sup> This was another controversial points. Some participants opposed this opinion, stressing that if a TU is too much involved in politics, it might be stigmatized each time by the colour of the Government and hence, each time there is a change in the government, their proposal would be blocked.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

### TRADE UNIONS NEED TO BE “KNOWN” AND THEIR IMAGE HAS TO CHANGE

As discussed already, TUs are suffering from their image of old, bureaucratic and self-referential organizations. Young people do not want to get involved into something that represents the old, well-established power system. Furthermore, young people do not know much about the history and the role of TUs, but “learn” only from what they hear from media and relatives or friends. TUs need to invest into some “marketing” activity to change their image.

1. TUs should **go to workplaces** and show and **publicize** the result of their work. They should inform workers, and young workers in particular, of the results of TU actions using youth friendly language and methods.
2. **Peer-to-peer information sharing.** Young people have to inform other young people about the advantages, opportunities and activities of their TUs.
3. **Young people** need to be more exposed and pushed to **the frontline**, step into the public domain so as to provide a positive, innovative and inclusive image of the organization.
4. The work of TU must be transparent and open to **public scrutiny** (e.g. through monthly publications and magazines).
5. Be present or organize **events, concerts, festivals**, etc. to attract and get in touch with young people. This will increase visibility and generate opportunities to inform people.
6. For internal and external communication purposes, make use of all contemporary **technologies** and get involved in the use of **social networks** as young people are using these tools on a daily basis.

Considering that in Europe the internet penetration rate is around 70%, that almost 300 million people access social media and that around two thirds of these users access them on mobile devices, it becomes imperative that:

### TRADE UNIONS NEED TO DEVELOP A SPECIFIC DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY ADDRESSED TO YOUNG PEOPLE

1. **Determine goals.** What do we want to do with social media? Recruit? Inform? It is important to know from the beginning what is the main goal. It is not just because everybody has Facebook that we need to use it, otherwise it is just a waste of time and resources.
2. **Set specific and realistic objectives.** It is not enough to open a Facebook page, for example, and inform people. It is necessary to use the opportunities that social networking sites are providing to track data, and set some specific objectives, (e.g. at the end of the year, % of people will be reached and % engaged (likes, or comments or shares)).

3. **Assess target audience.** It is possible to target a specific audience using the free tools provided by social media. (see below for more details)
4. Allocate a **budget**.
5. Develop a **content plan**. It is necessary to plan and schedule what needs to be communicated in the following period of time.
6. Organize your **workflow/assignment** of tasks. It is necessary to plan to be able to follow up on good proposals or ideas that the audience might provide through their feedback.
7. **Choose the appropriate tools** according to the message and the audience that the organization wants to reach.

### CHALLENGE 1 INTEREST IN INVESTING IN A YOUTH STRATEGY

The first challenge for a TU is to invest properly in a youth strategy. As seen before, a change in the communication strategy, alternative to the traditional and, in the youth's eyes, obsolete one, is a *conditio sine qua non* to reach and engage young people. But in fact studies and statistics show a different reality. According to some research<sup>39</sup>, in average only 3% of tweets by national unions in Europe are directed to youth or concerns youth issues. This research suggests that “youth are, in practice, considered as a topic that is out of national trade unions' ordinary agenda and daily business [...] and thus supporting the hypothesis that youth membership is not specifically addressed by trade unions at national level<sup>40</sup>.” This topic is mainly dealt with at youth specific trade unions' sectors, in countries where TUs have specific youth departments.

### CHALLENGE 2 NEW COMMUNICATION SKILLS

To prepare a post in social media new communication skills need to be learned. The language, the structure and the content of a message cannot be the same as the one used in a press release. It is important to invest time and money in training new communication skills, but all the participants to the conference mentioned that they never received any training on this. What is needed is the capacity to send short, concise and complete messages; to be able to detect which kind of social media is better to be used according to the public you want to reach; to be able to write appealing messages for different mobile devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, etc...

► **Keep in mind:**

- A third of Facebook users access their wall via mobile devices.
- In 2014 mobile devices generated the majority of all web browsing and media consumption.
- People getting information on a mobile device do that while commuting or at night on the sofa in front of the TV. Readers' lack of attention and concentration must be taken into account when preparing messages in order to prepare catching posts.
- Twitter is often used by politicians to communicate and by journalists to get information. This is important if a TU wants to have influence on the policies and on media communication.

► **Keep in mind:**  
A good organization is an organization that has a strategy open to all employees! In this way, every activity organized will be in line with and planned according to the objectives.

### CHALLENGE 3 SMOOTH AND FLEXIBLE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND WORKFLOW

Preparing a social media message of a long document takes time. The person in charge needs to be familiar with the content well in advance. Therefore a good workflow organization is needed. TUs should always remember that an effective external communication depends on the existence of an integrated internal communication.

<sup>39</sup> Fazio, F. *Trade Unions Twitter Analytics: to What Extent Trade Unions Interact with Youth?* YOUunion, Union for Youth. Project co-funded by the European Commission.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

#### CHALLENGE 4 NEW APPROACH TO MEDIA RELATIONS

As previously mentioned, journalists are increasingly using social media as a source of information. They might still read press releases, but they expect to get fresh and meaningful information from social media. TUs have then the possibility to shape and influence reports and establish relationships with journalists through a good use of social media.

► **Keep in mind:**

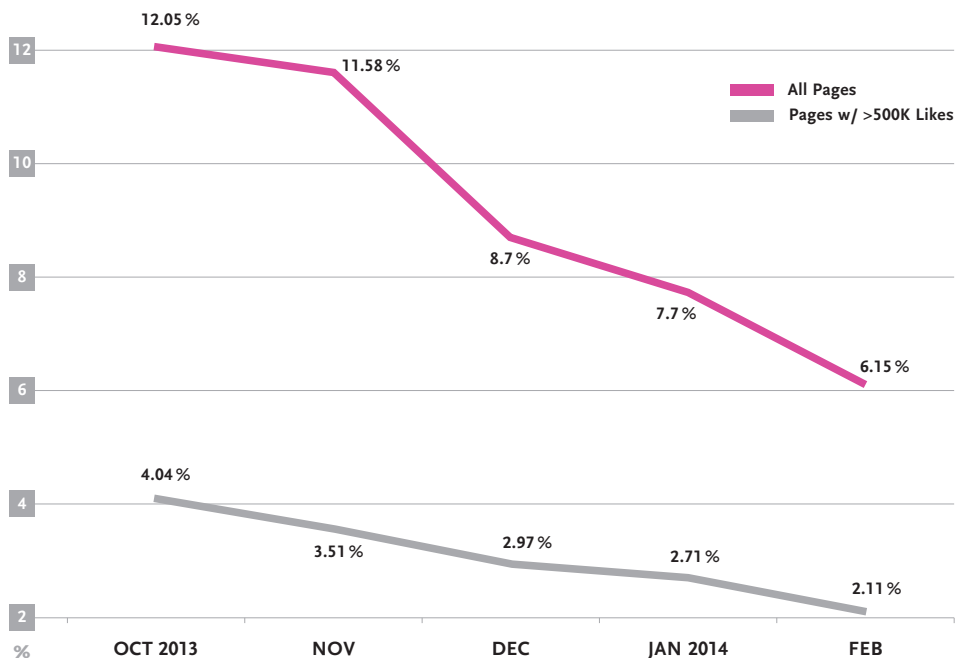
- Journalists are increasingly using social media to ask for clarifications concerning pieces of news and to quickly get a reply. TUs need to be ready to instantly interact with them.
- Bloggers might also be considered as proper journalists if they are influential. TUs could use these channels as well to spread information.

#### CHALLENGE 5 EVER CHANGING ENVIRONMENT AND NEED TO RAPIDLY ADAPT

The social media environment is constantly evolving. New social networking platforms are appearing and the old ones are constantly mutating and adapting. TUs should monitor the new trends in order to assess the most effective platforms to reach their target audiences based on the overall goals of the communication strategy.

Also the use of the existing and well known social networks is evolving. For example if in 2012 the best way to reach a big part of followers in Facebook was to publish a picture, studies have shown that in 2015 it is necessary to post videos. Therefore TUs need to keep updated and quickly adapt to the changes.

Average Organic Reach of Content Published on Brand Facebook Pages



Analysis of 100+ Facebook Brand Pages around the world with more than 48 million total fans conducted by Social@Ogilvy in February 2014. Please see "Facebook Zero" report at <http://social.ogilvy.com> for details

## CHALLENGE 6 BUDGET ALLOCATION AND MARKETING EXPERTISE NEEDED

Social media is not for free! If a TU wants to be sure to reach the target audience it needs to boost its posts through advertisements. Nowadays, if a post in Facebook is published without “boosting”, less than 5% of the fans will see it in their newsfeed.<sup>41</sup>

But in order to do it, without wasting money, it is necessary to be able to effectively manage online campaigns. Marketing expertise is needed. The expert needs to identify the target audience and the right platforms before starting a campaign. S/he also needs to constantly monitor its performance and adapt the strategy. It is indeed not possible to approach social media as traditional media. The “two-way” nature of social platforms requires a deep analysis and assessment of the communication efforts. This requires a lot of skills, time and dedicated resources who constantly monitor not only the data, but also try to analyze the users’ sentiment towards the published content and more in general towards the organization.

- ▶ **Keep in mind:**
  - A scientific approach is needed when preparing a social media campaign. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide a lot of information concerning fans and friends: gender, age distribution, economic situation, geographical location, time of connection, language, etc.
  - In order to avoid spamming all fans and friends of a specific page, Facebook allows to select specific target groups with relevant posts. This is a free of charge service.
  - TUs often naturally assign social media management to young people, but those people need to have time, skills, knowledge and access to information that they do not necessarily have. Social media campaigns and communication can be a full-time and highly specialized job.
  - Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social media have developed advertising schemes that allow organizations to promote their content.

## CHALLENGE 7 BE MORE OPEN AND INCLUSIVE AND READY TO INTERACT

Within the existing TU structures, social media are used mainly to communicate to other TU members or with people already “sensitive to the cause”. Some examples have appeared already in the Best Practices chapter. The recent study “Trade unions Twitter analytics: to what extent trade unions interact with youth?” highlights that “Looking at interaction by type of interacted users, it is possible to observe the general tendency of trade unions to interact mostly with themselves. 55 out of 115 most interacted users are indeed included in the category “Same trade union”, meaning that all trade unions mostly interact with Twitter accounts belonging to their own sphere, both trade union branches and persons working in the trade union”.

Even if it might not be possible to directly recruit new people through social media, the information produced and communicated through these tools is of utmost importance to attract and make your commitments known to the bigger public.

Interaction with the “outside world” is very important to provide the image of a caring and engaging organization.

- ▶ **Keep in mind:**
  - 35% of people in Europe do not have internet. Therefore all the social networking platforms will not replace traditional methods of mobilizing or recruiting. But they can integrate and support. Social media should then be integrated in all TUs’ activities.

<sup>41</sup> From Antonio Deruda’s presentation during the youth conference. [www.antonioderuda.com](http://www.antonioderuda.com)

# YOUTH REPRESENTATION

## TRADE UNIONS NEED TO HAVE YOUTH REPRESENTATION MECHANISMS

Young workers and trade unionists do understand the importance of the trade union structure. A structure: allows TU democracy to work in practice through a set of transparent rules; maintains a form of organizational memory on discussions and decisions; helps maintaining order; enables the Union to speak with one voice; helps facilitating collective bargaining and effective relationship building with employers. But TU structures are often dominated by “old men in suits”.

TUs should therefore:

1. **hire a permanent full time youth officer** who knows the TU structure and who is involved in all discussions, policies and strategies. This person must have a say in every decision in order to mainstream youth issues in all the TU policies.
  2. **create a youth structure** (within or outside the mother structure) with a degree of power, autonomy and resources. This is necessary for the structure to be able to take decisions and positions which can be sometimes in contradiction with the mother organization. Having the power to be listened to and to put forward different ideas will be beneficial to the work of the organization and will strengthen the democratic character that a trade union should have.
  3. **reserve seats** for youth in important committees and establish real **co-decision processes**.
- **Keep in mind:**  
Increased representation of young people will be beneficial not only to TUs – which will be able to increase their membership – and to young people – who will be able to have a voice and their rights protected –, but also to society in general which will see increasing intergenerational solidarity and the creation of future leaders.

### CHALLENGE 1 CHANGE IN CULTURE

Improving the quality of democratic processes within TUs remains an urgent priority which will not be achieved by structure alone, but which requires a change in culture. Young members need to make efforts to take a lead in this change of mentality.

### CHALLENGE 2 OVER-ASSIMILATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

It might be that the established structure and mentality is so strong that the Union might co-opt young people into its world rather than change itself and its structures. It might happen that young people who were able to enter “the system” fall into the trap and adopt the same attitude, language and “dress code” rather than changing it from the inside.

### CHALLENGE 3 UNION NEEDS TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE

A youth delegate in a committee might find himself/herself bound by collective responsibility to support the decision of the majority, therefore finding it impossible to exert any kind of influence to change things.

In order to avoid to fall into these traps and to keep a “deliberative vitality”<sup>42</sup> of young people into TUs a **comprehensive strategy** is needed.



### **1. Organizing**

The strategy needs to be based on a strong representational base. Therefore, the first step is to organize workers through recruitment and engagement activities. Youth activists should also make the recruitment and involvement of young people in the union the highest priority. By increasing the number and range of young people's direct engagement in the Unions, they will be in a stronger position to argue for more influence through a greater number of reserved seats, voting rights, etc.

### **2. Education and research**

To draw young people into the union family, it is important to know what people want from the unions. Young activists can use simple online tools such as Survey Monkey<sup>43</sup> to research into young people's wants and needs. Also it is important to organize training and dedicated mentoring activities for young members and representatives to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviors to be able to exert greater influence within the union.

### **3. Negotiations**

As with company bargaining, establishing a list of demands, prioritizing them and supporting these demands with evidence (from the researches) should form a key strand for young members' engagement in the union. Therefore a sort of bargaining agenda needs to be prepared and used within the union and skills learnt during training activities should be used to negotiate requests.

### **4. Campaigning**

In addition to external campaigns, internal campaigns for greater recognition and rights should be organized. Drawing on campaigning skills obtained through education and training, young activists can develop campaigns to support the negotiation strategy for greater influence.

### **5. International solidarity**

Young activists should develop links with young members and activists in other unions and countries in order to share good practices and make common cause across a number of unions, making use of European and international federations.

<sup>42</sup> The term "deliberative vitality" suggests a combination of the need of young people to access formal trade unions structures (deliberative), but without over-assimilation into prevailing cultures, retaining the transformative potential that a new breed of activists can bring to the union (vitality). From Vandaele, K.. *Trade Unions' 'Deliberative vitality' towards young workers: survey evidence across Europe*. In: Hodder, A. and Kretsos, L. (eds.) *Young Workers and Trade Unions: A Global View*, 2015, pp. 16–36.

<sup>43</sup> [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

The main conclusion of this research and of all the discussions that took place among young unionists during the European Youth Conference is that the future of trade unionism relies on young people. Involving young people is necessary to avoid the steady and fast declining number of TU members around Europe and to enhance a renovation process which is necessary if TUs want to continue being well-established and influential social and political actors, able to give answers to new and ever changing issues. The very existence of TUs is at stake if a renovation process is not undertaken. Many researchers have proven that if a person is not a TU member by 40 years of age, he/she will probably never be. This is why youth organizing must become a priority.

Even if in theory TUs have understood the importance of this transition, in practice the change is happening, in some cases, too slowly. It is therefore imperative to put in place an appealing recruiting and organizing system. This implies the use of all the means of communication with which young people are familiar today, such as social networks. It also means increasing peer to peer contacts in schools, bars, festivals, concerts, etc. where young people go and are. It is important to start promoting the work of TUs when people are still in school and that they can form their own opinions on the society they live in. It is fundamental to involve them in activities from an early age, proposing appealing affiliation opportunities before they enter into a job or profession (discounts, support to write a CV or finding a job, legal support, etc.).

Communication is also another fundamental aspect. The TU's image, in many cases, needs to change. The language and the tools used to communicate have to be adapted, as well as the message itself. Public opinion in many cases considers TU work relevant just for retired people or workers on a permanent contract. This has to change. Youth matters must always be included in all TU policies and initiatives.

But in order to do this, it is necessary that TUs change also internally. Young people should be given space and a voice within TU structures. Representation mechanisms should be put in place in order to ensure their inclusion in policy decisions and activities. With young people's direct input, TUs will be in the position to properly advocate and represent their interest. TU actions and campaigns will also be more incisive, inclusive and appealing and their image will eventually change in the eyes of the public.

Those are in a very short summary the challenges TUs are confronted with. Giving answers and taking actions in this direction will ensure a brighter future for all workers. Young people are not supposed to just sit and wait, but they need to be the actors of this change, the leading force, they need to push and act and take initiatives. They need to show the way, they need to ... **JUST GO FOR IT!**



## WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

These workshop techniques have been used at the European Youth Conference in Croatia during some of the workshops. The workshops were meant to be very interactive despite the high number of participants and languages used per workshop. These methodologies can then be replicated for trade union activities with big multilingual groups or smaller groups as well as adapted for people from the same country.

EXAMPLE  
7

TOPIC	METHODOLOGY	MATERIALS	DURATION				
Welcome and objectives	Introduction and motivation for workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective on flipchart</li> </ul>	5 min				
Task instructions	Moderator introduction Ground rules: time limits and Task explained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPT</li> </ul>	5 min				
<b>TASK 1</b> Participants individual perspectives	<p>Each person individually or with others from the same country/ organisation to prepare 1 flipchart</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="746 907 997 990"> <tr> <td>Country</td> <td>Name</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What works</td> <td>What does NOT work</td> </tr> </table> <p>Once finished, participants hang on wall</p>	Country	Name	What works	What does NOT work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40 prepared flipcharts</li> <li>thin black markers for all</li> <li>masking tape</li> </ul>	15–20 min
Country	Name						
What works	What does NOT work						
Gallery walk	<p>Participants walk around reading the flipcharts concentrating on the Good Practices answering the question: “Would this work in my country?”</p> <p>As they walk around, they place their post-it with their name and country beside the ‘good practices’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>very small post-it</li> </ul>	20–30 min				
Selection of top 7 good practices	Moderator selects 7 good practices (this number may change depending on the number of participants)		5 min				
Challenges/ possible solutions	<p>In teams of 7* (at tables) discuss and propose possible recommendations on their chosen good practice, taking into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>both internal and external challenges</li> <li>target group(s)</li> </ul> <p>* can choose where to sit – numbers can change according to the number of participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 flipcharts</li> <li>markers</li> </ul>	35 min				
Short presentation of discussion	Choose rapporteur to report back 2 min each		15 min				

- ▶ This methodology is based on a two-hour framework.
- ▶ The group was composed of English speakers only from different countries.
- ▶ This methodology can be used also for people from the same country.

EXAMPLE  
2

TOPIC	METHODOLOGY	MATERIALS	DURATION
Welcome and objectives	Introduction and motivation for workshop-Moderator	• Objective on flipchart	5 min
Ice breaking	Question time on the topic of the workshop – Yes / No questions: participants need to physically move to the Yes or No side according to what they want to reply	• PPT	5 min
<b>EXERCISE 1</b> Identify group issues to be discussed (aggregate group method)	3 different groups to select 3 main issues each which they want to discuss on the topic of the workshop – discussion within the group  All participants discuss with the moderator to select 3 main topics to be addressed in the rest of the workshop – 3 flipcharts with the topics are prepared	• flipcharts	30 min  20 min
<b>EXERCISE 2</b> How to tackle the issues identified in exercise 1? (Post-it note technique)	Each group chooses one topic and discusses solutions to address it (proposals on post-it)  Groups rotation to the next flipcharts – add more proposals	• post-it • flipchart	10 min  20 min
<b>EXERCISE 3</b> Rationalizing and synthesizing all the proposals (heuristic scheme)	Groups at the last flipchart cannot add more proposals, but organize post-it into categories and choose the best one for each category within each topic  Selection of key proposals for each topic – group discussion with moderator		10 min  20 min
Preparation for reporting back in plenary	Selection of rapporteur		

- ▶ This methodology is based on a two-hour framework.
- ▶ The group was composed of people speaking 4 different languages.
- ▶ Participants were divided into 3 smaller groups according to their language skills.
- ▶ Whispering interpretation was used rather than technical equipment, which allowed a more fluid interaction.

**EXAMPLE**  
**3**

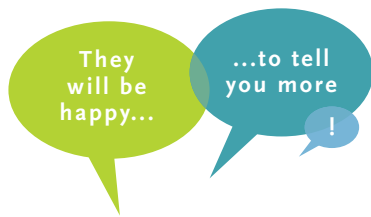
TOPIC	METHODOLOGY	MATERIALS	DURATION
Welcome and objectives	Welcome of participants. Introduction by the facilitator, what is the topic of the workshop and its objectives and the methodology/timeline that will be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flipchart</li> <li>• markers</li> </ul>	5 min
Energizer	<p>Short plenary activity in circle.</p> <p>Participants put their hands up on the height of their shoulders. They are asked to point the index finger on their right hand, and place their left hand behind the right hand of the participant next to them. Facilitator counts to three and participants need to protect their index finger while trying to catch the index finger of the participant next to them.</p>		5 min
<b>TASK 1</b> Provide input relevant to the topic of the workshop	<p>The method used is called “world-café”  <a href="http://www.theworldcafe.com/">http://www.theworldcafe.com/</a>            5 working stations are created.            Participants need to rotate every 15 minutes adding inputs and exploring inputs of the others. On each table one participant does not rotate but stays and acts as a coordinator and reporter of one specific topic.            When all participants have gone through all stations a “silent floor” exercise takes place. All flipcharts are placed on the floor and participants have 5–10 minutes to move around silently and do some speed reading of the different inputs.            Next step is the presentations of the results on each station followed by discussion and quick input (summaries/connections with the workshop) by the facilitator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flipchart</li> <li>• markers</li> </ul>	60 min
<b>TASK 2</b> Provide solutions to the problems raised during the first task	<p>The method used is generally known as “buzz groups”  <a href="http://thetrainingworld.com/articles/buzz.htm">http://thetrainingworld.com/articles/buzz.htm</a>            Participants are usually divided according to interest of topic in different groups.            In this case, they were divided according to language (to facilitate communication) and region of origin (to be able to stay on a discussion that makes sense according to their realities). They are given enough time to develop the idea/question of the topic and come back with a proposal/presentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flipchart</li> <li>• markers</li> </ul>	50 min
Summary	<p>A summary of the whole workshop is made in order to remind the objectives of the workshop, evaluate whether they have been reached and point out the different striking and interesting inputs/proposals that were made throughout the workshop.</p>		10 min

- ▶ This methodology is based on a two-hour framework.
- ▶ The group was composed of people speaking 4 different languages and coming from many different countries.

## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CJE	Consejo de la Juventud de España
CSR	Country Specific Recommendations
EC	European Commission
EFBWW	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers
EPSU	European Public Service Union
ETF	European Transport Federation
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUI	European Trade Union Institute
EYF	European Youth forum
FIEC	European Construction Industry Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MEPs	Members of the European Parliament
NEETs	Not in Employment, Education or Training
PES	Public Employment Service
S&D	Socialists and Democrats
TUs	Trade Unions
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

## THANKS TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED!



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