



Introducing unions to young people

Collection of best practices from Europe



ITUC CSI IGB

International Trade Union Confederation

Dear Young Trade Unionists,

The PERC Youth Conference in 2013 November gave a mandate to the newly elected PERC Youth Committee to focus their objectives on migration and organising as relevant and very important topics for the European trade union youth. This brochure was made with the aim to collect best practises from all over the PERC region on how to mobilise and organise young workers. Youth representatives sent us best practices from 14 countries to highlight some of their most successful and inspiring experiences on how to attract young workers to trade unions ranging from creative events and actions, through education and effective interest representation of young workers in the policy arena.

We have collected these best practises for young trade unionists who are working with youth to give them ideas for their daily work. We sincerely hope that by sharing these best practises we will be able to add value to your work in further building the trade union movement in the future.



PERC Organising Academy for young trade union activists

The context for youth organising in Europe is difficult. Young people are likely to be in less secure or stable work positions due to the growth of precariousness. There is a certain mistrust from young people to unions as being organised around the classical proletariat. However, experiences of union actions with migrant workers, informal economy insiders, self-accounted or domestic workers show that there is obvious interest for collective drive, and these groups of workers are relatively young. New sectors are evolving – care economy, green economy, IT services – where unions can find potential for growth. Work with young people on raising their awareness about union values can also increase support for the union movement as such, with potential transformation to more flexible forms of young workers' involvement in unions. The young workers' organising has to be done by peers, since this is the better way to get trust from them and mainstream their issues.



The PERC Youth Committee initiated a series of educational events to set up the young organisers' pool, which will move forward the ITUC organising priorities in the PERC region. The kick-start event took place in Warsaw (April, 2015) and gathered a mix of seasoned young union activists and newcomers.

As a result of a three-day training, based on the ITUC Organising Guide, participants got equipped with methods and techniques to make their organising or mobilising campaign effective. They have mapped out their campaign plans, such as organising of the woodworkers' industry in Lithuania and Ukraine, mobilising for a better collective agreement for youth in Belarus, unionising of young workers in the communication industry of Moldova, the banking sector in Georgia among others.



Focus on youth

The British TUC decided to dedicate a whole month to focusing on youth and held a national *Young Workers Month* in March 2014. They concentrated on issues affecting young workers. Not only the national centre, but their affiliated unions also mobilised young members by organising different events and activities throughout the month. The TUC marked Young Members Month with a new publication *My Union, My Voice*, which gives young union members an opportunity to share their stories on how they became involved in their union.



The TUC also hosted a Youth Unemployment Summit in Liverpool providing an opportunity for young activists to exchange their experiences. Young workers took part in the TUC's Fair Pay Fortnight campaigns as well, in which they gave their message to the government that they deserve fair pay too.

“Empower also young trade union activists in your union and put them into focus for a day/week or a whole month by concentrating on solutions to their problems (pay, housing and access to training and career development, etc.)! Trade unions should demonstrate to young workers that their policies and values are relevant to them.”

Reach young professionals during their studies!

The youth group of the Latvian Builders' trade union affiliated to LBAS observed the lack of qualified and motivated workers in the construction sector. It therefore started a programme entitled *Young Builders' Network* financed by European Commission project initiative “Youth in Action”. The main goal of the programme was to raise the prestige of the construction sector, thus attracting more young people to it, reducing unemployment queues and early school leavers. This programme involved many young individuals.

The youth group visited twelve different professional schools. The three most active students from each school were asked to participate in regional camps, where they worked with other students to create promotional materials for the construction sector. These materials were presented to different stakeholders involved in the construction sector, and also to other interested organisations.

This programme has not only improved the reputation of the construction sector but it has also raised the Latvian Builders trade unions image in the eyes of society including youth. Many students from the twelve schools have joined the union and almost all participants of regional camps have become union members.



Slovenian volunteers organising precarious young workers

Trade Union Youth Plus (www.mladiplus.si) was established to reach out to young people who do not know what trade unions are and what they do. It is a legal entity with its own statute and is affiliated to the Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (ZSSS). It was established because there are a low percentage of young people organised in trade unions and because trade unions do not properly represent youth. Youth Plus members are pupils, students and young unemployed (precarious) workers up to the age of 35. There is a symbolic yearly membership of 12€.

Most young people join because of the services offered. Young precarious workers join when they need legal help; students mostly join for the career or tax counselling and study opportunities. Since Youth Plus has become active in the field of youth policy, more and more young people are joining and become involved in the decision making processes. For example, in the Erasmus+ project on the Youth Guarantee (YG), Youth Plus invite young people to share their experiences with the YG, to assess which YG measures are good and which ones need improvement and how they can be improved. These contributions are used for developing proposals for the new YG scheme. When given a chance to be part of the decision making process, young people are eager to help.

Another very important way to reach out to young people is social media. They are present and very active on Facebook and Twitter where they also engage young people and promote their work.

Work of Trade Union Youth Plus on policy level so far:

- Participation in Slovenian "Youth Guarantee Campaign";
- Response to public policies (analysing/evaluating public policies and communicating their views on the policies in question), including: labour market reform, Resolution on the National Programme for Youth, Scholarship Act, Slovenia's Development Strategy;
- Creation and carrying out of an Erasmus+ project;
- Involvement in the campaign to abolish unpaid internships in the public sector in Slovenia, etc.

Trade Union Youth Plus has no people employed; all of them are activists. The work is financed through symbolic membership payment and through project work. Trade Union Youth Plus has become an important partner in Slovenian social dialogue, having access to consultations with the government and to media. It is also engaged in a broad network with other non-government organisations.



School programme to introduce youth into the world of labour

“*My First Workplace*” is a unique campaign of CITUB Bulgaria aimed at educating young people about their labour and social rights. Launched in 2011, the programme, besides CITUB, also involves the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Union of Bulgarian Teachers and the Youth Forum 21st Century, heads of schools and school graduates.



The campaign is directed towards secondary-school graduates. It aims to enhance the civil consciousness of the students; to facilitate their transition from school to the labour market; to stimulate their successful adaptation to the world of labour; to promote their career development; and to inform them about different measures against the shadow economy.

Manuals for graduates and teachers were worked out, a special website was elaborated (<http://mfwp.labour-bg.net>), and nine subject leaflets (about finding work, starting work, necessary documents, remuneration, working time, health and safety at work, possibilities for education and training, social security contributions, quitting work, work abroad, etc.) were published. An attractive youth video, promoting decent work for young people entering the labour market, was created (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rF8CE6W9M3E>).

Dig a hole and find a barrel of beer

Each year ACV-CSC Youth from Belgium organises a geocaching. Every year the union produces an info brochure about the particular labour law for student work. A few years ago they decided to find a new way to give and spread out this information especially aiming at students.



The competition “Dig a hole, find a barrel of beer” originated from this goal. The setup is easy: students can register themselves or their group on ACV-CSC’s website. During a month each week they receive three questions about the labour law; correct answers can be found in the brochure or on the website. Each right answer leads closer to the barrel and narrows the search area. If they think they have localised the barrel, they can start digging for beer. A party is organised afterwards.

The advantage is that young unionists reach out to different groups of young people in their free time, they meet more friends, promote free membership for students and get positive experiences with unions.

LO Student Service in higher education – Organising students

Nine out of ten students in Norway work in addition to pursuing higher education studies. LO Student Service is designed to give students relevant information about rights in the working life, and offers membership in an LO-union. LO's central administration coordinates and facilitates the service's visual and communication design and materials, whereas LO's youth secretaries design and coordinate the implementation. They visit campuses to give advice to students concerning their particular work situation. Stands have a variety of giveaways and free coffee is arranged in order to generate more traffic to the stands. Activists are encouraged to attract attention by addressing union issues, debating political matters of particular interest to students, and running seminars on personal finance and trade union and student rights. The personal finance and rights' classes have proved to be in high demand. LO developed student membership as an introduction membership, which gives full access to different services and benefits; students are organised according to their part-time jobs or studies. The student membership foresees an agreement of LO unions to facilitate transfer of membership.



Youth initiative in Austria that promotes trade union achievements

Many collective agreements in Austria include two additional salaries in June and in November every year. Unfortunately, many people take this for granted and only a few people know that it was unions who pushed for and achieved such a benefit. Therefore, summer activities are organised in front of public swimming pool complexes to explain and inform the people about the benefit and its history. In winter, Advent calendars are handed out with the aim to raise awareness that there would not be Christmas bonuses without the trade unions! ÖGJ, the youth of ÖGB Austria, takes an active part in educating young people about the benefits achieved by trade union negotiations while trying to encourage them to become members. A special Trade Union Bus, which goes around the country to encourage and promote membership, was launched to get more visibility and coverage.



On the next pages you can find pictures of the photo action by the members of PERC and ETUC Youth Committee on the International Migration Day on 18 December 2014.

CFDT Working Time Festival



The idea of reaching young people and making them interested in trade unionism was the central aspect of the last Congress of CFDT France. France has only eight per cent of its work force organised in trade unions. The rate is even lower for young workers. So it is crucial to attract more people to trade unions and also to change people's views on trade unionism. For that purpose the CFDT and its youth organised a festival for young people under 35 years of age: young workers, unemployed, apprentices and students. No matter whether you're a member or not, the Working Time Festival is for all young people!



The festival was organised at the national sport and performance institute to show the link between sport and unionism. There were more than 2000 young people from all over Europe on a rainy Friday to learn from each other and to speak about youth involvement, Europe as a way of emancipation and empowerment, youth employment and sustainable transition, work-life balance, etc.

In a very cosy atmosphere with Zen music, participants could also rest a bit after their journey or just take time to focus on CFDT's publications. Different events and forums facilitated networking and acting together during the Working Time Festival.



IG Metall Youth for smooth transition from school to work

In 2009 - 2012 the German IG Metall affiliated to DGB was running a campaign called “*Operation Übernahme*” with the aim to ensure that dual apprenticeship – combination of study and employment at the workplace, - which was obligatory only for 12 months leads to stable employment. The campaign resulted in an obligation for a workplace, where a student had dual apprenticeship, to offer not limited by time secure job. This achievement was included in the collective agreement in 2012. With “*Operation Übernahme*”. the IG Metall youth has written a bit of trade union history



In the framework of this campaign IG Metall youth outreached 9 million people in social networks, organised a big demonstration with 20.000 young trade unionists in Cologne in 2011 and organised 905 smaller and bigger public actions all over the country. They managed to empower their youth structure and gained a lot of new young members, raised a good community spirit and got solidarity support from elder colleagues (www.operation-uebernahme.de).



FreeZbe Award by ACLVB-CGSLB

Since a couple of years annually the national committee of the Youth of Belgian ACLVB-CGSLB elects the “Golden Youth Delegate” in a ceremony that reminds Golden Ball award ceremony. The aim is to focus on the efforts young trade unionists invest in trade union work and to show respect and appreciation for these efforts, each year a *FreeZbe Award* is given to a young militant for his/ her special achievements and activism.



Every year three candidates are nominated and short films about the three candidates are developed that also include interviews. At the committee meeting the three candidates are called on to stage to present themselves, their short movies are demonstrated and then the winner is announced. All three candidates get a trade union sweater, while the winner is also awarded with an extra personalised gadget. Reward for activism could encourage others to follow!

You can find the movies on <http://freezbe.be/media/video/>

CGIL Youth campaign - 2014/2015

This campaign has been launched by CGIL Youth with two main **objectives**:

- To raise awareness of young people about the labour market reform; and to promote and support activities toward the national CGIL rally on 25 October and national General Strike on 12 December 2014 and all actions against the Jobs Act
- To create a space for developing and creating “fresh” narratives for campaigns and mobilizations and to organise assemblies with CGIL youth reps and youth NGOs at local level, connect and create networks, go beyond the usual trade union scope in terms of action.



The campaign engaged different tools and materials, including leaflets, social media (twitter account, Facebook page), tweet storming, website and dedicated materials for specific actions.

It has very clear and understandable demands:

1. A **contract** for all: the so called “contract with rising protection” must lead to the abolishment of the remaining unfair precarious contractual arrangements;

2. Real access to **maternity** benefits: some precarious contracts do not include access to paid maternity leave;
3. No discrimination in accessing **unemployment benefits**: many young people in precarious contracts are excluded because of too restrictive criteria or because on bogus self-employment;
4. **Self-employment**: bogus self-employment must come to an end, while real protection should be provided for genuine self-employed youngsters;
5. **Everyone represented**: all workers must enjoy full trade union rights, including the right to affiliation, to vote trade union reps and be voted!
6. **Jobs creation**: it is useless to change labour market regulations without creating jobs!

The symbol of the campaign is an umbrella with holes, representing the s.c. rising protection of the “Jobs Act”: a supposed protection that makes water leak all over you. The umbrellas have been used for several actions including flash mobs, general strike and rallies against the labour market reform. The slogan “X TUTTI” (for all) opposes the supposedly extended protection of the jobs act, which has in fact reduced overall protection for everybody.



Young Ukrainian miners demanding environmental justice

Young activists of the Independent Trade Union of Coal Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) affiliated to KVPU uses the World Day for Decent Work as an opportunity for carrying out public campaigns.

As an example, the NPGU Youth Committee conducted a campaign on 7 October 2014 under the motto “Justice for working people – justice for environment and climate change”. Activists marched to the professional college of the National Coal Mining University and young activists at the professional college distributed booklets and leaflets about the ecological problems in the region (Dnepropetrovsk oblast) and communicated key messages about how to prevent pollution at the coal mines. Young miners came to a meeting to express their concerns about the environment pollution and called upon the city administration to undertake sound and feasible steps towards elimination of pollution in the region. Young activists also called upon the government and businesses to be responsible and to transform ineffective technology at mines to effective, friendly-to-environment technology.

Leaders and activists note that as a result of this activity, the NPGU primary trade unions experience the increase of young newcomers in trade unions.



Annual magazine for job seekers and youth in Finland

“Teekkarin työkirja” is an annual magazine that provides information about jobs to students all around Finland. This publication contains concrete tips for job seeking. For example: job application and CV examples, tips for job interviews, different channels for finding open positions and instructions on creating a portfolio can all be found in the magazine. It has been published every year since 1994 and has become a great tool for over 20 000 students in Finland when their time to look for a job comes.



“Teekkarin työkirja” is a result of cooperation between Academic Engineers and Architects TEK (AKAVA) and Technical Universities and Faculties in Finland. The magazine is published and printed annually at the end of the year. It can be found at campuses all around the country.

Teekkarin työkirja can be found in social media on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook” (<http://www.teekkarintyokirja.fi/>).

School book for secondary school students about working life

In Hungary young people enter the labour market with a very limited knowledge about working life, therefore the LIGA, the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions, has developed a complex textbook for secondary school students that includes a broad knowledge on topics related to working life, and tips on communication, basics of finances and rights at work.



The textbook is accompanied by an exercise book and a teacher's guide. In the material there are a lot of interactive exercises and situation practises for skills development on how to behave at a job interview, how to search for a job and how to prepare a motivation letter, a CV, and also what trade unions are.

While developing the educational material, LIGA has organised roadshows all over the country, where relevant stakeholders (i.e. HR experts) explained to students what the requirements at a job interview are.



The textbook so far has been tested in 10 schools by 40 trained teachers reaching about 700 students. At the end of the testing period in spring 2015 LIGA Trade Unions organised a study competition amongst the trained students. Now it is time to lobby for integration of the 36 hours (36*45 minutes) educational course into the Hungarian curricula for secondary school graduates to improve their capacity to find first working place and to equip them with the “must know” of the working life.

Feedback shows that students were very interested in the topic and found it relevant to their realities, as it gave them a useful tool to prepare for working life. A teacher testing the material developed by LIGA said: *“If only my students were as interested listening to my other classes!”*



DGB Tour in Vocational schools

In Germany every apprentice or trainee has to attend a vocational school. To reach every young worker, **German DGB** Youth is touring the vocational schools in the country. Young volunteers team up with DGB employees to attend lessons and / or to inform young people in the schoolyards. It is important to show young workers how people of their own age support trade union movement and that being a member is not a boring thing but a creative and fun way to defend their rights.



If young people have problems at work they can directly discuss it with the unionists. Personal contact and offering of services targeting young people on the spot show how serious DGB takes problems of young people at the workplace. During the school tour the DGB also supplies the young people with information brochures and materials about different topics.

Building alliances with the youth society by FNPR Youth

Youth council of **FNPR- Russia** signed an agreement with Russian Federal Agency for Youth Affairs about joint work.

According to this agreement, Federal Agency for Youth Affairs has to invite young trade union moderators to their large youth forums and to give them an opportunity to communicate the advantages of being a trade unionist to the most active representatives of Russian youth. Such exchange was held during the Second Forum of Work Youth in December 2014 in Ekaterinburg, Russia.

FNPR Youth took part in a very important event in Russia's youth life. In 2015 in Seliger an International Youth Forum was organised with the participation of about 20.000 active young people.

FNPR young activists distributed leaflets about trade unions, offered consultation on labour law and sang trade union songs.



ITUC Youth for fair play in Qatar

The International Trade Union Confederation at their 3rd Congress in Berlin in 2014 called on FIFA Congress to impose five conditions on Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup, demanding them to take decisive action as global outrage over Qatar's attacks on workers' rights grows.

More than 1,000 workers have been killed by 2014 May already building the infrastructure that will deliver the World Cup, working under kafala – a form of modern-day slavery. Qatar's promises on labour laws have been purely cosmetic and it is time for FIFA to stand up for human rights.



ITUC Youth accompanied by famous football players organised a flashmob to give a voice for the ITUC demands that are to

- End kafala;
- Allow freedom of association and collective bargaining;
- A minimum wage for all workers;
- Introduce grievance procedures;
- Work with responsible international recruitment agencies.



Thank You!

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