Activating and empowering young members

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GEW Youth
Contents

• Create structures for young members
• Reflect on what young members want
• Activate young members
• Empower young members
GEW Youth (all members under 35)

- Federal youth meets three times a year
- Additional group for student members
- Students and youth have groups in each German state
- Bylaws guarantee youth seats in all committees
- Structures supported by staff to avoid problem of short-term involvement due to temporary nature of youth (university study, teacher training, age...)
- Young members and new members often have the same problems getting involved.
- Youth in education contexts means students, trainees and beginners—age of involvement different from other trade unions
Reflection

• Broschure: Ten building blocks for a moving trade union
  – Suggestions from youth for best practice with new members
• Survey: 7000 members under 35 were asked what keeps them from getting more involved
  – Time, moment in life/career, lack of information
Activate young members

• Two conferences for active members (2016, 2018) bringing upcoming young members together with trade union leadership
  – Workshops on organizational development
• Conferences for and by youth (2012, 2016, 2020)
  – 150 young active members from each state
  – Networking, time to develop papers to influence „grown-ups“
• Give us time, money and staff support ->
  Youth do trade union
Empower young members

• Results of survey:
  – Students are more interested in the politics of trade unionism and will get more involved. Beginners are overwhelmed, 30-somethings have small children
    • Caveat: Students work on weekends! Does their union involvement cost them income?
  – Colleagues need more time to get involved
    • Fewer committees? Paid involvement? Does local involvement require federal knowledge?
  – Colleagues need to know how to get involved
    • Transparent online meeting schedule
    • Personal recruitment is most effective
Empower young (and new) members

• Reflect meeting culture
  – Are times, places, ways of speaking friendly to people who have children? For rank-and-file members who work full time? For people who do not speak union language? (=Acronyms)

• Reflect recruitment and leadership development
  – Are women stuck at the middle leadership level?
  – Is every trade union debate only between old men?
Closing appeal

We are not your children. We are trade unionists now.