

INDUSTRIAL UNIONS MUST ACT TO INCLUDE YOUNG WORKERS



Recruiting and engaging young workers is an existential question for industrial unions in Europe. Unionising younger workers is the only way to ensure the long-term viability of our organisations whilst tackling the crisis of youth unemployment, poverty, precarity and low pay.

In May 2022, industriAll Europe's Executive Committee adopted the Youth Working Group's action plan. It commits industriAll Europe and its affiliates to concrete steps to improve the involvement of young workers in the labour movement. Since then, the Youth Working Group has been working on delivering national action plans – find out more overleaf.

The Youth Working Group also commissioned a study to identify what steps are being taken by affiliates to engage young workers and what types of representation for young workers are most effective. It found that:

- ☛ **Young members make up only 15.3% of membership of the unions surveyed, with the share of young members being lower than those over 54.**
- ☛ **Reduced or free union membership can help attract young workers, but on its own it is not enough.**








- ☛ **Unions need formal youth structures and these need to be given adequate financial resources and staff.**
- ☛ **While young workers feel they are listened to about issues directly affecting young people, the majority do not feel their views are adequately represented in wider union decision making.**
- ☛ **Youth structures on their own are not enough; young workers need to be given reserved seats with voting rights on union bodies, including the Executive Committee.**
- ☛ **When youth structures have sufficient staff and resources, they are more active in training other young members and promoting the union to non-members, than those which are under-resourced.**
- ☛ **Where youth structures are well-resourced, this translates into more organising and recruitment of young workers. Giving young workers a voice in the union and resourcing them to conduct trade union activities pays off with more activism and new membership.**

Turn over to read the study's recommendations to improve the inclusion and engagement of young workers.

**Young Workers in industriAll Europe
are taking action - We need your support!**



IndustriAll Europe's Youth Working Group has already made huge progress since the Youth Action Plan was adopted one year ago. We have:

-  **Secured 25 national action plans in 12 countries, developed by our young members in their respective unions;**
-  **Organised 10 seminars for young members to implement the national action plans;**
-  **Advocated for youth structures in seven unions so the union can better respond to the concerns of young workers and increase membership;**
-  **Developed new internal and external communications strategies in 7 unions, including improving social media presence to reach out to young workers;**
-  **Trained young workers on trade union values, recruitment and negotiation, so they can take up more roles in the union;**
-  **Pushed for the appointment of youth representatives in two unions where they did not previously exist;**
-  **Made increasing the density of young workers a priority: many national plans have set the ambitious target of a 5-6% increase in one year.**

The Youth Action Plan - approved by the Executive Committee in 2022 - sets out a series of recommendations for better youth inclusion.

Our study (see overleaf) backs up these demands with evidence. It shows that giving young workers resources and representation within the union increases youth engagement and delivers a more active and dynamic union.

The study makes several key recommendations:

- 01 Unions should offer reduced or free membership to young workers, but it must be coupled with a plan to involve young members and turn them into activists.**
- 02 Youth structures are necessary to involve young workers, but they need to be properly resourced to be effective.**
- 03 Young workers should have reserved seats, with full voting rights, on decision-making bodies, including executive committees.**
- 04 Give young workers time and resources to train other young members and inspire new activists.**
- 05 All unions should have strategies for recruiting young workers and involving them fully in the life of the union.**

IndustriAll Europe's Youth Working Group has two clear demands for the Mid-Term Conference:

To all affiliated unions:



Young workers must have a voice at the table!

To industriAll Europe:

Young workers need a voice on the Executive Committee!

