



WORKSHOP BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

Education Trade Unions and young members: Embracing young members in the education trade unions



The ETUCE Resolution '[Education Trade Unions and Youth](#)', adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference in Athens on 27-28 November 2018, highlights the vulnerable situation of young teachers and other education personnel in the labour market and a number of specific challenges they face in their professional life. The Resolution therefore calls on education trade unions to better support young teachers, academics and other education personnel, and to **enhance the work on attracting, embracing and activating their young members**.

With the view to examine the existing experiences of ETUCE member organisations' work with young members and to collect information about their specific needs and contribution to the work of education trade unions, ETUCE carried out a survey¹ among its member organisations in spring 2020. The key outcomes of the survey showed that there is a **significant diversity** not only in the share of young members among trade unions affiliates (from 1 % to 72%), but also in the criteria of defining young members: different age limits, including or excluding students, some definitions depending on the career stages, etc. Furthermore, the survey report shows the diversity and complexity of how young members' structures are organised within education trade unions. At the same time, 32% of the respondents reported that they had no such structures in place.

On 17 September 2020, ETUCE in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) organised its first [workshop](#) on "Education Trade Unions and Young Members" which provided a **platform for education trade unions to exchange information on good practices of whether and how they work with and/or organise their young**

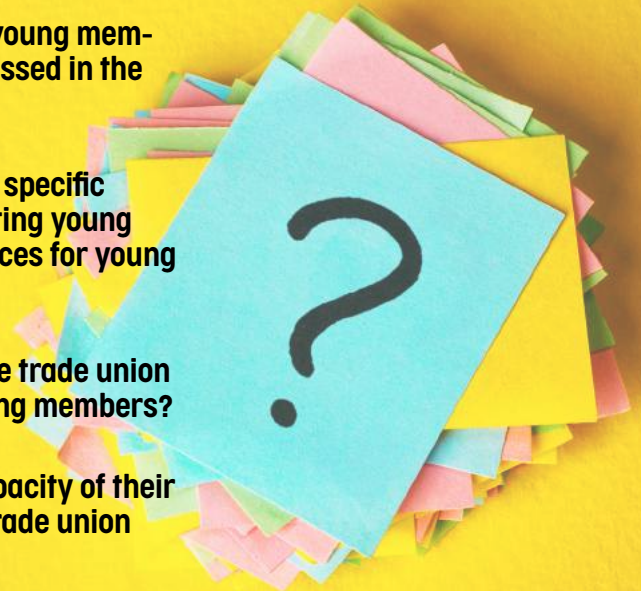
¹ Please see the survey report in the Annex.



members. Despite of the evident diversity in working with young members, ETUCE member organisations have expressed a strong interest in strengthening this work to represent the needs of young members by initiating local, regional, national and European initiatives on topics that are appealing to young people, as well as to bring them to meetings, expert groups, and social dialogue negotiations for a better mix of point of views.

Following the fruitful discussion at the ETUCE-FES workshop on the topics of interest for ETUCE affiliates regarding organising and representing young members, **the ETUCE pre-Conference workshop aims at addressing topics of relevance and interest of young members and building the capacity of education trade unions to renew as well as to attract and activate young members:**

- **What are the key topics of relevance and interests for young members in education trade unions and how are they addressed in the trade unions' policies and work programmes?**
- **What are the benefits and challenges of organising the specific structures within education trade unions for representing young members and developing trade union's activities/services for young members?**
- **Which tools and approaches are especially useful in the trade union work on renewal and on, attracting and activating young members?**
- **How can education trade unions train and build the capacity of their young members to actively engage and contribute in trade union work?**





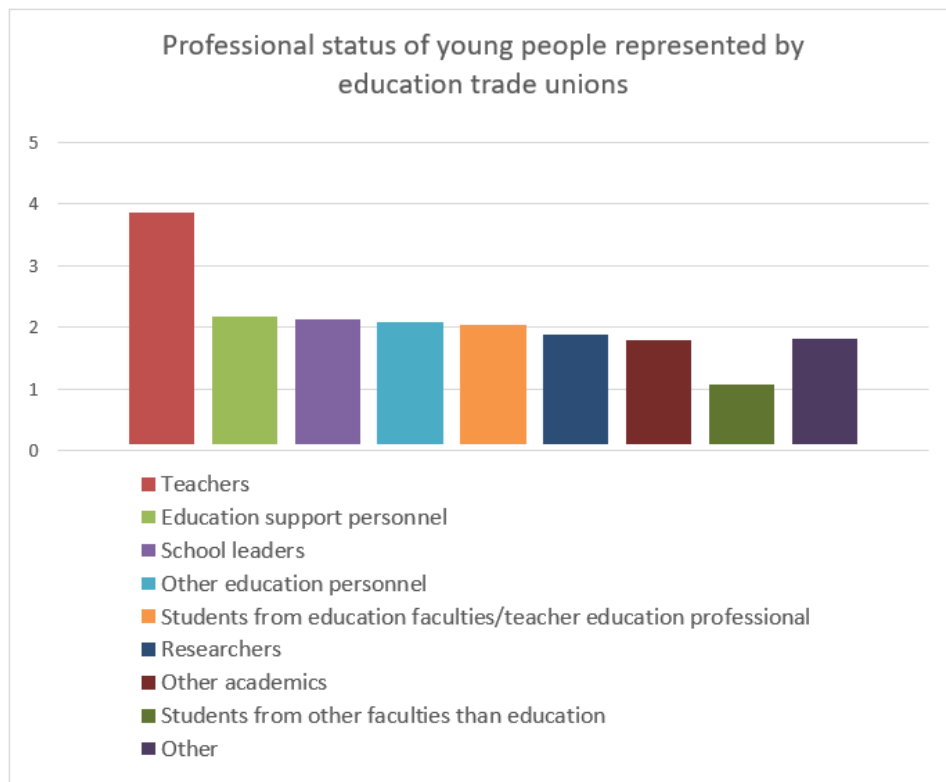
ANNEX

ETUCE Survey “ Education Trade Unions and Young Members”

Following the ETUCE Resolution ‘Education Trade Unions and Youth’, adopted by the ETUCE Special Conference in Athens on 27-28 November 2018, ETUCE has implemented a survey among its member organisations aiming to examine the existing experiences of ETUCE member organisations’ work with young members, at local, regional and national levels. The survey also sought to collect information about their specific needs and contribution to the work of education trade unions.

Outcomes of the ETUCE survey on Education Trade Unions and Youth are the following:

- **54 education trade unions participated in the survey from 16 non-EU² countries and 23 EU countries** covering all education sectors and including support personnel and adult education workers (with majority from ECE, Primary and Secondary education).
- The **percentage of young members** ranges from 1 % (UED, Denmark) to 72% (NTUESCWU, Uzbekistan). On average, young members make up to 23% of education trade unions. Some respondents noted that their membership statistics does not take into account the age of their affiliates.
- Nearly all those education trade unions who have a definition for young members determine young members in terms of age. The **upper age limit** varies among member organisations ranging between 30 to 40 years. The majority of respondents (47%) define young members as those members who are below the age of 35. 27 % do not have a definition. While a number of trade unions have a more flexible definition, **depending on the career stages** (e.g. ‘young teachers until 10th years of service (teaching)’: ‘early stage or early career researchers’; ‘new teachers’, ‘PhD candidates’).
- The majority of young members in respondent trade unions are **teachers** (please see the diagramme below). Education trade unions also represent a significant number of young people among education support personnel, school leaders, other education personnel, and students from education faculties. Several respondents pointed out that students from other disciplines but majoring in teaching are also widely represented among their affiliates. The high number of responses in the category ‘other’ shows a **significant diversity among education trade unions’ definition and representation of young members**.

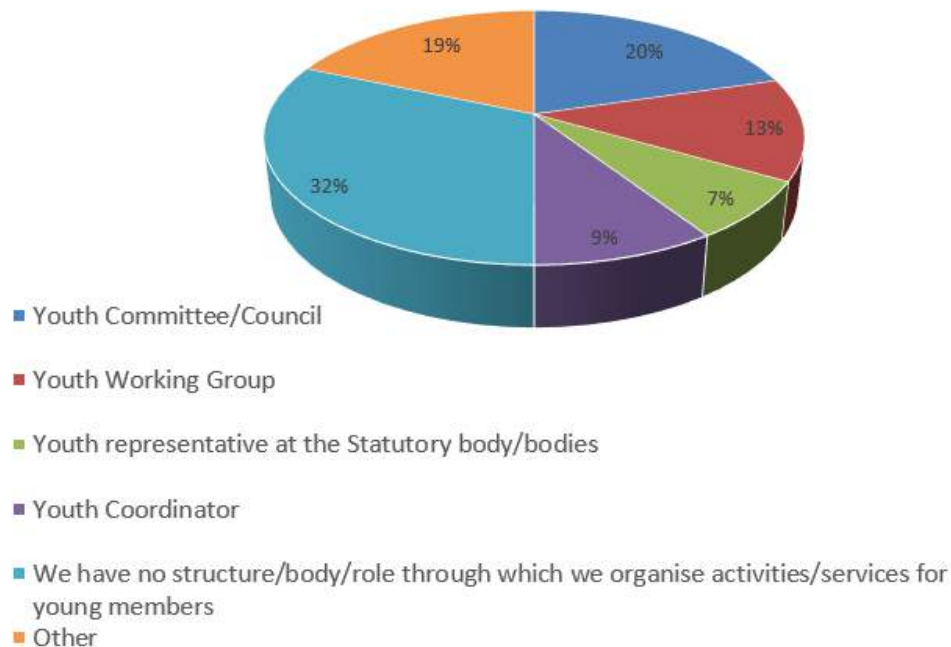


- As for student representation: the **majority of respondents (39%) stated that they do not represent students**. Around 15 % of respondents indicated that although students are not TU members, education trade unions work with them, e.g. supporting various student events, consulting on law projects, cooperating with student unions on higher education issues, representing undergraduate student teachers on collective issues, etc. For 18 % of the responding member organisations the student union is a branch of their respective unions. Whilst 17 % informed that students are members of their education trade unions but are not organised in student unions, 11% explained complex relationship (e.g. 'student teachers are a branch within our union but may also belong to specific student unions').
- When it comes to young members, 67% stated that they pay full **membership fees**. However, there is a wide variety of arrangements for young members and especially students, ranging from reduced membership fee and special arrangements for certain criteria to no membership fee at all. For instance, student and affiliates teaching on probation can have free periods of membership prior to full membership, but this is related to student status/job role and not age. All young members - i.e. teachers and lecturers under the age of 35 - pay full membership fees after they finish their probationary period. Some responding unions replied that doctoral candidates can pay a reduced fee regardless of their age.
- The **education sectors** with the majority proportion of young members are primary education (33 %), followed by secondary education (26 %) and early childhood education (19 %).



32% of the responding education trade unions have no **structures for young members** in place. Of those who do have one or several structures, 20% have a Youth Committee or Council, 13% have Youth Working Group, 9% have a Youth Coordinator and 7% have a Youth Representative at the Statutory body/bodies. (Please see diagramme below) Some respondents noted that even though they do not have a dedicated structure for young members, they have various mechanisms of ensuring that the issues of young members are included in their union policy (e.g. 'an informal system of meeting with representatives of the student unions to discuss their issues and concerns'; 'offering opportunities for young members (under 27 years of age) to participate in Youth Conferences'; 'organising specific activities for young or rather «new» teachers', etc.)

Structures for young members

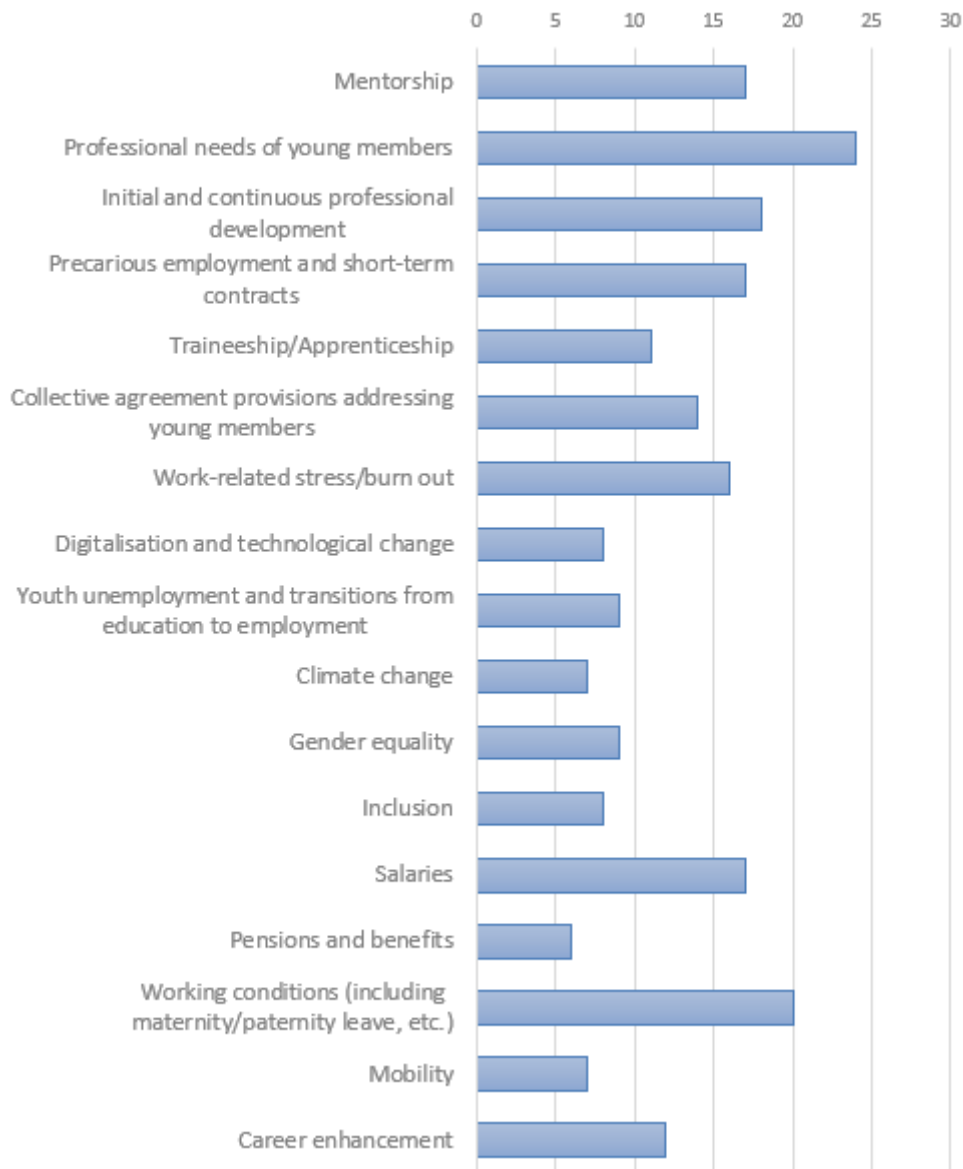


Regarding the **role of these structures** where they exist, 20% of the respondents opted for voting rights, 28% for advisory or consultative role, 15% for working on specific topics, 6% for organising trade union education, and 31% for other (e.g., 'students can have voting rights in every Committee with the exception of executive boards and trade union council'; 'youth committees work on specific topics related not only to the specific needs of young employees and also help to organise young members across the organisation'; 'working groups can have voting rights in the general assemblies, and an advisory role; they also work on specific topics', 'full voting rights in decision making bodies').

The **topics which are mostly cited as relevant for young members** are professional needs of young members; working conditions (including maternity/ paternity leave, etc.); initial and continuous professional development; and the prevention of work-related stress/burn-out. Many respondents noted that all mentioned topics are relevant for their young affiliates.



Topics relevant for young members



Regarding the **involvement of young people in the collective bargaining and social dialogue mechanisms**, 32 % of respondents indicated that there is a practice of involving young members ahead of negotiations in their organisations; 28% through formal communication and information practices with the employer or government; 31% through formal negotiations with the employer or government; and 9% through formal consultations with the employer or government.