

Towards a just and green transition with trade unions and workers


Next Economy Lab

Our activities on Just Transition



Why do we work on Just Transition?

- Workers expect increasing costs of living through green transition (e.g. CO2 taxation)
- Workers fear the loss of their jobs, especially in carbon-intensive industries (e.g. automotive, steel, energy etc.)
- A loss of jobs often comes with a loss of identity (high identification with company / sector)
- The same time it is clear that we need urgent and fast climate action in order to combat the climate crisis

 This leads toward a **climate of insecurity & the feeling of powerlessness of workers.**

Transition conflicts are arising.

Anti-democratic parties instrumentalize this situation.





What we do

We work with trade unions to ensure that employees can actively shape a green and just transition through participation and co-determination — turning powerlessness into agency.



How we do it

1. Showing what a just and green future can look like
2. Strengthening skills and knowledge on Just Transition
3. Building bridges between unions and the climate movement

TM2



Folie 4

TM1 für mich waren diese Zwischenüberschriften von der Message her voll gut, aber ohne Kontext auch bisschen verwirrend.
Deswegen vielleicht hier so Intro Folie?

Teresa Merz; 2025-10-28T11:19:01.542

TM2 hab die jetzt bisschen mehr ausformuliert damit das vielleicht klarer wird, aber ist eben gleichzeitig dann auch nicht mehr so schön prägnant.

Teresa Merz; 2025-10-28T11:21:13.262

TM2 0 Und diese globale Sache noch zu building bridges gemacht. Aber weiß nicht ob das für dich auch Sinn ergibt?

Teresa Merz; 2025-10-28T15:09:00.875

Project examples



Showing what the future can look like

TM1

Folie 6

TM1 Vielleicht auch unnötiger Zusatz, aber dann wird das nochmal klarer.

Teresa Merz; 2025-10-28T13:29:14.341



How do we envision the future of our jobs?

What can we produce in our company if we don't produce car parts?

The conversion of the automotive industry

- Workshops with workers of the automotive supplier industry in the region North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
- Participants...
 - ...analyze their roles in the combustion engine production value chain
 - ...understand how climate change and the transformation of the automotive sector are interconnected
 - ...develop a future, sustainable vision for their company and their jobs
- Collaboration with the local branches of the union IG Metall, work councils and management of the companies



Strengthening Skills



Participants from the following sectors are involved:

- Health
- Public Transport
- Steel
- Automotive
- Wood & Plastic
- Energy
- Pharmaceutical & chemical industry

Teaming up for a Just Transition

- Cross union pilot project involving the three biggest unions in Germany (IG Metall, ver.di)
- 45 union members are completing a 1.5-year training program on Just Transition topics such as:
 - Climate change, planetary boundaries & inequality
 - The transition of our economic sectors & perspective of workers
 - (Legal) possibilities of co-determination & union organizing
 - Project development and management
- Participants develop projects that aim at implementing a Just and Green Transition at their workplaces
- Professional coaching & networking possibilities



Leading question:

How are workers in Germany and workers in the Global South connected?

Educational events: workers in the Global South and us

- Educational event series reaching out to members of ver.di - the German union that comprises the service-sector
- Webinar series & in-person conference on a variety of topics:
 - A short holiday trip to Turkey? The impact of international tourism
 - Value chains and the European Supply Chain Act
 - Electrification or mobility shift – what do we need?
 - Etc.



Building bridges



Skills and strategy development in automotive industry in Central Eastern Europe

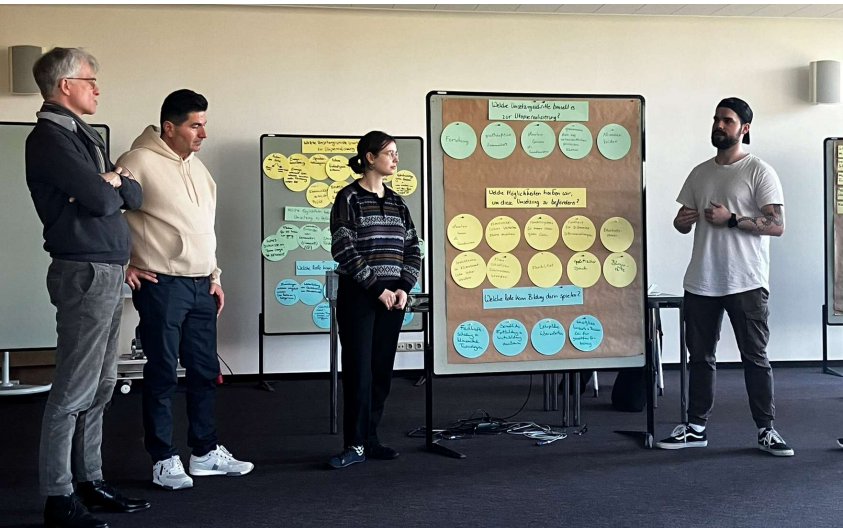
TM1

- Supporting a just transition in key automotive regions (CZ, PL, HU, SK)
- Building regional capacity for climate-friendly and socially fair mobility
- Training unions, employers & local actors on future-oriented strategies & social dialogue
- Developing digital tools for participation, strategy & self-assessment

TM1

Würde ich zu Unterpunkt zwei packen.

Teresa Merz; 2025-10-28T15:19:30.379



Future Labs: Unionists & climate activists

- Future Labs with participants from IGBCE, (the German union that organizes the mining, chemistry and energy sector) and climate activists
- Core questions:
 - How does a climate neutral industry look like?
 - How can we collaborate in order to achieve this?

„Yes, it was me that has been mining coal the last 35 years. But it was us that has been burning coal for our over-consumption.“

“I want recognition for using my time as a climate activists to fight for a better future for all of us — not to be labeled a nuisance in society.“

Participants of our Future Labs

Questions?



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