

## Young Workers: Challenges Now and in the Future

### Questions:

1. What it took for you to be a leader
2. What challenges you faced
3. How I overcame the challenges
4. What challenges I still face
5. What is my advice and tips to young women unionist seeking to lead and shape the labour Movement

We are meeting at a time of tremendous difficulty for ordinary women and their families. Particularly for us coming from developing countries.

The facts as previous speakers have mentioned are an elephant in the room, we can no longer ignore and go around it.

Women and young women are twice likely to be affected by government cuts more than men, Women are being disproportionately hit by the pay freezes, pension reforms and massive jobs cut in the public sector.

An EPZ young woman in Tanzania is continuously bearing the blunt of an economic crisis largely caused by the testosterone-fuelled antics of male bankers in the developed country.

My 21 year old sister who has just graduated in Kenya with a degree in Microbiology is being told to start her own business because there are no jobs.

My single mother friend in Kampala with her four months old twins is unable to find work because of lack of childcare while the government is liberalizing the National Social Security Fund.

In Kenya the minimum wage for a domestic worker has been raised around 120USD and mandatory contribution to the National Social Security Fund from the employer. The young mother in Kenya will not afford to have a domestic worker with most of the young women earning less than 250usd a month.

My aunty a receptionist at a company that the government has just privatized, who is also widow in her early fifties with two children in high school and one in university has just been made redundant and we know she will never work again. Not forgetting the effects of policies being passed

I grew up in a family with a long history in labour struggles in Kenya. I am extraordinarily lucky to be a daughter of one the greatest unionist and pioneers of trade union movement in Kenya. I was brought up to share values and a passion for rights, equality and social justice.

Trade union by mistake unemployment after One and half year of unemployment, 5 years job experience, 2005 when I 24, Accounts office, gender officer, training officer curriculum development, productivity practitioner, Project officer in charge of Social dialogue, Lobby and advocacy public relations, Commonwealth foundation, TUDCN,

Being a woman my leadership is informed **by my personality traits, strengths, and weakness and some of those are in turn informed by my gender and culture around feminity**, but my leadership role is not limited by my gender and I am not limited to a particular path just because I paint my nails and wear lip gloss and often default to an emotionally pathetic place.

Be continually mindful that you are solely **incharge of your career**, you might be lucky to have mentors and other wonderful advisors and role models along the way but only you know what makes you happy.

**Learn to be- rather than to do**, stop lying awake at night and thinking about all of the things you need to do the next day, learn instead to go to sleep dreaming about the type of person you want to be. Learning to be calm and confident and there no way I was going to end up calm and confident by thinking of the 25 things on my to do list. Preparing my mind in the way has had a profound effect on my ability to cope with all sorts of challenging situations

Never under tell yourself **Take full account of your achievements**

**Be interested** – employed as Management Trainee not eligible to be in the Trade Union.

If you don't take **proactive** step then nothing will change – Capacity building, participation and contribution to programmes and activities

**Start early and build. Build relationships** No matter where you are in your career, take every opportunity to build a network of relationships both within and beyond your organisation. These are authentic, mutually rewarding relationships, in which both participants contribute to help each other.

**My advice and probably the only one you should remember is as a woman please STOP trying to lead like a man.** You are not a man. You are chasing a position and not a higher purpose- Leadership is about caring about something beyond yourself, and leading others even if it means taking a back seat and ending up with no seat at all. You follow rules instead of breaking them status quo is the great enemy of leadership. Leadership is nothing if understanding the need for change and then possessing the ability to deliver it.

What EATUC is doing

Summit

Secretariat is a young one with young staff

Amendment of the constitution

Committee of Experts (age, gender,)

Youth committee

Youth representative at the Summit

Youth mentorship programme through internship

Youth Technical conference (Youth and opportunities in the informal sector, social security and youth, employment )

Co-operating partners and the kind of programmes.

Outreach campaigns

NGO, Culture and tradition