

# LabourStart | Results Survey Monkey

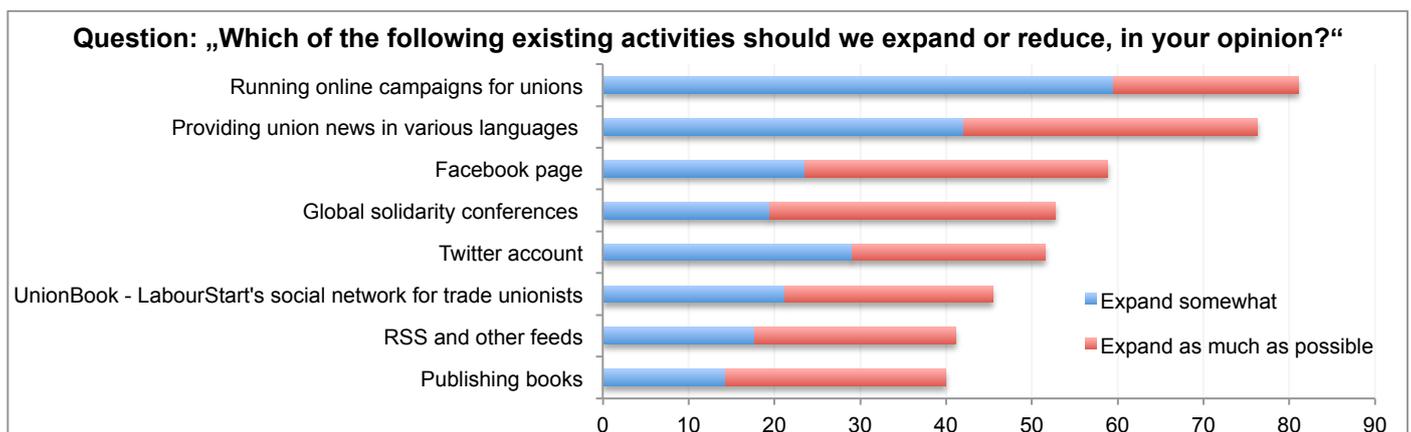
For more than 17 years LabourStart has provided a digital platform for the international trade union movement and workers solidarity with its news and online campaigns. Annual surveys have researched the requirements and needs of the grassroots and helped to evolve LabourStart progressively in the past. Now LabourStart wants to go further and advance its development. In September 2015, there will be a LabourStart Strategic Retreat in Brussels and in preparation for this, a survey within the volunteer activists was conducted.

Sixty LabourStart correspondents and translators participated in the English-language survey on the future of LabourStart from October 2014 to January 2015. The responses came from almost all parts of the world. The participation from Europe with 27 participants was highest. But LabourStart activists, among others from North America (12), Asia (6), Africa (3), Australia and New Zealand (8) participated in the survey, too. Two-thirds of the participants were men, and just a quarter of respondents were younger than 40. The lion's share with 50% was the age group of 40 to 60 years and a further 25% were older than 60. Almost one in five respondents has been involved for more than 10 years in LabourStart. Furthermore, 16% of the respondents were new volunteers who joined LabourStart within the last year.

## Requirements for future short, medium and long-term goals and tasks

The survey concentrated mainly on the strategic development of LabourStart, its potential, weaknesses and future organisational internal structure. The participants answered the question of future tasks and goals of LabourStart. In the responses, several new tasks appeared such as training opportunities for online campaigns for trade unions, the formation of a research and reporting unit, building an international platform for discussion and communication platforms for LabourStart activists. In general, the focus was on how to bring international trade union issues to the grassroots and strengthening the international trade union network.

In particular the results highlighted the improvement of LabourStart's online presence, whether through an "upgrade the technology" or "freshening up the branding". Moreover, the participants of the survey clearly support that LabourStart should expand its activities in terms of online campaigns (80%). The same positive picture emerges when asked about the expansion of LabourStart news. Nearly half of respondents also want more LabourStart activities on Facebook and Twitter. By contrast, UnionBook was seen very controversial. 27% were in favor of cancelling, 21% were undecided and 21% were in favor of more activities in Union Book.



However, the respondents cited not only the public presence as one of the objectives of LabourStart, but also a stronger presence within the trade union movement, for example, by expanding the mailing list or the creation of offline groups. These local groups and networks could on the one hand publicize campaigns, attract new activists and integrate or accompany creative campaigns, e.g. with offline actions. The proposal to be more active offline, e.g. to establish offline groups, therefore won high approval, as well as the development of new online tools. With 58% the proposed regional conferences or meetings were popular as well. Moreover, it was important for the respondents that LabourStart devotes its internal structure and strategies for continuous and high revenue.

### **Strengths and opportunities of LabourStart**

The potential of LabourStart was seen among respondents mostly in direct participation, e.g. in the form of online campaigns. The online campaigns turned out as a particular strength of LabourStart and also reflected the individual interests in LabourStart of the respondents. Second, the news service was pointed out: "The worldwide information and awareness raising on trade union and workers rights". In addition the international character and the fact that Labour Start is supported by volunteer activists is given great importance. LabourStart as an independent and open trade union network is frequently named as a special feature and strength.

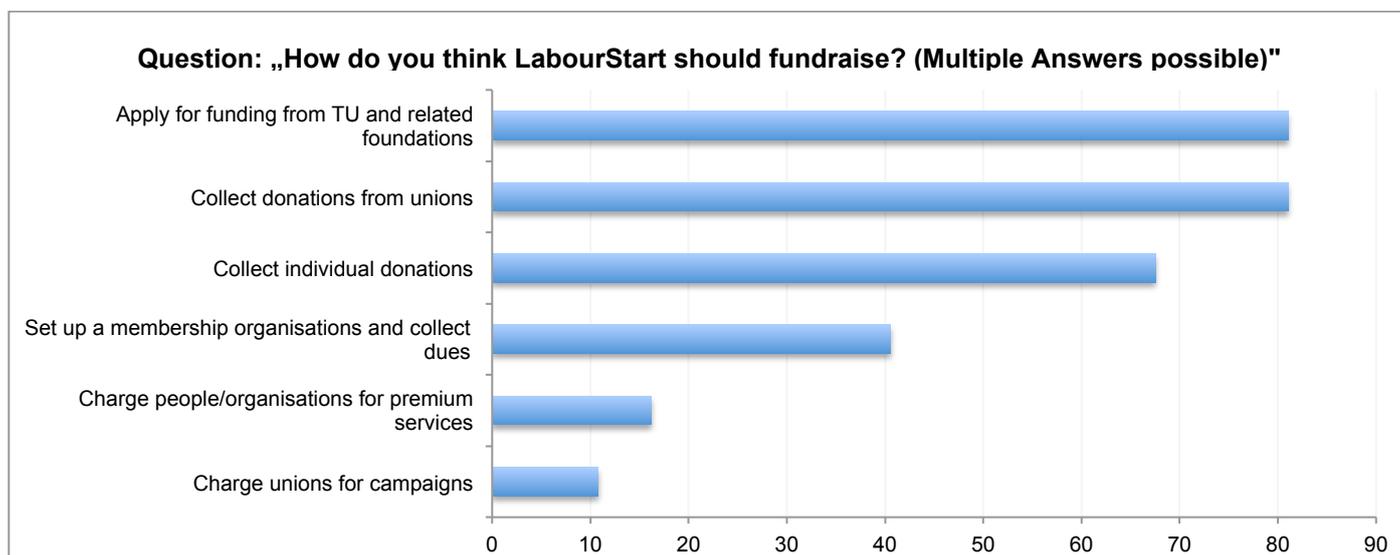
As far as the improvement of LabourStart goes, many participants in the survey agreed: the technology. This is often assessed by respondents as unattractive, unfashionable and poor for mobile devices. Moreover, the participation structure is seen critically: "I fear that not all those in the LS mailing list feel equally involved." And so, more interaction and participation is requested and support in the lack of skills to be able to participate. In addition, the scope of LabourStart was often the focus of perception. Topics and groups such as the unemployed and precarious workers, young people, or even trade unionists from Africa should be addressed more by LabourStart and be present. Overall, the request for stronger internationalisation, e.g. on the language coverage, is clear.

### **Participation structures and financing models for LabourStart**

Regarding the current participation of respondents in LabourStart one thing was clear: The major interest in LabourStart are the online campaigns and the news service. Almost all respondents stated that they support the online campaigns (93%). And these were promoted by 81%. Just over a third of respondents have even proposed a campaign in the past. The news on the Labour Start website is read by 68% of respondents regularly. Not surprisingly, the participation among respondents with regard to the posting of news and reports (61%) or by translation activities for LabourStart (18%). Of particular note, a fifth of the participants in the survey has already donated money to LabourStart.

When asked in what way the respondents could imagine to be more active in LabourStart, two-thirds of respondents would spend more effort to promote the campaigns in their union or in their country. The highest willingness to engage more fully in LabourStart was the application of online campaigns (67%) and the setting of union news (37%). Less attractive were the activities of a translation of campaigns and mailings with 13%. There is also interest to establish offline groups (27%). Unfortunately, the respondents named a lack of time and this constrains further involvement. A clearer structure of LabourStart, more interactive communication with other volunteers, the integration of other working languages, or assistance in the technical IT skills would also encourage the involvement of individuals.

Regarding the question of how LabourStart should be structured as an organisation in the future, the responses draw a very mixed picture. 36% of the respondents want a loose network, coordinated by one editor and a group of correspondents -- similar to how LabourStart is currently organised. Only 14% of respondents support LabourStart with formal membership. The idea of representative structures or internally delegated structures did not convince the respondents. A mere 8% can imagine LabourStart as a network of delegated union representatives. Ultimately, the majority of respondents (30%) found it difficult to answer this question. Although the idea of a formal membership organisation was not popular, two thirds of respondents would join LabourStart as a member if such an organisation were set up. Only 3% definitely were against it.



Taking up the question of membership, just 40% support a membership fee as a financial model for LabourStart. It became clear that Labour Start as a non-profit organisation should stay that way. Therefore, all ways of fundraising were supported by the respondents. The highest approval with 82% was fundraising by both trade unions and of union-affiliated foundations. Similarly, more than two thirds of respondents were in favor of collecting individual donations. By contrast, the idea to charge unions for campaigns or other premium services was not popular. The willingness to participate in fundraising and asking unions or individuals for donations ranged from 23-38%.

The results from the survey show an initial interest in the future of Labour Start. Potentials, ideas and existing strengths became visible. A good basis for the LabourStart Retreat in September and continuing debates. Thanks for your participation in the survey.