



# Political Youth Organizations World Wide: How do They Work?

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Assessment and Best Practices

by Frederik Ferié, IFLRY Vice President  
on the occasion of the seminar "Youth Organizations: The Vision and the Application"  
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# Content

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- IFLRY = International Federation of Liberal Youth
  - IFLRY is the **global umbrella organisation** of liberal and radical youth and student organisations
  - Founded in **1947** in Cambridge, United Kingdom
  - Today almost **100 member organisations** (MOs)
  - In total: representing **more than 2 million young liberals all over the world**

# IFLRY's Membership

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- Different **types of membership**
  - Candidate Member / Full Member
  - Observer Member
- Different **background** of members organizations
  - Party youth wings
  - Completely independent political youth organizations

# Case Study: Junge Liberale Germany

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- Case shows a couple of best practices that are not unique specifically to Junge Liberale (JuLis), but are shared by other successful youth wings of political parties, especially - but not only - in Europe



# History

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- Founded in **1980**
- Foundation based entirely on the **initiative of several young FDP members** – at that time **against** the will of the party's leadership
- **Only incident** in Germany's political history that a political party **replaced** their youth organization with a different one
- **First youth organization** that covered entire Germany **after the reunification** with the German Democratic Republic in 1990

# JuLis Today

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- About **10,000 members** all over Germany
- Age of members between **14 and 35 years**
- **Official youth wing** of the Free Democratic Party (FDP)
- Full member of **IFLRY** and **LYMEC** (European Liberal Youth)

# Organizational Structure

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- Federal association headed by **federal board**, elected on a **yearly** basis
  - One President (Johannes Vogel, 26)
  - One Treasurer
  - Three Vice Presidents, who are elected for specific tasks (Public Relations, Organizational Affairs and Political Program)
  - Six Board Members, whose function in the board is only determined after their election (International Officer, liaison to other organizations, PR support, campaigns, new members liaison, ... )
  - One Ombudsman
- Additionally, the board **co-opts** members whose position is crucial for the organization (Executive Director, international board members, internet specialist, legal counsel, editor in chief of member magazine)

# Organizational Structure

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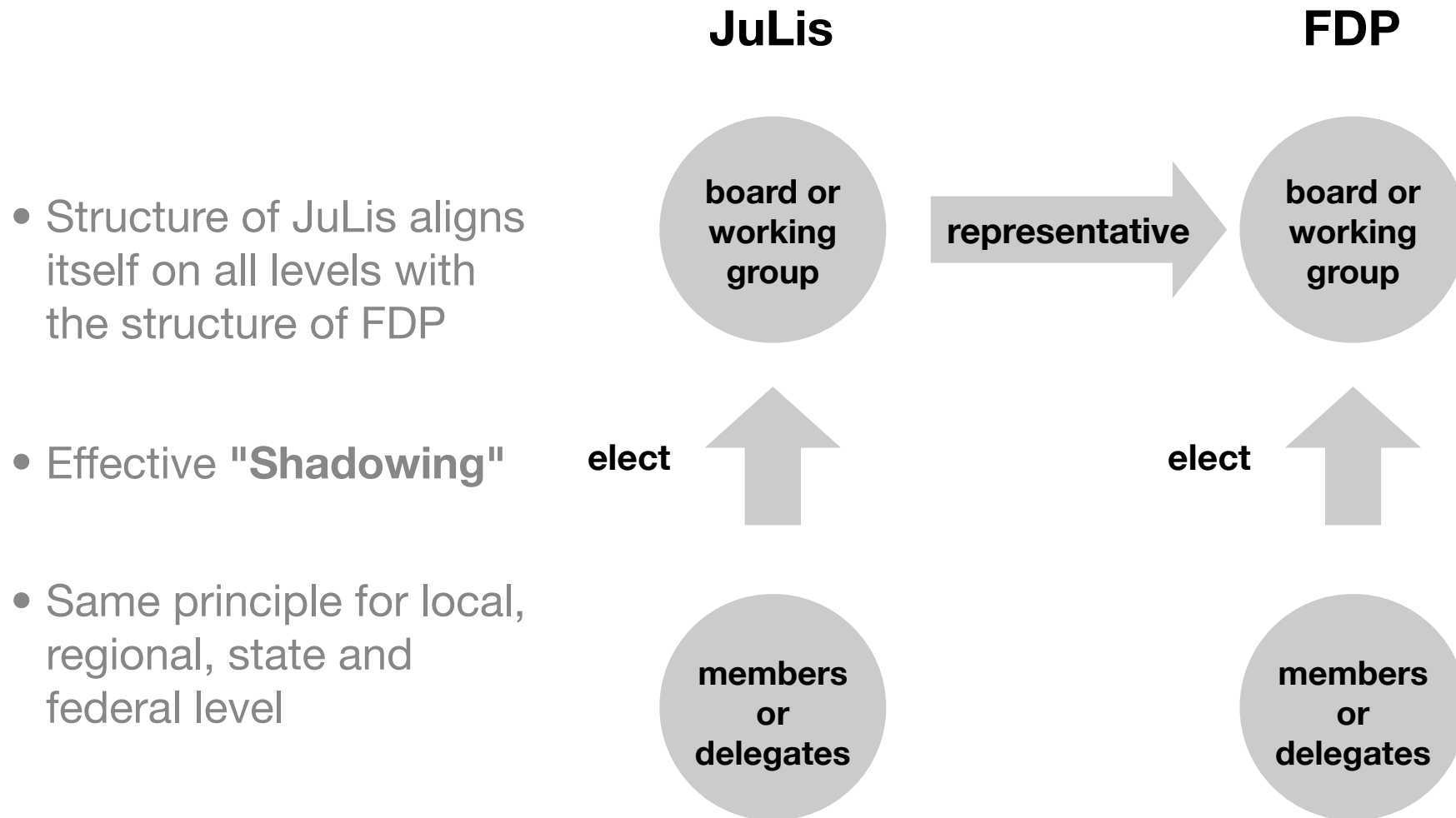
- **Two federal congresses every year**, locations rotate around Germany
  - Spring: electoral congress
  - Autumn: program congress
- Congress is **highest decision making body**
- **Delegates** are elected within the state associations
- **16 State associations** - each with own board and congress structure (mostly similar to federal level)
- Eight **federal working groups** on different program topics

# Financial Background

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- **Annual budget** of the federal organization: € 300,000
- Major part: **governmental funding** for political youth organizations and **membership fees**
- **Less than € 20,000 from FDP**
- More than € 25,000 from **private donors**

# Relationship with Mother Party



# Political Program

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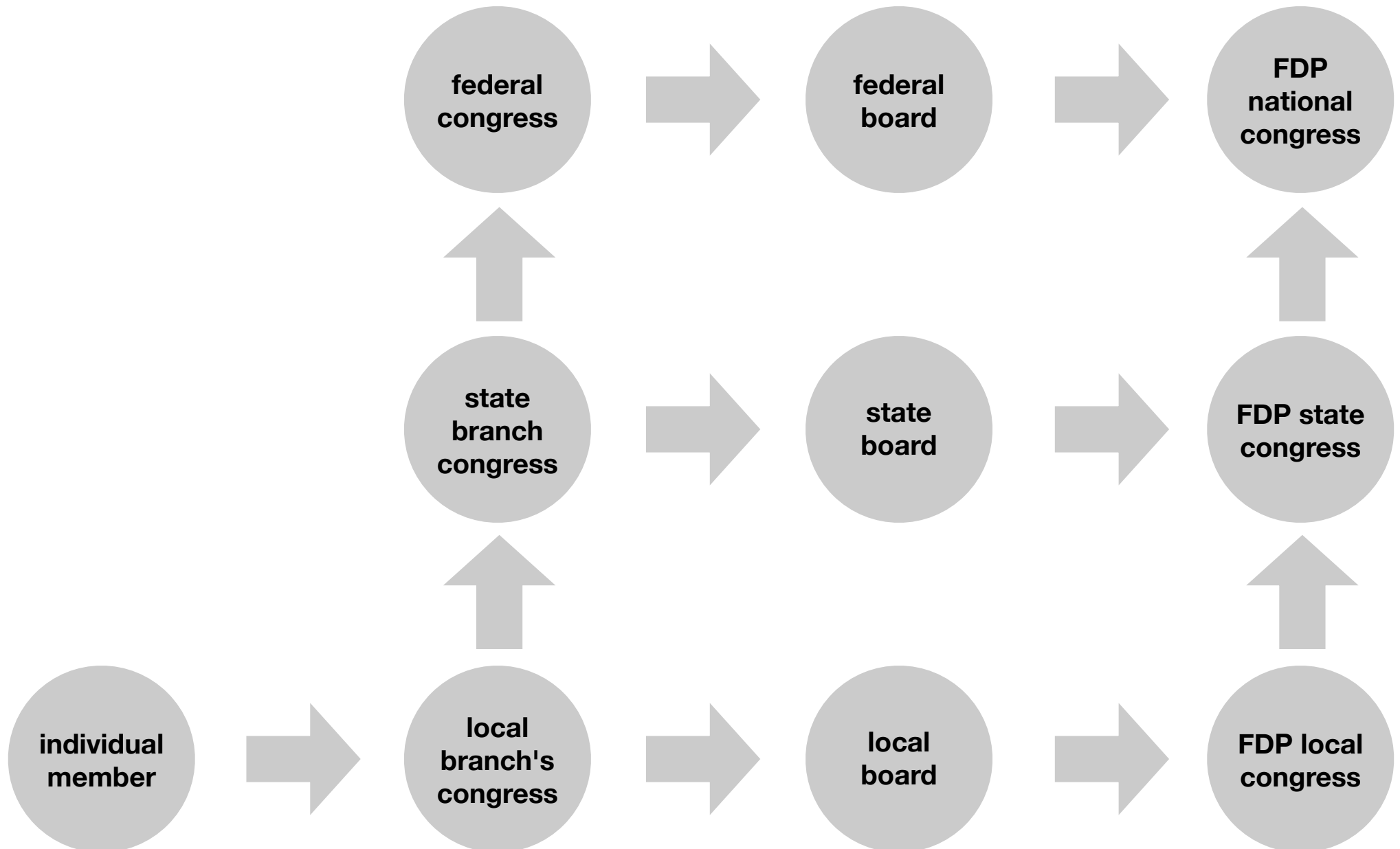
- The political program, its drafting, and development through discussion is one of the core principles of Junge Liberale
- Advantages:
  - **Innovators** and "**Think Tank**" of the party
  - Young members get a very **effective training** that enables them to participate also in the program discussions of the mother party

# Political Program: Cornerstones

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- Justice between generations
- Enforcement of civil rights
- Educational reform / university fee
- Abolishment of military draft
- Possibilities for young people on the labor market

# Political Program: Development Process



# Results of Process

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- Today FDP and JuLis have a **continuous productive debate** about their political program
- Debate concerns **all fields of politics**, not only youth and education topics
- Debate is **visible in the media** - JuLis are titled "the most interesting of all political youth organizations in Germany" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*
- **Unique selling proposition** for FDP as well as JuLis
- Attracting young people who are interested in **working together productively to promote liberal ideas**

# Skill Training

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- Training of members is not only done indirect - "on the job", e.g. during program debates
- Specific **skill training options** are organized on federal and state level, e.g. supported by the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for Liberty
- **New concept** for elections in 2009 - targeted **knowledge transfer** from other political youth organizations

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# Communications: External

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- JuLis can engage media and the public in ways that are difficult for FDP:
  - **Target group credibility**
  - Chance for debating **more progressive** ideas
  - **Public debate** - showing the public the **reasoning** behind a political position
  - **Cooperation** in campaigns
  - **Own point of view** also in campaign material

# External: Joined Campaigning



# External: Own Publications



# Internal: Member Magazine "j&l"



# Internal Campaign: Fast Forward

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Zur Anzeige wird der QuickTime™  
Dekompressor „“  
benötigt.

# Conclusion

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*Success Factors:*

- **Quality**
- **Independence**
- **Continuous mutual criticism - always constructive!**

*A youth wing that operates on a high quality level can be a significant help for the mother party - in more than one way.*

**Thank you.**

