Pact for Youth

Guide for creating your National Action Plan

For a Pro-Youth and Pro-Innovation Sustainable Europe
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There is an acceleration of action from leaders in businesses, governments and international institutions to make youth and education a priority. Education, labour and collaboration are high on the global agenda through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 – quality education, 8 – decent work and economic growth and 17 - partnerships for the goals. The EU agreed the new narrative, in which Youth and the SDGs are at the forefront. Based on an appeal from EU heads of states and Ministers of Education, the new Youth Initiative was launched on 7 December 2016. European business and supporting organisations are joining forces through the European Pact for Youth to make business-education partnerships the new norm, making the vocational education and training (VET) an equal choice and mainstreaming entrepreneurship education.

That is why, one of the goals of the European Pact for Youth, and its leaders is to facilitate 28 National Action Plans, bringing the education sector and employers closer together in partnerships to create the best place for youth to learn, work and live.

There is a growing need to connect EU-level action to individual action on the ground – the Pact Leaders are working on three European joint policy proposals on promoting VET and Apprenticeships as an equal choice, on making business-education partnerships the new norm and on mainstreaming entrepreneurship education. These joint policy proposals could be supported and aligned with the individual bottom-up National Action Plans (reflecting the needs and priorities of each member state).

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1 http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2692&furtherNews=yes

2 Definitions used in the Pact for Youth methodology for measuring impact, 2016:
The Definition of a Business-Education Partnership is the involvement of educational institutions, companies, unions, governments and/or community organisations. The aim is to improve youth education and employability, as well as to support teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education. The target group is typically 6-25 year olds.

Partnerships can cover activities such as: curriculum support, teacher development, work experience programmes, jointly establishing/running a study programme, career counselling/explorations, mentoring/job-shadowing activities, CV and interview support, upskilling activities, study visits, workshops, fairs, etc. This is a non-exhaustive list of examples, please see also actions proposed in the engagement guide.

3 Learn more about the Pact for Youth and the concrete goals here: http://www.csreurope.org/pactforyouth
The aim of the guide

The aim of the guide is to support the creation of the National Action Plan. It advises partners on how to shape the content so it fits both with the goals at national level on education, skills and entrepreneurship in the coming years and with the European Pact for Youth.

The aim, by the end of 2017 through the facilitation of National Action Plans (NAPs), is to identify the most important actions to support the creation of robust business-education partnerships that can help realise seven priority areas.

What is a National Action Plan?

A National Action Plan is a set of priorities that you and your stakeholders identify to accelerate and facilitate business education partnerships. It is your pathway to achieving your goals together.

The National Action Plan is not a policy/governmental National Action Plan, but it

• is action oriented
• prioritises (builds upon existing priorities set in your country or creates priorities if none exists)
• focuses on geographical scope (by thinking locally and considering your national conditions and pressing issues)
• brings together the beneficiaries – youth, parents, educational institutions and companies
• assists the authorities in charge of education in your country
• can be articulated together with the EU joint proposals to make the business-education partnerships mandatory
The European Pact for Youth aims to boost business-education partnerships for youth employability and inclusion through the actions of the Pact leaders and through the Joint EU Policy Proposals. The national level stakeholders are free to choose what is relevant and specific for their country and set priorities and plan actions accordingly. From our research, we identified seven priority areas to focus on:

- **Enhance skills** (through formal and informal education) including basic skills, soft skills, entrepreneurship skills and science, technology, engineering, art & design, and mathematics (STEAM) skills
- **Promote vocational education and training (VET)/Apprenticeships** as an equal choice.
- **Inspire** youth, educators and professionals to explore a myriad of work opportunities and education paths by connecting the dots.
- **Support young people in transitioning to jobs.** Create an environment that supports young people in job seeking.
- **Help industry sectors and companies attract talent** to gain competitive advantage and manage the high levels of retirees. Engage all kinds of employers (SMEs, multinational, NGOs, public sector etc.)
- **Support schools, directors and teachers** to gain leadership in the classroom; in their development; and increase the prestige and morale of the profession.
- **Boost and strengthen intermediary organisations** to help schools create robust business-education partnerships

The best results in these priority areas can only be achieved when their interconnectedness is recognised and utilised – for example, one can only achieve a real increase in the quality of skills of young people when there is consistent support for schools, teachers and directors and when companies themselves guide the schools through trends in the labour market. The possibilities for future work should also be discussed with youth.

In essence, through the priority areas above you can formulate messages and priorities for regions, governments and the EU to go for bold reforms as has been done in Italy; for businesses to get the classroom into the boardroom and to make investing into education a competitive advantage; for education to engage in long-term employer partnerships without compromising their freedom of teaching and for youth to ask and answer the questions of ‘how others can help you?’ and ‘how you can help yourself?’.

You can find a template in the Resources section with examples and space for you to personalise it.
Tips for structure and format

Here are some tips to make your National Action Plan (NAP) content practical and clear. The NAP should:

- be approximately 3-5 pages in length including annexes
- have an executive summary listing the top 3-5 priorities most likely to be reached by a specific date (e.g. 2020) or priorities that are most pressing (on max ½ a page)
- include a methodology of how these priorities were defined and with who they were created (in an annex)
- list concrete priorities and, if possible, include some planned actions and a timeline
- Express the goals of the local national action (where possible, provide measurement and evaluations)
- Communicate the progress and results

Please note that the above are suggested guidelines and country or organisations can make their own choices about the structure and format of the Plan.

See examples of National Action Plans and a roadmap for creating them in the Resources section.
We observed several approaches to creating a National Action Plan, and summarised the process in seven simple steps:

1. **Start with internal alignment – clarify how and why business-education partnerships are material to you**

2. **Think local and consider your national conditions and pressing issues**
   - Research the current situation e.g. ET Monitor, European Semester country reports or Eurostat
   - Include the voice of young people e.g. Local Youth groups and federations

3. **Engage with stakeholders**
   - Think about who would be the best actors and stakeholders to work with and how you could cooperate. *In Ireland they are developing their own National Action Plan through the Forum, which was established some years ago and covers a wide range of different stakeholders, in order to have a wider impact.*
   - Map out and connect different stakeholders with each other, support initiatives and projects already in existence and try to scale them up. *In Belgium, the SHIFT brought together various stakeholders and projects instead of creating a new one.*
   - Involve government if possible. *In Italy, Impronta Etica and Sodalitas are working directly with the government, especially the Ministries of Education and Labour.*

4. **Set goals and priorities**
   - Strive for a clear mission and articulated goals
   - Push for concrete proposals
   - Focus on quality, not just quantity
   - Find the right balance of priorities, making sure every stakeholder is willing to work on them
   - Set timeline and milestones

5. **Implement your goals and measure the impact**

6. **Measure your results and communicate them in a meaningful way**

7. **Review and renew**
Enhance skills

- Recognise skills gained outside formal education
- Enhance and reform skills curricula, pedagogy and assessment
- Embed skills in formal and informal education
- Start at an early age to have real impact
- Lifelong learning
- Entrepreneurship skills to help with personal brand

Promote the VET/Apprenticeships as the equal choice

- Research government policies to see what is being done at the national level already e.g. Information about national commitments and pledges on apprenticeships on European Alliance for Apprenticeships website⁴ ⁵
- Procedures for organising and implementing work-based learning environments⁶

Inspire to explore a myriad of work opportunities and education paths

- Establish and enhance multi-stakeholder platforms to connect the dots
- Communicate with partners and schools to reach young people
- Encourage new business
- Focus on the parents as well; they have the most influence on their children’s career and education choices⁷
- Excite young people about the world of work
- Adopt a sectorial approach

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⁶ Procedures for organize and implement the work-based learning environment, from Latvia http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=283680

Seven priority areas

1. **Support young people in transition to jobs**
   - Support on skills such as CV writing and preparing interviews etc.
   - Find a common language between schools and businesses
   - Take the classroom out of the school and into a business, so that young people have a chance to understand working life and be motivated by practical problems
   - Create opportunities for young people to have work experience in business

2. **Help companies attract talent**
   - Embed education in business planning, practice and integrated performance
   - Provide support for companies, especially SMEs
   - Build a business case for business-education partnership in the Board Room
   - Involve companies and establish their needs and wishes
   - Give companies guidance about different styles of collaboration
   - Building bridges between businesses and schools – encourage educational institutions to be business-aware
   - Divide between multinational, SMEs and Micro Businesses - engage all types of employers
   - Find novel ways for companies to reach education institutions

3. **Support schools, teachers and directors**
   - On-going professional development
   - Measure success of what becomes of the graduates
   - Cities to run pilots & display the data on careers & employment
   - Provide teachers and school faculty a business perspective, they themselves might not have any work experience outside teaching
   - Focus on career counselling: it has a real impact

4. **Boost and strengthen intermediary organisations**
   - Bring together organisations and companies: Different stakeholders may be working on related topics so it is useful to connect the dots
   - Use examples of new local partnerships
   - Qualification frameworks bringing stakeholders together
   - Communication activities

Add your own solutions, priorities, actions and sources. **CLICK HERE TO ACCESS SHARED DOC**
Examples of existing National Action Plans

Scottish Youth Employment Strategy
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7750/2

Scottish Government and Local Government Implementation Plans
http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7750/3

Section 1: Schools
Work-relevant learning

Section 2: Colleges
A Valued and Valuable Choice

Section 3: Apprenticeships
Access to Work Based Learning for All Young People

Section 4: Employers
Their Investment in the Young Workforce

Section 5: Equality
Developing the Talents of All Our Young People

Examples of existing National Action Plans
Do you have one too? Share it here:
LOG IN TO BASECAMP
**Targets**

- **500** Partenariati di qualità tra imprese e sistema formativo
- **10,000** studenti coinvolti in alternanza scuola-lavoro, tirocini, apprendistati di qualità
- **1** Piano di Azione Italiano
- **1° Summit** Europeo Imprese-Istruzione a Fine 2017

**Priorities**

- Boost the partnership between secondary schools and businesses in the framework of the Education Reform “La Buona Scuola”, (group leaders: Fondazione Sodalitas and Impronta Etica)
- Establish a national branch of the European Hub on Entrepreneurship Education, to collect and scale up entrepreneurship education models (group leader Junior Achievement Italy)
- Promote VET Education and the new apprenticeship model, according to the national reform “Jobs Act” (group leader: Enel)

**The Workplan**

- 24 projects of partnership between secondary schools and businesses
- 6 projects Entrepreneurship Education
- 6 Apprenticeship/VET
- Collecting experiences
- Critical analysis and success factors
- Proposals for solutions and new partnerships
- Series of round table discussions: 1° took place on 20 September
- Simplify the bureaucracy Support for Enterprises (including SMEs) Promoting the culture
European Pact for Youth Leaders (the European Pact for Youth document, 2nd Joint Policy Proposal on Business-education partnerships, the interim results of the Pact Impact measurement); Italian Pact for Youth (coordinated by Sodalitas and Impronta Etica); Scottish Youth Employment Strategy (2014); Accenture 2012 report Turning the tide: how Europe can rebuild skills and generate growth; European Commission 2012 report Effects and impact of entrepreneurship programmes in higher education; Joyce, A., & Dzoga, M. (2011) Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education: Overcoming challenges in Europe; McKinsey & Company 2014 report Education to employment: Getting Europe’s youth into work.