



THE
EMPLOYMENT
ALLIANCE

Employment Alliance Ireland- UK
Actionable Action Plan

2015-2016

The following is the Action Plan agreed by the Employment Alliance for the Louth/Meath area of Ireland and Newry and Mourne region of the UK.

The cross border Employment Alliance for this area first convened at a high profile launch in March 2015 which was attended by government ministers and key stakeholders in business and education from both jurisdictions. From the very outset the gathered stakeholders acknowledged the issues facing un and underemployed graduates in the two regions, and through a series of mind mapping exercises over a number of Alliance meetings they discussed potential options to try and address this issue using the network of Alliance members. Some of the ideas explored in the mind mapping exercises were somewhat aspirational given that there was no budget to implement and so it was decided that the focus should be on Actionable Actions in the initial steps undertaken by the Alliance. The Actions would be delivered by members of the Alliance and external organisations that they were involved with and would focus on three key themes identified:

1. Theme 1

Graduates are not work or business ready

2. Theme 2

Demand – skills mismatch

3. Theme 3

Can hobbies and interests be the basis of a career?

By the nature of the subject there are overlaps in the themes however each theme was assigned at least one action. The key issue identified and therefore addressed with the most Actionable Actions was the demand-skills mismatch expressed by stakeholders in the region.



Action Number 1

THEME: Graduates not work/business ready

ACTION TITLE: Schools Programme- early intervention

WHY?

Discussions among Alliance members centred on preparing graduates BEFORE they commit to a university programme. Entrepreneurship and self-employment options should be introduced during primary and secondary schools stage. This will facilitate an informed career choice for school leavers. Career planning concept needed to be introduced at this time.

HOW?

- Create better links with Careers teachers – make them more aware of current issues in business
- Encourage Interview-readiness and communication skills
- Promote confidence-building – interior and exterior
- Encourage presentation/communication skills
- Engage with schools programme
- Introduction of career path planning concept- there is more than one way to succeed
- Encourage innovative thinking
- Introduce the concept of entrepreneurship/self-employment
- Consider expanding programmes further into primary schools

WHO?

- Local Authorities, through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) in County Louth and Meath will work more closely with secondary schools in the region and encourage their participation in young entrepreneur schemes.
- The LEO's will continue to ensure the Student Enterprise Awards are promoted as a key part of the strategic plan for entrepreneurship in the region and have a high profile during National Enterprise Week
- NMEA has a history of delivering seminars promoting entrepreneurship as a career path to schools in the area. The range of ages of those attending is from 10-18 years. NMEA will be rolling out a formal programme of seminars which will use elements of the training materials generated by the programme when the final version is available post pilot testing. NMEA has built strong links with the schools in its area, specifically careers teachers, there has been unanimous agreement by all schools contacted thus far to use the training materials as part of their career programme.

WHEN?

SHORT TERM?

- Academic year 2016-2017

LONG TERM?

- We will continue to build on this action

WHERE?

- County Louth, County Meath Ireland
- Newry Mourne and Downpatrick Council area United Kingdom

COST?

In Ireland the costs for the schools programme will be covered by the budget already allocated for this initiative and this will hopefully grow as the programme expands. Additional costs will come in the extra allocation of staff time to develop and expand the initiative and advising re the integration of relevant modules and activities available in the online resource which will be developed by the Employment Alliance project

In the UK the cost is expected to be neutral with perhaps a minor cost to Alliance members (time). This concept was agreed early on in the process and feeds into the 'Champions' concept which is discussed in a further Action.



ACTION Number 2

WHAT?

THEME: Demand and Skills Mismatch

ACTION TITLE: Awareness Programme- Employers

WHY?

- Employers are largely unaware of the skills and depth of knowledge of under-employed creative and humanities graduates.
- These graduates are an excellent resource being underutilised by employers in the local regions.

HOW?

- Commitment to demonstrate what 'creatives' can offer a business as an employee or as a young entrepreneur
- Encourage and promote companies to utilise internship placement schemes available through third level colleges and government initiatives
- Run training programmes for companies highlighting benefits that traditional non-business mind-sets can bring to companies and service providers.
- Build closer collaborative links with Intreo services which act as a support network for companies and unemployed in Ireland

WHO?

- Local Enterprise Offices Louth and Meath/ Local Authority
- Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
- Third level Colleges
 - Dundalk Institute of Technology
 - Southern Regional College
- Creative Spark (Dundalk)
 - Incubation hub for creative businesses and VET

- Intreo offices Ireland
- VET's and mentors engaged with the Enterprise support agencies and Alliance who work with businesses in the region

WHEN?

SHORT TERM?

- Awareness and relationship building can start immediately- build on contacts made through the Employment Alliance

LONG TERM?

- Development of awareness raising through on-going development of relationships and delivery of relevant workshops or training programmes

WHERE?

- Across County Louth and Meath in Ireland
- Newry and Mourne area in United Kingdom

COST?

Costs involved in the relationship building and awareness raising will largely be in commitment of staff time.

Training programmes or workshops can be delivered from existing training budgets or provisions made to plan for further delivery.



ACTION Number 3

WHAT?

THEME: Demand/skills mismatch

ACTION TITLE: EMPLOYER/GRADUATE SIGNPOSTING

WHY?

Utilise the resources available to assist new graduates and employers within local area to connect.

Build awareness of the pool of talent readily available, but under-utilised.

Help maintain employment within the region

Help local companies grow using talent available locally.

HOW?

- Mentoring is essential – range of support – commerciality/ business planning/ life skills (budgeting)
- Flexible to mould around needs of graduates and employers
- Make use of proposed expansion to Government run and managed apprenticeship schemes.
- Become a voice for the under-employed humanities graduates in the various Regional Skills Forums being established in Ireland.
- Encourage signposting among Alliance members to help individuals they are dealing with. Capitalise on the wide network of connections available in aggregate among the Alliance members
- Introduce concept of Champions Network
 - Utilising a repository of talent, without geographic constraints who are connected to 'homeland'
 - 'Gatekeepers' will be recruited to provide one-to-one career mentoring and encouragement
 - The 'Champions' can share their experiences and assist in making connections for talent 'struggling to break through'

WHO?

- Local Authorities, through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) in County Louth and Meath
- Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
- VET and mentors working with the Enterprise Support Agencies
- Third level career offices
- 'Champions' network

WHEN?

SHORT TERM?

- Champions recruited in the UK by NMEA will work to establish the database of champions in late 2016/early 2017
- Louth and Meath LEO to engage with appropriate Regional Skills Forums

LONG TERM?

- Expand the Champions networks formed in both UK and IRL.

WHERE?

- Louth and Meath Ireland
- Newry and Mourne UK

COST?

Cost neutral. Staff time only

Alliance member's time

Champions work on voluntary basis- giving back to their community



ACTION Number 4

WHAT?

THEME: Demand/skills mismatch

ACTION TITLE: AWARENESS – GRADUATES/ EMPLOYERS

WHY?

The world of work changing. Skills which did not exist previously have now come to the fore.

Both employers and potential employees need to be aware of the value of these new skills.

Communication is new key discipline in business – humanities graduates by their very nature excel at communication – verbally and visually.

Constant demand from existing companies for social media and video production training – many attend sessions only to realise that they don't have the requisite set of IT and communication skills.

HOW?

- Promoting the new communication skills required by all businesses
- Provide training for companies/ individuals in the new communication technologies
 - Social media platforms
 - Video technologies
 - Blogs
 - Etc.
- Provide training/mentoring for graduates on how to sell/package the natural communication skills they have learned through their education and how they could be implemented in a business environment.
- Create and highlight training for graduates to upskill themselves – raise awareness of national training initiatives such as Springboard. Utilise existing

networks and those within the Alliance to raise awareness of the opportunities available.

- Encouraging new companies to avail of new, targeted supports
 - On-line vouchers
 - Web site grants

Plan for appropriate course in response to areas highlighted by the business community or emerging business trends identified.

WHO?

- Local Authorities, through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) in County Louth and Meath
- Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
- Newry Mourne Downpatrick Council
- HEI's- career offices
- Alliance members
- Intreo offices dealing with unemployed graduates

WHEN?

SHORT TERM?

- Immediate effect- awareness raising

LONG TERM?

- Creation of appropriate training

WHERE?

- Louth and Meath area in Ireland
- Newry Mourne and Downpatrick

COST?

Awareness raising and signposting will be cost neutral

Development of appropriate training to be factored in within the delivery agents training budget. They will work to secure new funding streams to expand the training on offer



ACTION Number 5

WHAT?

THEME: Can a hobby and interests be the basis of a career?

ACTION TITLE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME

WHY?

Encourage graduates to explore options of maximising opportunities from their skill-set.

Successful entrepreneurs need to be passionate about what they do. Humanities graduates should be encouraged to explore the options of self-employment in a field they are interested in that could allow them to excel.

HOW?

- Improve the range of entrepreneurship/business training provided. Look at workshops for pre entrepreneurs to encourage 'Idea Generation' style training.
- The promotion of the training course developed as part of REAL project to those providing training within the region.
- Getting the use of some or all the REAL training programme as part of Third level curriculum.
- Promote the on-line resource to VET trainers beyond those involved in the Alliance and those who engage with the business support agencies

- Encourage those working on the front line with unemployed graduates to direct them to the free on-line resource as part of the support available to further their knowledge at no cost.
- Creative brokers- signposting to skills training available from Alliance members and on a wider national scale.

WHO?

- Local Authorities, through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) in County Louth and Meath
- Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
- Newry Mourne Council
- Third level Institutes- DKIT Dundalk, SRC Newry
- VETs- mentors and trainers in the Alliance and in wider networks
- Intreo offices in Louth and Meath
- Creative Spark
- Teachers Resource Centres
- Employment agencies

WHEN?

SHORT TERM?

- Signposting and provision of training in 2016

LONG TERM?

- Ongoing

WHERE?

- Across County Louth and County Meath
- Within the Newry and Mourne area

COST?

Provision of the course created through the REAL programme will be free and available as open source on the website for individual and VET's to use

Creation of new pre entrepreneurship training will come from re allocation of existing training budgets or funds will be raised.

Promotion of the REAL Course and signposting will require a time commitment from the Alliance partners.