

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND PRIORITIES OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

Strategic Partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level.

Strategic Partnerships are open to any type of organisation active in any field of education, training and youth or other socio-economic sectors as well as to organisations carrying out activities that are transversal to different fields (e.g. local and regional authorities, recognition and validation centres, chambers of commerce, trade organisations, guidance centres, cultural organisations). Depending on the priority addressed by the project, Strategic Partnerships should involve the most appropriate and diverse range of partners in order to benefit from their different experiences, profiles and specific expertise and to produce relevant and high quality project results.

To be funded, Strategic Partnerships must address either a) at least one horizontal priority or b) at least one specific priority relevant to the field of education, training and youth that is mostly impacted.

Horizontal priorities

- developing basic and transversal skills (such as entrepreneurship, digital skills and language competences) in all fields of education, training and youth, using innovative and learner-centred pedagogical approaches and developing appropriate assessment and certification methods. In particular, supporting innovative activities that foster the assessment of transversal skills and that promote the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)⁷³ or reciprocal learning to increase language competences among learners of all ages from various fields of education, training and youth including those with migrant background;
- developing new approaches to strengthen the education and training paths of prospective and practicing educators/youth workers; equipping them with all competences and skills needed to deliver high quality services and address increasingly diverse needs e.g. those posed by multicultural societies. In particular, priority will be given to activities building effective partnerships between providers and educational institutions (e.g. HEI/teacher training colleges and schools/VET institutions); co-ordinating approaches among providers as well as through collaboration and dialogue with key stakeholders and partners and in particular with youth organisations;
- enhancing digital integration in learning, teaching, training and youth work at various levels: promoting access to and learning through Open Educational Resources (OER); supporting ICT-based teaching, training and youth work, as well as ICT-based assessment practices. In particular, supporting teachers, trainers, educational staff and youth workers in acquiring or improving the use of ICT for learning and related digital competences; supporting organisations active in education, training and youth review their business models; promoting OER in different languages and produced in Europe; supporting digital integration in learning to reach audiences of disadvantaged backgrounds; exploring the potential of learning analytics and crowd-assessment to increase the quality of learning;
- contributing to the development of a European Area of Skills and Qualifications: promoting stronger coherence between different EU and national transparency and recognition tools, supporting projects that facilitate the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and its permeability with formal education pathways as well as permeability between different fields. In particular, promoting the use of learning outcomes in the design, delivery and assessment of curricula, educational programmes and activities in favour of students, trainees, pupils, adult learners and young people;
- supporting innovative projects aimed to reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds/with fewer opportunities –including learners with disabilities. In particular, enhancing access to, participation and performance in (formal/ non formal) education and training, preventing early school leaving, preparing educational staff and youth workers for equity, diversity and inclusion challenges; monitoring the various kinds of disparities, combating segregation and discrimination of marginalised communities, such as migrants and Roma; facilitating transitions from education to the world of work for disadvantaged learners;

⁷³ Teaching subjects such as science, history or geography through a foreign language.

- stimulating the development and use of innovative approaches and tools to assess and increase the efficiency of public expenditure and the investment in education, training and youth, including through new funding models such as public-private partnerships, cost-sharing, etc.

Field-specific priorities

In higher education:

- supporting higher education institutions to implement the necessary reforms in line with the 2011 EU Modernisation Agenda and its priority areas: increase attainment levels; improve the quality and relevance of higher education; strengthen quality through mobility and cross-border cooperation; make the knowledge triangle work; improve governance and funding. A particular focus will be placed on projects that:
 - support activities that help attune curricula to current and emerging labour market needs and equip the young generation with transversal skills such as entrepreneurship, by developing active cooperation between HEI and partners from outside academia: enterprises, professional organisations, chambers of commerce, social partners, local/regional bodies etc.;
 - support activities to develop innovative strategies to boost mobility or ways to remove obstacles to mobility in higher education providing more opportunities for students to gain additional skills through study or training abroad; projects can also support virtual mobility that are embedded in a global strategy for the effective integration of ICT in the participating HEIs;
 - strengthen the links between education, research and business to promote excellence and regional development;
 - aim at increasing the number of graduates, widening the participation and raising completion rates of underrepresented groups and non-traditional learners, enhancing lifelong learning via the creation of flexible learning paths, developing ways to increase the social responsibility of higher education institutions;
- supporting the implementation of the 2013 Communication on Opening Up Education: promoting the development of new modes of delivery, in particular the integration of a greater variety of study modes (distance, part-time, modular learning) through new forms of personalised learning, strategic use of open educational resources, virtual mobility, blended mobility and virtual learning platforms; as well as stimulating the internationalisation of Europe's higher education systems in Europe and beyond.

In VET:

- supporting the development of high quality VET with a strong work-based learning component (including apprenticeships and dual learning models), involving strong partnerships between education and employment (in particular companies and social partners);
- increasing the labour market relevance of VET provision and reducing skills mismatches and shortages in economic sectors through timely adaptation of curricula and qualifications profiles and establishment of stable partnerships between VET providers and economic actors, including social partners, development agencies, bodies in innovation systems, chamber of commerce. These should be based on data stemming from monitoring systems of VET outcomes (employability rates, placement rates) and systems of forecasting skills needs and a close alignment of VET provision to economic development strategies at regional and local levels. This also may imply development of VET at higher than upper secondary level / higher EQF levels;
- increasing transparency and mutual trust between VET systems through streamlined and coherent implementation at national level of ECVET and EQAVET recommendations;
- fostering the promotion of easily accessible and career oriented continuing VET, including for the least likely to take part in such learning opportunities;
- promoting the development of skills and competences of teachers and trainers, with a particular focus on work-based teaching, partnerships between school teachers and in-company trainers, and training of in-company trainers.

In school education:

strengthening the profile of the teaching professions through attracting the best candidates to the profession and by supporting teachers and leaders to deliver high quality teaching, deal with complex classroom realities and adopt new methods and tools. In particular, improving initial teacher education and supporting new teachers so that they have all necessary competences right from the start including

in dealing with diversified groups of learners (such as migrants); to adopt collaborative and innovative practices to strengthen leadership roles in education, including distributed leadership, for designing necessary changes and improvements at institutional level;

- addressing low achievement in basic skills through more effective teaching methods. In particular, through projects that: foster multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches; integrate the teaching of basic skills (maths, science and literacy); promote problem-based learning; or foster innovative approaches to teaching technology-rich environment with particular focus on mathematics in technology-rich environment;
- supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage as well as to address all students from the lowest to highest end of academic spectrum, in particular by supporting projects that aims to: improve collaboration internally as well as with parents and other external stakeholders; promote networking of schools and holistic collaborative approaches to teaching; develop methods and create conditions for personalised teaching and learning for pupils;
- enhancing the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in order to improve the quality of services for better learning outcomes and ensure a good start in education for all, in particular through projects that aim to: develop a holistic and age appropriate pedagogical framework for ECEC; ensure that the benefits of early childhood education are carried through to other school education levels; and projects that develop new models of implementation, governance and funding for ECEC.

In adult education:

- designing and implementing effective strategies for enhancing basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) for specific adult target groups, increasing incentives for adult training;
- providing information on access to adult learning services, such as information on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and career and education guidance;
- improving and extending the offer of high quality learning opportunities tailored to individual adult learners, including through innovative ways of outreach and delivery;
- developing adult educators' competences to deal with diversified groups of learners, make use of new technologies for better outreach and teaching outcomes;
- evaluating the effectiveness of adult education policies at national, regional and local levels level.

In youth:

- promoting high-quality of youth work. Priority will be placed on projects that aim to: foster the inclusion and employability of young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETS); internationalise youth work and open it up to cross-sectoral cooperation; professionalise youth workers, building their competences, setting quality standards, ethical and professional codes; reinforce links between policy, research and practice; promote better knowledge, recognition and validation of youth work and non-formal learning at European, national, regional and local level;
- promoting empowerment, participation and the active citizenship of young people, through projects that aim to: broaden and deepen political and social participation of young people at local, regional, national, European or global level; enable young people to connect with, express their opinions to and influence elected policy-makers, public administrations, interest groups, civil society organisations, or individual citizens within any of the political or social processes affecting their lives;
- promoting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship among young people. Priority will be placed on projects that allow groups of young people to put entrepreneurial ideas into practice with a view to tackling challenges and problems identified within their communities.