

# Stand by Youth



## Call to Action: #StandByYouth

Can your business do more for the next generation?

The COVID-19 crisis has brought an entire generation to a halt. It has disproportionately affected young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, setting back their education, employment prospects, mental health and income at a time when they were already facing major challenges. Already by the end of 2020, youth unemployment rates had increased in nearly all OECD countries, and by twice as much as for older generations. They are now also likely to shoulder the burden of the long-term social and economic costs stemming from the pandemic.

All of us have a role to play to help today's youth get through this crisis and prepare for the post-COVID world. And businesses of all sizes need to be part of the solution. Many of you have already taken bold action and led by example, including by providing emergency support and by continuing to hire young people. Yet much more can be done, even if you have different capacities to do so.

Join us in taking action to create opportunities for the young especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including by expanding the permanent recruitment of young workers! By doing so, you would not only be contributing to your own communities, but also to the future of your own business by bringing in young people with different perspectives, skills and experiences.

Your action can take other forms too, by:

- Creating good quality paid internships, placements, apprenticeships and work experience that offer the opportunity to develop skills and ambitious pathways to employment for the young;
- Taking steps to develop young workers within your business through on the job training, career advice, mentoring and development opportunities, including to promote their entrepreneurial skills;
- Working with local partners, including employment and training agencies, universities, schools, and vocational training centres to improve alignment with the needs of your company;
- Engaging with young entrepreneurs, to provide services (such as marketing, legal, and accounting) and form partnerships to provide inspiration, advice, coaching and mentoring; and
- Leveraging government programmes that support the young and pro-youth business initiatives.

All these actions can and will make a difference, and help stave off a crisis of opportunity for the young.

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This Call to Action is put forward by these institutions:

OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions & Cities  
SMEUnited  
Business for Inclusive Growth (B4IG)  
Ashoka Global  
European Engineering Learning Innovation & Science Alliance

Business at OECD (BIAC)  
International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)  
European Youth Forum  
JEUNE Europe  
International Network for SMEs (INSME)

Sign up for this call to action, share, and let us know what you are doing to support the young at [bit.ly/StandByYouthStories!](https://bit.ly/StandByYouthStories)