

JA Bulgaria Communication on Engagement for 2017-2019

Statement of continued support to the UN Global Compact

02.12.2019



Dear stakeholders,

We are pleased to confirm that Junior Achievement Bulgaria reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.


In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Milena Stoycheva

(Chief Executive Officer)



Boni Bonev

(Chairman, Board of Directors)

Description of actions

After becoming an official supporter of the UNGC, we decided to form an internal team that would outline a simple strategy for engagement with the UNGC and its principles at the beginning of each calendar year. We are committed to not only spreading the word about the UNGC to our partners and stakeholders, but also to living the principles daily. We believe that through the educational programs we create we have the power to address the 10 principles and embed them into the lives of the thousands of students we reach and impact each year.

Actions to promote the UNGC and its principles

Our team took several steps in order to promote its support for the UNGC on all levels:

1. Our Board Chairman and CEO emphasize our commitment to the UNGC principles in public appearances, as well as during meetings and discussions with possible business and NGO partners.
2. Our support for the UNGC is prominent on the [homepage of our website](#) (the UNGC logo is incorporated). We also have a separate page dedicated to our social responsibility where we have featured our support for the UNGC (http://www.jabulgaria.org/page/about_us/nashata_socialna_otgovornost).

Partnership projects on corporate sustainability

We are constantly working to forge partnerships with the corporate sector that result in joint educational programs and experiences that correspond to one or more of the 10 UNGC principles. Some examples of programs/activities that we have done with corporate partners in the last three years (2017-2019) are highlighted below.

The project “**LifeChanger**” developed in partnership with **MetLife and MetLife Foundation** works to improve the financial literacy of students that come from low-income financial backgrounds or are at-risk according to some other criteria. The five waves of the project so far have reached more than 2500 students in several Bulgarian cities, and the sixth wave has just been launched in November 2019. JA Bulgaria develops the educational content “Smart Finance” which is then delivered in class by trained volunteers from MetLife. The five editions of the project so far achieved impressive results in terms of increased student awareness on personal finance issues and improved skills for personal financial management and budgeting.

The “**Citi & JA Enterprise Program**”, realized for several years in partnership with Citi, tackles the low level of financial literacy and the lack of proactive thinking and entrepreneurial behavior in the high school and university students. It provides them with educational modules that are focused on real life and existing business practices and standards. In 2017-2019, the program helped more than 2000 youngsters understand how to take responsibility for their own lives by creating jobs for themselves through establishing a small or medium-sized enterprise. All participants met real business practitioners who helped them in the improvement of their idea in the mini company. 72% of all high school participants and 50% of all university participants came from low-income communities and areas of minority concentration. We managed to educate them how to be pro-active and look for opportunities. We gave them the fundamentals of how to plan, set up and operate a small enterprise and a full set of skills to manage people, work under pressure and do basic corporate finance.

In partnership with **NN**, we run the “**Social Innovation Relay**” – an online interactive competition for social innovation ideas where teams of students have the possibility to find out more about social and environmental problems around the world and the ways to address them through innovative business ideas. In the process of shaping their social innovations, student teams are assisted by NN volunteers who mentor them on how to improve their ideas and make them more realistic and applicable. The 2019 edition of the Social Innovation Relay saw the involvement of 844 students from across Bulgaria who were distributed into 83 teams. [The Bulgarian national winning team was also one of the three winners of the global final of the Social Innovation Relay.](#) They presented a working prototype of a solar powered e-bike.

Another project where we have managed to mobilize businesses to realize corporate sustainability initiatives is the “**Practical Finance**” project where we attracted leading financial companies in Bulgaria to contribute to the development and piloting of the first-of-its-kind educational content on financial literacy for upper secondary high school students across the country. The first two editions of the project were supported by NN Bulgaria, BNP Paribas, Karroll, Bulstrad Life Vienna Insurance Group, Doverie and DZI. The funding contributed by these companies was matched by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The 2019-2020 edition of the project is realized thanks to the support of NN Bulgaria, BNP Paribas and Unicredit Bulbank. The educational course consists of 12 topics which are taught as an elective subject in the course of 72 school hours. This year it will be taught in 31 schools and 34 classes by 34 teachers, with the help of 50 business volunteers and will equip 800 students with skills and practical knowledge in the personal finance domain. The first two editions of the program already impacted positively more than 1500 students in the whole country.

Together with **HP, HPE, Manpower** and **A1** we have contributed to the early career orientation and development of employability skills of more than 7500 young people in Bulgaria in 2017-2019. We do this through the annual national initiative “**Manager for a Day**” – a job shadowing experience for young people where they have the opportunity to be immersed into the daily business activities of top managers and professionals from small and large companies and institutions and make an informed choice about their future career based on their impressions. Through applying for shadowing positions in a specially designed online platform, students get access to educational materials that help them improve their CVs and cover letters. The one-day experiences often grow into longer internships for the youngsters who have shown talent, entrepreneurial mindset and perseverance. The initiative is complemented by a one-day youth forum “**Careers of the Future**” which features TED-style presentations by inspiring corporate leaders and/or freelancers, entrepreneurs, etc. who outline the latest trends and forecast the future developments in various professional fields. Our business partners in this are **HP, A1, IBS, Nestle, Coca Cola HBC Bulgaria.**

Another business partner that we attracted in a co-creation process to realize a meaningful CSR activity is **Coca-Cola HBC**. Together we are realizing the ambitious educational program “**Youth Empowered**”. The aim of the program is to reduce the number of economically inactive young people through prevention of NEETs status (NEETs = not in education, not in employment). About 20% of Bulgarian youth aged 19-29 fall in the NEETs category. For more than 3 years now, our joint work with Coca Cola has been addressing the problem through a variety of in-school educational and out-of-school motivational and practical instruments. We have been able to impact positively the motivation, employability skills and chances for professional realization of thousands of youngsters from the upper secondary grades.

Our annual national competition for student mini companies (**Youth Business Forum “Rising Stars”**) takes the form of a trade fair where the student teams display their products and make presentations in front of jury members from the business community. It usually features several award

categories that affirm the 10 principles, such as “most socially innovative product”, “most socially responsible mini-company” or “environmental sustainability”. The student teams can enter the race to win one of these awards and based on the track record of their company’s activity throughout the school year the jury decides whom to award the prize. This is a great way in which we work toward firmly embedding these values into the mindset of the future generation of Bulgarian (who can one day become global) entrepreneurs.

Other actions to support the Global Compact and to engage with the initiative

JA Bulgaria has been extremely active in developing special actions in support of principles 7, 8 and 9 related to the environment. In 2015-2017. Our first action, the “Green Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development” project in 2014-2015, was created with the aim of contributing to the formation of an entrepreneurial culture that respects nature and allows environmental care to be at the heart of economic activity. In 2015-2017, we continued our work in this direction by implementing a larger project called [GREENT](#), funded by the European Union’s Erasmus + program. In partnership with organizations from 4 European countries, we developed a comprehensive methodology and innovative teaching content for teachers across Europe in order to extend the teaching of green entrepreneurship through blended learning. With this content, we both address the need for sustainability, the need for green businesses and the need for social entrepreneurship, without overlooking the current global challenges, but using them as a driver for entrepreneurial action and not as a discouraging factor. GREENT was so successful that in 2017 the global organization JA Worldwide honored us with the extremely prestigious JA Collaboration Award.

Driven by the recognition and evidence of the need for this type of training, in 2019 we turned GREENT into a global wave, [conducting two trainings for Green Entrepreneurship teachers in Tanzania and discovering the African eco-entrepreneurial spirit](#). Our activities continue to this day with the translation of the developed educational toolkit into Spanish, and in February 2020 there will be a remote online training in green entrepreneurship for teachers from Colombia.

A natural continuation of our efforts is the “**Green Cooperation Beyond Borders**” project, which is set to launch a large-scale green entrepreneurship training program in schools in Bulgaria and Norway. The innovative element of the project is that the ideas for green business generated by young people will not remain on paper, but will find their true realization in the 2020-2021 school year through the formation of cross-border teams, which will be expected to produce a real green product or service using the model of JA’s flagship educational “Company Program”.

All these activities reflect our deep conviction as an organization that entrepreneurial activity should come from a genuine and deep understanding of the intrinsic value of nature, natural ecosystems and all organisms, which should begin to be reflected at the heart of the business models of the future. An economy based on perpetual growth in consumption of exhaustible resources and on the generation of more waste is unsustainable and does not create prosperity for people. We are convinced that young people have the energy and the potential to change the economy. Hard pressed by climate change, we know that we have only one generation in which we must do everything we can to educate and inspire these eco-conscious young entrepreneurs. This is our mission with the educational tools we create. What has been done in recent years has established JA Bulgaria as the only organization not only in Bulgaria, but also in the world, which is gradually and strategically building and promoting green entrepreneurship education for high school students as a key element for the future of the planet and societies.

In terms of reducing our own environmental footprint and contributing to positive change we have realized the following:

- We use LED lighting in our office premises.
- We engage in responsible disposal of obsolete office equipment.
- We recycle used paper.
- We use plastic multi-use boxes for lunch. Instead of buying their lunch in disposable single-use plastic boxes, staff members are encouraged to bring their own thicker boxes to the nearby restaurants.
- We use the services of the zero-waste catering company Nulala any time our budgets for events and competitions allow that.

Measurement of outcomes

The adequate measurement of outcomes is a crucial element in the delivery of each of our activities, including our support for the UNGC. We regularly keep track of basic metrics related to our educational programs/projects such as number of students, number of teachers, number of schools, cost of program delivery per student, number of real startups created, etc. We are also focused on measuring the impact of our programs through tools such as self-assessment pre- and post-tests and satisfaction surveys. We are committed to developing better ways of measuring more adequately the social impact of what we do in terms of mindset fostering, skills development, etc. Information about these measurements has been incorporated at appropriate places in the text above.