



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development

Expert Group Meeting
“Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda”

11-12 December 2018
United Nations Headquarters
New York, USA

Concept Note
DRAFT

Overview:

On 11 and 12 December 2018, the Division for Inclusive Social Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations will organize an Expert Group Meeting at the United Nations’ headquarters in New York under the theme *Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda*.

Social entrepreneurship can be defined as a form of entrepreneurship which predominantly focuses on social benefits rather than solely financial ones, and which seeks to address societal, cultural or environmental issues, often in an innovative manner. Young people’s desire to “do good” socially while they “do well” economically is translating into a rise in youth social entrepreneurship in several regions of the world.

This Expert Group Meeting will bring together experts and representatives from academia, United Nations entities, and intergovernmental organizations as well as young social entrepreneurs, to discuss the following overarching questions: How do young social entrepreneurs support socio-economic advancement, help vulnerable groups access opportunities and ultimately contribute to system change? What is needed for youth social entrepreneurship to be an effective tool towards the 2030 Agenda? How can governments put in place enabling ecosystems for youth social entrepreneurship to significantly help advance the 2030 Agenda?

The results of this meeting will support the preparation of the *2019 World Youth Report* on the same theme. While the scope of the Expert Group Meeting and the *World Youth Report* is global, special attention will be given to developing country contexts.

Background:

The selection of this theme for the Expert Group Meeting and the World Youth Report was done in light of both youth employment and the reduction of inequalities representing top priorities for the global community and governments across the globe. As part of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goal 8, entitled *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, includes targets pertaining to young people and entrepreneurship. SDG 10 on *Reducing Inequalities*, calls for the development of economic and social policies clearly considering and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Social enterprises, with their hybrid goal of being financially effective and socially transformative, are particularly apt at generating locally-driven responses to a wide array of issues hindering collective social progress and economic development, especially for vulnerable groups. Social enterprises therefore bring a unique contribution to achieving SDG 8 and SDG 10. And when they are led by young people, they also contribute to youth development and empowerment. Given that globally, “the number of youth aged 15-24 years is projected to increase by 8 per cent over the next 15 years, from nearly 1.2 billion in 2015 to close to 1.3 billion in 2030¹”, solutions addressing challenges faced young people, such as employment and inclusion, will produce a massive positive ripple effect across the entire population. And this is even more true for Africa as it is the region with the “largest projected relative growth in the number of youth, with the number aged 15-24 years expected to increase by 44 per cent between 2015 and 2030²”.

However, social entrepreneurship is not only a tool for the generation of youth employment and development opportunities and the reduction of inequalities, it is also an instrument to help achieve all other SDGs. Where national or local authorities are unable to provide sufficient opportunities, spaces or services, social enterprises often create nimble and tailored responses to these unmet needs. This is where young people’s creativity and capacity for innovation further bolster social entrepreneurship endeavours. Young social entrepreneurs are particularly poised to reach, service and give a voice to vulnerable groups or people living at the “last mile” (e.g. indigenous people, people with disabilities, older people, minorities and migrants, refugees and IDPs, people living in slums, rural communities, etc.).

As other members of the social and solidarity economy, youth social enterprises engage diverse stakeholders in a common search for solutions to issues in a manner that sustainably and equitably leverages social capital and assets. This can ultimately generate economic and social opportunities for vulnerable groups and therefore reduce inequalities as well as promote inclusion of vulnerable groups. In turn, this process can contribute to system change from the grounds up. For this to become significantly more widespread, and for youth social enterprises to reach their full potential, ecosystems composed of conducive policies and regulatory frameworks need to be put in place. Together, these policies need to foster dynamic skills development, ensure the availability of sufficient financial capital, generate efficient technical

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/trends/Population2030.pdf>

² <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/trends/Population2030.pdf>

support, and develop an enabling infrastructure. Also, an empowering culture and societal norms supportive of social entrepreneurship are also needed to fully reap the benefits of youth social entrepreneurship.

With the implementation of the 2030 Agenda fully underway, there is an urgent need to articulate forward-looking and highly actionable policy recommendations for youth social entrepreneurship to become a paramount solution in efforts to “leave no one behind”.

Key issues:

The Expert Group Meeting will include three sessions that will examine the following issues, culminating with a discussion on policy guidance

1. Understanding the current landscape of youth social entrepreneurship
2. Assessing the impact of youth social enterprises toward the 2030 Agenda
3. Supporting and empowering young social entrepreneurs
4. Developing enabling ecosystems for youth social entrepreneurship

Sessions:

Session 1: Understanding the current landscape of youth social entrepreneurship

Topic 1.1: State of affairs

- Why is there a rise in youth social enterprises around the world? What are the major regional trends?
- What motivates young people to choose social entrepreneurship?
- What sectors/issues are young social entrepreneurs passionate about?

Topic 1.2: Challenges

- What are the key challenges faced by young social entrepreneurs? How are these similar or different from challenges faced by other types of entrepreneurs?
- What are some of the regional trends regarding challenges?
- What can be learned from women social entrepreneurship and the cooperatives movement?

Topic 1.3: Opportunities

- Is the 4th industrial revolution (digital world, AI, analytics, etc.) fuelling the rise in youth social enterprises?
- Youth social entrepreneurship as civic engagement: a new way to foster social change?

- “Last mile” communities and youth social enterprises: mutual benefits?

Session 2: Assessing the impact of youth social enterprises toward the 2030 Agenda

Topic 2.1: Youth development

- How are youth social enterprises contributing to youth development and empowerment?
- Are youth social enterprises truly providing *decent work* to young people?
- Are young people repositioning their efforts to contribute to development away from the political spheres to the social entrepreneurship milieu?

Topic 2.2: Social impact

- Regarding the generation of social impact, what are some of the strengths and weaknesses of youth social entrepreneurship when compared to other members of the social and solidarity economy?
- Given the challenges they face, to what extent are youth social enterprises truly able to deliver locally-driven, people-centred, innovative and inclusive solutions contributing to the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the main conceptual and practical obstacles to measuring social impact of a youth social enterprise?

Topic 2.3: System change

- How realistic is it to expect that local social enterprises generate community or national system change?
- What is needed for youth social entrepreneurship to generate social change?
- Does scaling up necessarily lead to system change?

Session 3: Supporting and empowering young social entrepreneurs

Topic 3.1: Financial goals

- What are some of the most effective evidence-based and tested youth-specific or youth-friendly practices, initiative and policies supporting the financial goals of youth social enterprises?
- Why are these practices, initiative and policies effective? Can they be expanded or replicated?
- How can these practices, initiative and policies be translated into a recommendation?

Topic 3.2: Social goals

- What are some of the most effective evidence-based and tested youth-specific or youth-friendly practices, initiative and policies supporting the social goals of youth social enterprises?
- Why are these practices, initiative and policies effective? Can they be expanded or replicated?
- How can these practices, initiative and policies be translated into a recommendation?

Topic 3.3: Integrated goals

- With the rise of hybrid models among social enterprises, how can additional partners (e.g. corporate sector, public sector) bring meaningful value-added to the support system?
- Given the need to significantly advance the green economy to achieve the SDGs, how can environmental and climate change initiatives better integrate youth social entrepreneurship in their policies and initiatives?
- The 4th industrial revolution (digital world, AI, analytics, etc.) offers unprecedented opportunities for youth social entrepreneurship. How can we leverage these opportunities in the context of the 2030 Agenda?

Session 4: Developing enabling ecosystems for youth social entrepreneurship

Topic 4.1: Mapping

- What are the main policies included in youth social entrepreneurship ecosystems?
- Who are the major actors driving or influencing these policies?
- What are the other elements influencing the ecosystem (media, social and cultural norms, national competitiveness index, regional investment climate, etc.)?

Topic 4.2: Developing

- What are some of the most transformative policies put in place to support youth social entrepreneurship (case studies)?
- What are the policies supporting other members of the social and solidarity economy that can be leveraged?
- What can be learned from the development of other economic ecosystems?

Topic 4.3: Fine-tuning

- From policy formulation to implementation: what are the main challenges and lessons learned?
- What are the interacting factors and unintended policy consequences that should be surveyed?
- What is the role of regional and global actor and frameworks in supporting national youth entrepreneurship ecosystems?

Participants

The EGM will bring together 15 to 18 experts (including the 3 consultants working on the 2019 World Youth Report on Youth Social Entrepreneurship) on the specific thematic areas that will be addressed at the meeting. These experts will be identified from academia, United Nations, Member States, youth social enterprises and the private sector to ensure a fully rounded discussion. Gender parity and geographical balance, as well as age balance will also be pursued.

Experts will be asked to present a technical paper on their topic of expertise two weeks prior to the EGM to ensure that all participants are fully informed on the subject areas discussed. The technical papers will also be used in the background preparation for the 2019 World Youth Report where relevant.

Outcomes

- 12 short expert papers on the themes addressed at the meeting (including the 3 chapters developed by 3 consultants working on the 2019 World Youth Report on Youth Social Entrepreneurship).
- A short report summarizing the key discussion points and recommendations.
- A list of indicative policies and practices on youth social entrepreneurship within the areas discussed.
- Substantive and conceptual input and contribution for the 2019 World Youth Report.