

YOUTH
CO:LAB

Project Co-Leads



Citi Foundation



#Jointhemovement




YEARS OF
YOUTH CO:LAB

youthcolab.org

Co-created in 2017 by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and **Citi Foundation**, Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to **empower and invest in youth**, so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through **leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship**. Between 2017 and 2021, Youth Co:Lab grew to be one of the largest movements to advance this agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

#Jointhemovement



Over 11,000 young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs and innovators were reached in 28 countries and territories and supported through innovation challenges, National Dialogue events and other activities. National Dialogues across the region convened national partners and young people to discuss the state of the ecosystem for youth entrepreneurship, leadership and social innovation and identified the means to strengthen the operating environment for young social entrepreneurs.

More than 1,240 youth-led social enterprises have been launched or improved by the Youth Co:Lab project.

The workshops organized by 506 Movers volunteers were attended by more than 25,000 young people across the region. The Movers Programme is a regional movement of volunteers who develop SDGs awareness, entrepreneurial mindsets and 21st century skills, by conducting localized training at grassroots levels.

Livelihoods or jobs of 55,000 people were enhanced by some of the most established social enterprises supported by Youth Co:Lab.

Three Regional Youth Co:Lab Summits and other regional events have brought together young entrepreneurs and stakeholders from across the region to get inspired, celebrate social entrepreneurship and drive change.

A 250,000+ people's community on Facebook is following the journey of young leaders and social entrepreneurs supported by Youth Co:Lab in the Asia-Pacific region.

202 stakeholders from the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, and the development sector joined Youth Co:Lab's Youth Empowerment Alliance. With a focus on youth entrepreneurship and social innovation, the Alliance is a powerful network connecting young social entrepreneurs to finance, mentors, partners and support.

The knowledge and research products produced by Youth Co:Lab were downloaded over 15,000 times from the UNDP website and are contributing to systems change. These support data-driven as well as policy design and implementation on youth entrepreneurship, social innovation and leadership. In 2021, Youth Co:Lab piloted its youth entrepreneurship ecosystem diagnostic framework in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank to identify entry points for strengthening the overall ecosystem for youth-led enterprises.



Years of Youth Co:Lab

*The Regional Youth Project
on **Leadership, Innovation
and Entrepreneurship**
(2017-2021)*

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About Youth Co:Lab:

Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth, so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Learn more at www.youthcolab.org
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About Citi Foundation:

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. They invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyse job opportunities for youth and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfil our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation.

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01

Unlocking the Potential of Young Solutionists in the Asia-Pacific Region

Background and Context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes **the important role of youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and calls for action against the challenges faced by young people that limits their economic, social and political inclusion. Young people have the potential to be more connected, creative, informed and persuasive than previous generations. With the right support, young people can respond to the challenges that the world is facing today with innovative approaches and fresh ideas, and drive human development for themselves, their communities and their societies.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab

However, young people today are not getting the support they need to fulfill their potential. The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than 660 million young people. According to International Labour Organisation's (ILO) estimate, in 2020, 24.4 percent of youth in the region were not in employment nor in education or training (NEET), thus facing dire economic insecurity¹.

In addition, many young people are left out of decision-making processes, further contributing to their marginalization and exclusion. Various gender related barriers prevent young women from realizing their potential and accessing entrepreneurship opportunities and leadership roles².

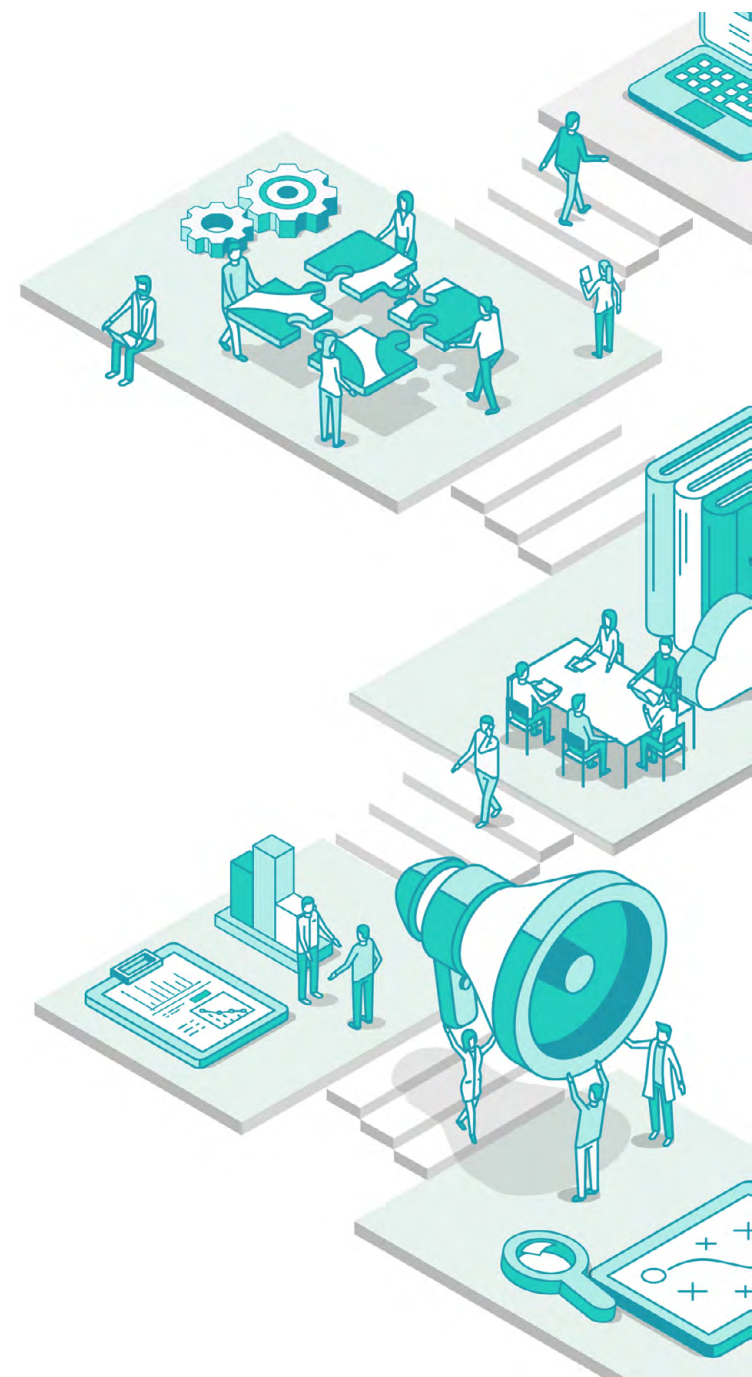
The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges young people face. In 2021, [Youth Co:Lab's research](#) found that 92 percent of surveyed youth-led enterprises were negatively impacted by the crisis. Climate change is another global challenge threatening to steal the future of young people in a region that is among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

[Youth Co:Lab](#) positions young people front and centre to solve the Asia-Pacific region's most pressing challenges. Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.

This report provides a snapshot of what Youth Co:Lab has achieved since 2017 and an account of the actions that helped unlock the potential of young social entrepreneurs as solutionists in the Asia-Pacific region. This report also includes the key findings of the 5-year project evaluation conducted by an external and independent Evaluation Consultant, Dana Peebles, between January and June 2022. The purpose of the evaluation was to promote accountability, facilitate learning and knowledge sharing and to guide the design of future programme strategy. The full evaluation report, including information about the methodology, overall evaluation approach and all findings and recommendations, is available [via this link](#).

¹ILO (2020). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Asia and the Pacific.

²UNDP and UNICEF (2021). Addressing Gender Barriers to Entrepreneurship Among Girls and Young Women in South-East Asia. Bangkok: UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub and UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office



Youth Co:Lab’s Approach to Youth Empowerment

Youth Co:Lab’s approach to Youth Empowerment is an integrated approach that strengthens individual and institutional capabilities while building an enabling environment that promotes young people’s agency in shaping the future and achieving the SDGs.

Youth Co:Lab operates at three interconnected levels to **strengthen the ecosystem** for youth social entrepreneurship:

Downstream

Directly empowering young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs through National Youth Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activities (Chapter 2 of this report), supporting youth-led enterprises through the Springboard pre-incubation programme (Chapter 3) and building entrepreneurial and 21st century skills of youth through the Movers programme (Chapter 5).

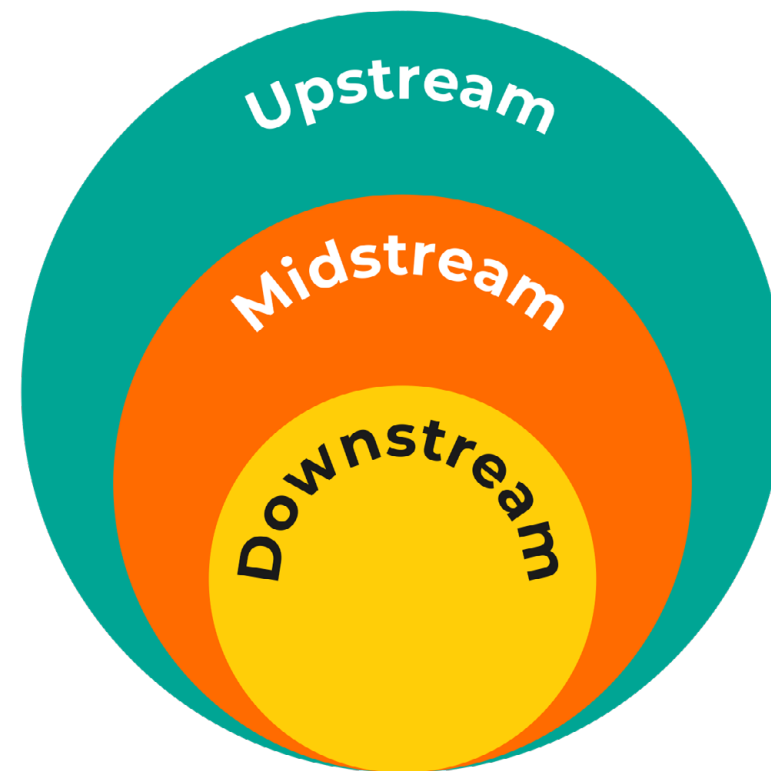
Midstream

Connecting ecosystem partners and building their capacities to better support youth entrepreneurship through the Youth Empowerment Alliance (Chapter 4) and Regional Summits (Chapter 6).

Upstream

Working with governments to strengthen the enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship and producing knowledge products that contribute to data-driven decision making and programming (Chapter 8).

Theory of Change



Upstream	Midstream	Downstream
Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Diagnostics	Youth Empowerment Alliance	Innovation Challenges
Research and Knowledge Products	Financing Solutions	Springboard Programme
Systemic Approach	Regional Summits	Movers Programme

Snapshot of the Evaluation Findings Related to the Project Design and Theory of Change

According to the evaluation, the main strengths of Youth Co:Lab's design and implementation are:

- ◆ The adoption of flexible, iterative design and implementation process has allowed the Youth Co:Lab team to respond to the current needs and priorities of youth in the Asia-Pacific region to foster social innovation, leadership and social entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Youth Co:Lab believes that most project activities should be youth-led. The project's leadership makes a concerted effort to make sure that youth are actively involved and recruited to drive the Youth Co:Lab agenda.
- ◆ The ecosystem approach to youth social entrepreneurship focuses on providing support and strategic inputs at the downstream, midstream and upstream levels.
- ◆ Through its strategic model Youth Co:Lab has found effective ways of working with the private sector as a key partner.

Some gaps in the project design and implementation stem from the same flexibility and iterative process, which are also the project's strengths. This is most evident at the national level and includes:

- ◆ The absence of a standardized, and readily applied monitoring system at the national level that can still be flexible enough to accommodate Country Office's programme priorities.
- ◆ The Youth Co:Lab model still needs further adaptation to effectively address the very different operating contexts in small island developing states, most notably in the Pacific Island states.



Photo:
Youth Co:Lab
Viet Nam



02

Youth Co:Lab National Programmes

At the national level, youth social innovation and entrepreneurship activities provide a platform for young people to get hands-on experience, test their ideas, and enhance their **readiness as innovators and entrepreneurs who can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**. More than **11,000 young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs and innovators** have been supported through national dialogue events, innovation challenges, hackathons and other activities organized and supported by the project as of March 2022.

These national activities were organized in close collaboration with **national ecosystem partners**, including the government, academia, private sector partners, civil society organizations, and others. Youth Co:Lab has brought together national ecosystem partners and youth to discuss the **ecosystem for youth social entrepreneurship** and identify the means to create a more supportive environment for youth-led enterprises.

Youth Co:Lab has supported young social entrepreneurs in 28 countries and territories across the Asia-Pacific: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, The Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

This section briefly outlines the results achieved in the project countries and territories.

Photo: Youth Co:Lab and Thailand Social Innovation Platform



Bangladesh

Launched in 2018, [Youth Co:Lab Bangladesh](#) works closely with the government, civil society organizations and the private sector to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem for youth to lead with their SDG solutions. 264 young people have been supported through Youth Co:Lab Bangladesh in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Information and Communication Technology Division of the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, LightCastle Partners, Impact Hub Dhaka, ygap Bangladesh and others.

Among the 52 social enterprises supported, examples of enterprises creating impact at scale include [Moner Bondhu](#), a platform that provides affordable and accessible mental health and well-being services, and has served 67,834³ people through counselling sessions to date, and [iFarmer](#), an Agri-Tech company that fosters the vision to construct Bangladesh's most efficient and largest agri-financing and supply chain platform while improving the lives of farmers, retailers, businesses, and consumers across the agricultural value chain in an impactful manner.

Bangladesh was the first Youth Co:Lab country to publish a national study on the [State of the Ecosystem for Youth Entrepreneurship](#), in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank and Startup Bangladesh Limited.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Bangladesh

Bhutan

In Bhutan, Youth Co:Lab has supported over 340 young changemakers and aspiring social entrepreneurs since 2018. Youth-led social enterprises from Youth Co:Lab Bhutan are driving positive change through their solutions. For example, [Yoga Yangchen](#) offers yoga and meditation classes to help promote a healthy and active lifestyle, while addressing the depression and mental wellness in Bhutan. [iHub](#), provides workspace and pre-incubation services such as mentoring, business development training, branding and marketing to early-stage startups.

In 2021, Youth Co:Lab contributed to the '[Intelligence Report on Systems Approach to Youth Unemployment in Bhutan](#),' which captures the journey and results of UNDP Bhutan and the Gross National Happiness Commissions' work with partners on tackling youth unemployment through systems thinking and practice. This report offered insights and suggested solutions to address youth unemployment.

³ The results achieved by the social enterprises highlighted in this report are based on self-reported data provided by the entrepreneurs or reported on their websites between May and September 2022.

India

In India, the Youth Co:Lab initiative has been launched as a joint endeavour with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog. Since 2019, Youth Co:Lab India has supported 397 young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs. Youth-led enterprises such as [Care Form Labs Private Ltd](#), [Rup-yo](#), [LonePack](#), [InfyU Labs](#), [Silvery Nanos](#), [Novorbis Itus](#), [PadCare](#), are contributing to various social and environmental solutions ranging from menstrual health to waste management.

In 2021, Youth Co:Lab supported UNDP India's Initiative; 'Innovations Marketplace for Gender Equality,' which helps identify and incubate innovative solutions for creating livelihoods for the LGBTQI+ community and mitigate gender-based violence in India. More than 20 social innovators were supported through the programme to address the various challenges faced by the LGBTQI+ community. The pilot provided valuable lessons for the regional project to scale the efforts on 'Leaving No Youth Behind' agenda across the region. To guide programming in COVID-19 recovery, Youth Co:Lab India published a research report [Impact of COVID-19 on Youth-Led Social Entrepreneurship in 2021](#).

“Overall, the program enabled us to have a better perspective. Earlier, we were looking at a commercial angle and were fixated around the business. Through the incubation we understood, ultimately the goal was to help an individual. The idea was to focus on how the individuals perceive the product and to look into their experiences. That is what Youth Co:Lab and Head Held High (HHH) support has helped us achieve. We have been supported to build our value proposition, a much stronger product through the workshops and the HHH mentorship”.

- Youth Co:Lab India participant

The Maldives



Photo: UNDP Maldives

In the Maldives, Youth Co:Lab has supported 148 young social entrepreneurs since 2017 through National Dialogue events and Ooredoo Miyaheli Social Innovation Camps, with a particular focus on accelerating solutions developed by youth to support vulnerable and at-risk people.

Recipients of support include, [Blue Hearts](#), an online platform that aims to provide psycho-social support to those who need it with the help of trained volunteers and [Binheyo](#) provides disadvantaged youth with the opportunity to become financially independent and self-sufficient through urban micro farming.

Youth Co:Lab Maldives has brought ecosystem stakeholders together to strengthen the enabling environment for youth leadership and entrepreneurship by facilitating a 'Government to Community Diagnostic Workshop,' during the 2017 National Dialogue with the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Youth and through 'Reimagining' sessions during the 2019 National Dialogue organized in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development and the Business Center Corporation.

Mongolia

In Mongolia, Youth Co:Lab has supported youth social entrepreneurship and innovation activities organized through Activated2030: A Youth Enterprising Project of the UNDP Mongolia. In 2019, Social Entrepreneurship Programme engaged 30 youth participants through an SDG challenge and a two-month mentorship programme to equip youth with the skills that are essential in developing and accelerating a business. In 2020, a three-day, 'Mongol Enterprising Adventure' online webinar reached around 300 youth participants to raise awareness about social entrepreneurship and to inspire them to become social entrepreneurs.

“It was my first time to participate in this kind of programme. From my experience, most similar programs mainly have lectures and presentations. However, the Social Entrepreneurship Program was so different, in a way to enabled hands-on experience and a self-learning approach which made me learn many new things by myself. The things I have learnt are not only applicable to business, but in many things.”

- 2019 Social Entrepreneurship Programme participant.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Mongolia

Nepal

Youth Co:Lab Nepal is a joint initiative of UNDP Nepal, National Youth Council and the Association of Youth Organizations Nepal, that seeks to empower young people to develop innovative solutions through social entrepreneurship. Youth Co:Lab Nepal has leveraged partnerships with public, private, academic and civil society partners, including Yunus Social Business Center at King's College, Nepal Entrepreneurs Hub, World Innovations Forum, Delegation of the European Union in Nepal, VSO Nepal, 2030 Youth Force Nepal, CECI, Blinc Ventures, and many more.

Youth Co:Lab Nepal has supported 266 young aspiring and inspiring social entrepreneurs across all seven provinces. These include youth with disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth, Indigenous youth and youth from “Dalit” communities. In addition, Youth Co:Lab Nepal has organized three National Dialogue events, bringing together ecosystem stakeholders and strengthening their connections to contribute to Nepal's 'Youth Vision 2025.'

Examples of youth-led social enterprises supported by Youth Co:Lab that are driving the positive change and supporting rural and indigenous communities, include among others, [Dulwa](#), [Dochaa](#), [Airlift Technology](#), [Aer-roots](#), and [Himalayan Innovations](#).



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Nepal

Pakistan

Implemented as part of UNDP's Youth Empowerment Programme in Pakistan, Youth Co:Lab Pakistan has built the capacities of 538 youth and supported 62 youth-led social enterprises that are driving the change towards achieving the SDGs. Youth Co:Lab Pakistan has been particularly successful in engaging with and supporting young women social entrepreneurs. Between 2019 and 2021, 73 percent of the participants were women.

Several youth-led enterprises, such as [ENENT](#), [ConnectHear](#) and [Mobiliti](#) have scaled up their activities and are addressing social and environmental challenges from designing innovative products that reduce energy waste, to providing sign language interpretation services for deaf people and helping improve the lives of people with physical disabilities through high quality and affordable prosthetics.

Youth Co:Lab Pakistan works closely with multiple stakeholders across the country including the government, civil society and the private sector. In the past three years, it has worked with over 30 partners including the National Incubation Center, the Government of Scotland, DEMO Enterprises and CIRCLE Women to create a conducive environment for young entrepreneurs with a particular focus on young women, marginalized youth and social enterprises working on technology and climate change.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Pakistan

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, Youth Co:Lab is implemented through the; '[HackaDev](#)' programme that empowers youth to be innovative and entrepreneurial and to take a leadership role in solving development challenges. HackaDev consists of three offers: social innovation challenges, learning and skills academy participation and enterprise incubation programmes. Since the launch of Youth Co:Lab, HackaDev has engaged over 2,400 young social entrepreneurs, 40 percent of whom were women, and incubated 76 social innovations, including youth-led social enterprises such as [Ideal Six](#), [Trash For Trade](#) and [Ecohub](#).

Youth Co:Lab programme partners in Sri Lanka include Vocational Training Authority, Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, the National Youth Services Council, The Ministry of Telecommunication, Digital Infrastructure and Foreign Employment, Citra Social Innovation Lab, and other private sector and UN agencies. A strong shared vision and partnership structure has enabled HackaDev to scale up and become a national platform for young changemakers.



Photo: UNDP Sri Lanka

Indonesia

[Youth Co:Lab Indonesia](#) was launched in 2018 and has since then supported more than 180 youth-led social impact enterprises, who in turn have reported reaching over 17,000 beneficiaries. These include success stories such as [Kitong Bisa](#), [Suri the Goods](#) and [Komerce](#).

To support the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in Indonesia, Youth Co:Lab Indonesia has partnered with several government agencies, including the Indonesian Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, and the Ministry of National Development Planning. Youth Co:Lab Indonesia has co-led programmes such as the training of trainers, research, and other financial and non-financial support to the Youth Co:Lab participants.

In 2020, Youth Co:Lab, in partnership with Islamic Development Bank, initiated a study on '[The State of the Ecosystem for Youth Entrepreneurship in Indonesia](#)' to support the implementation of the National Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy and to identify entry points to strengthen support for young entrepreneurs in the country.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Indonesia

Cambodia

Youth Co:Lab launched in Cambodia in 2020 when 10 selected teams were supported through Youth Co:Lab's Startup Bootcamp Program. These included [Smart Farm Assistance](#) that offers an automated watering system that helps save water and energy and [Junlen](#), a social enterprise that recycles organic waste to rich nutrients for plants and provides training for farmers in Cambodia. A five-day online National Dialogue event brought together young changemakers and ecosystem stakeholders to discuss youth leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship to inspire action among young leaders. Youth Co:Lab Cambodia also successfully piloted a 5-week online coaching programme; "My Job, My Future," to support 20 young people to improve their employability skills.

Youth Co:Lab Cambodia has been supported by UNDP Cambodia, the Russian Federation and Impact Hub Phnom Penh.

"I learnt how to do impact measurement for my start-up, how to do effective time management as well as how to make a good financial projection."

Youth Co:Lab Startup Bootcamp Program participant

Lao PDR

Youth Co:Lab has been working with young social innovators and entrepreneurs in Lao PDR since 2020 and has strengthened the capacities of 56 young social entrepreneurs. In 2020, Youth Co:Lab supported the UNDP Lao PDR Accelerator Lab to organize the UNDP Innovation Challenge to promote the Circular Economy for Waste Management. Nine winning teams successfully tested new ideas to tackle waste management issues and plastic pollution. In 2021, Youth Co:Lab supported the Youth Innovation Challenge, focused on agriculture and handicrafts. 12 winning teams from the Youth Innovation Challenge initiative, supported by the Russian Federation, received a prize to support the implementation of their social enterprise projects. For example, [AMITIÉ](#) produces handbags made from local cotton and banana fibre, woven by persons with physical disabilities. [Bee More](#) trains vulnerable communities to harvest beeswax and make beeswax coated fabrics as an alternative to plastic wrapping.

Youth Co:Lab in Lao PDR is implemented in partnership with Russia Trust Fund, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union and Lao Women's Union.

Malaysia

Youth Co:Lab activities have been organized in Malaysia since 2018 in partnership with the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC), providing capacity building for 309 young social entrepreneurs. With support of Youth Co:Lab's regional Springboard, several Malaysian youth-led social enterprises have been connected to opportunities such as the Cherie Blair Foundation, Women in Business Programme, the SDSN Investment Readiness Programme and Google Start-up Advisor SDG programme to help them accelerate their impact.

For example, Youth Co:Lab connected [#DemiLaut](#), with the Google Start-up Advisor SDG programme and assisted in a crowdfunding campaign. This social enterprise aims to empower fishers for the sustainable development of the fishing industry. They provide an automated pulley and fishing nets that help fishermen optimize their small-scale operations and have supported 125,879 traditional fishers to date.

Myanmar

Six youth-led social enterprises joined Youth Co:Lab's Springboard programme after participating in the The Hackathon, co-hosted by UNDP Myanmar and Ooredoo in partnership with Impact Hub in October 2019.

[The Hackathon](#) provided a platform for youth to showcase and develop their innovative digital SDG solutions under three themes: rural development, education, and climate change.

The Philippines

Since 2017, [Youth Co:Lab Philippines](#) has supported 1,153 young leaders, social innovators and entrepreneurs with around 50 percent from underrepresented communities. 15 social enterprises supported by Youth Co:Lab have been awarded seed funding to grow and scale their solutions. Youth Co:Lab Philippines engages partners who work closely with targeted sectors to ensure that we reach the farthest first and leave no one behind. Key partners, such as the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC), support Youth Co:Lab in engaging grassroots communities, and enablers, such as makesense Philippines and the Department of Trade and Industry – Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (DTI-BSMED), help integrate young Filipino entrepreneurs in the startup and MSME ecosystem.

The Youth Social Innovation Lab (YSIL), is the flagship event of Youth Co:Lab in the Philippines, bringing together changemakers who aspire to achieve the SDGs. [AI4GOV](#), Hacksociety 2019 winner, focuses on improving access to information of local government unit's basic services through artificial intelligence (AI) to enable participatory governance. They developed a COVID-19 digital triage bot (K.I.R.A) for the Department of Health for medical professionals to confirm COVID-19 cases and create predictive modelling of the number of people infected based on reported cases and locations tracing. [GoodGovPH](#), the winner of the 2020 Youth Social Innovation Lab, is a youth-led non-profit organization for good governance in the Philippines. It conducts various initiatives anchored on civic engagement, education and training, and policy advocacy.

Youth Co:Lab Philippines has also been a partner in the 'Ideation Impact Challenge: Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' initiative which has supported 29 youth teams to be drivers of community peacebuilding and development in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

In 2021, 123 young people from across the Asia-Pacific region participated in the first [Regional Innovation Challenge for Human Mobility](#) organized by the Youth Co:Lab Philippines and the UNDP Human Mobility Team, in partnership with Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), International Organization for Migration (IOM), makesense, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat).



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Singapore

[Youth Co:Lab in Singapore](#) was launched in 2019. The Youth Co:Lab team in Singapore is part of UNDP Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam. In order to create meaningful engagements with the youth in Singapore, Youth Co:Lab partnered with the National Youth Council (NYC) Singapore, a national agency that drives youth development and expands outreach to young Singaporeans and youth sector organizations. The programme has supported over 180 youth-led initiatives through; 'Youth Action Challenges'.

Some of the enterprises supported by the programme include: [Skilio](#), a one stop, pedagogy-rooted and data-driven soft skills development platform tapping on AI. [Calm Collective Asia \(CCA\)](#) a social enterprise promoting good mental health across Asia. Calm Collective hosts free virtual events and shares mental health tips on social media to help their community cope with the pandemic.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab Philippines

Singapore

Thailand

Youth Co:Lab was launched in Thailand in 2017. Over the first five years, it has supported 276 youth participants and incubated 84 social innovation ideas in collaboration with the key partners, such as ChangeFusion, Young Entrepreneur Chamber of Commerce, and HandUp Network. Some examples of youth-led social enterprises supported by the programme are [Hint](#), a digital learning platform for students, [Project Titang](#), a social enterprise supporting stateless people's communities in Thailand, and [Young Happy](#), an enterprise bridging the gap between senior citizens and modern technology to build a community and provide access to social activities for the elderly.

To support the development of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country, Youth Co:Lab contributed to the study, '[Mapping the Social Impact Investment Youth Co:Lab and Thailand Social Innovation Platform in Thailand](#)', published in 2019.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab and Thailand Social Innovation Platform

Timor-Leste

Youth Co:Lab Timor-Leste was launched in September 2019 by Knua Juventude Fila-Liman (KJFL) youth hub established by UNDP in partnership with the Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment, the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, Entrepreneurship Development Support Institute (IADE), SERVE and other private sector partners. In 2019, 30 youth teams with SDG solutions participated in a capacity building programme and the finalists pitched their ideas at the Timor-Leste National Youth Forum, which brought the government, private sector and youth together to identify solutions to strengthen the ecosystem for youth entrepreneurship. The top 3 teams received grants from the Embassy of New Zealand. One of the winners is [Café Organiku Atsabe](#), producing and exporting local and high-quality specialty coffee with the goal to improve the living conditions of coffee farmers.

In 2020, Youth Co:Lab Timor-Leste was organized by Accelerator Lab Timor-Leste and Recycling Promotion Pilot Project. 30 youth participated in a training programme and eight teams pitched their solutions on sustainable waste management, food production and consumption and community-based tourism. The winners received further support from the KJFL, UNDP and the Youth Co:Lab Springboard programme.

In 2021, Youth Co:Lab supported the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI), IADE and UNDP's SEEWAY project in organizing an innovation challenge 'Enhance Entrepreneurial Innovation for the Economic Recovery,' to support 43 youth-teams with their unique and innovative ideas through a capacity building bootcamp. The most promising teams received further support from MTCI and Youth Co:Lab to turn their ideas into sustainable businesses.

Viet Nam

Youth Co:Lab Viet Nam was launched in 2018 in partnership with the Ministry of Science and Technology. Since 2021, Youth Co:Lab Viet Nam initiatives have been implemented in collaboration with Business Forum Magazine, under the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

524 young people and 110 impact mentors were educated in SDG entrepreneurship skills in the last four years. 35 start-ups received financial and technical assistance through the SDG Innovation programme with the support of over 30 public and private sector partners. Over 500 youth participated in the sub-national and national policy dialogues.

For example, [FUWA Biotech](#), Youth Co:Lab runner-up 2020, offers eco-friendly natural household cleaning products made with fruit enzymes. [HASU](#) is a social enterprise that supports physical and mental health and social well-being of the elderly in Viet Nam. Through HASU's easy-to-use mobile application, seniors can access health advice, exercise, meditate, learn online, connect with friends and meet new people.

Youth Co:Lab also contributed to strengthening UNDP Viet Nam's leading role in supporting an impact start-up ecosystem in Viet Nam. For example, UNDP Viet Nam has played a strategic partner role in Impact Village, under TechFest. Youth Co:Lab's youth-led impact start-ups participate and pitch at this largest national competition for start-ups. Based on the success of Youth Co:Lab, and other initiatives which support impact businesses and inclusive innovation, such as SDG Challenge, and Impact Aim Viet Nam, in 2021, UNDP Viet Nam initiated a new project to promote a 'Social Impact Business Ecosystem' in response to COVID-19 (the ISEE COVID project), funded by the Global Affairs of Canada.

Photos: Youth Co:Lab Viet Nam



China

Youth Co:Lab China has been supporting 311 young social entrepreneurs (167 of whom are women), in China since 2017 through National Dialogue activities organized in close collaboration with The China Soong Ching Ling Foundation and other national partners. The programme in China has catalysed youth-led solutions targeting accessibility, rural revitalization, digital disruption and climate action. This includes success stories such as [Voibook](#), a social enterprise that builds a bridge between people with hearing loss and the society by providing real time speech to text technique and speech therapy and [Clear Plate](#), an online platform that provides incentives for people to reduce food waste and has helped reduce more than 2.6 million kilogrammes of food waste to date. The founder of Clear Plate, the first prize winner of the 2019 Youth Co:Lab National Dialogue, was the first Chinese person to be recognized as a Young Leader for the SDGs by the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth.

In 2021, UNDP China mobilized resources from the private sector and set up a [1 million CNY Youth Innovation Grant](#) to bridge the financing gaps for youth-led social enterprises that participated in the National Dialogue and to host the Youth Innovation Acceleration Camp organized in partnership with OPPO in December 2021.

UNDP and the All-China Youth Federation have also co-hosted four [Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#) events. More than 50 youth projects have shared their best practices of entrepreneurial solutions that address social, economic and environmental issues through the forums.

“The activity made me realize how cool it is to work with my partners to help the needy in the villages. It is not a lonely undertaking, as the young people from across the country join in using their wisdom, ability and perseverance to resolve issues, and to make the world a better place.”

- Youth Co:Lab China participant



Photos: Youth Co:Lab China

Hong Kong SAR

Youth Co:Lab has supported young social entrepreneurs in Hong Kong SAR since 2018, in partnership with the Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau, Hong Kong Social Service Council, and the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund. The National Dialogue events have reached around 600 participants to facilitate discussion and raise awareness on topics such as youth social entrepreneurship and innovation, youth well-being and inclusion of youth with special needs.

Since 2018, the winning teams, such as [Breer](#) and [Walking Partner Design Lab](#) of the [Hong Kong Social Entrepreneurship Challenge](#) organized by the Centre of Entrepreneurship, Chinese University of Hong Kong, have had the opportunity to join the regional Youth Co:Lab Springboard Programme to receive support to develop their businesses.

Japan

Since 2019, Youth Co:Lab Japan has supported 88 aspiring young entrepreneurs and reached over 750 young people through National Dialogues and Social Innovation Challenges. Since 2021, four teams have been selected as CVC award winners and have received a total of 110K USD seed grants and mentoring from CVC Capital Partners.

Several Youth Co:Lab supported enterprises have grown and accelerated their impact. For example, [nymizu](#), aims to reduce the use of plastic bottles by increasing access to water refill stations. They help users discover refill stations and track their usage through a mobile application. So far, together with their business partners, they have mapped over 8,000 refill stations in Japan alone, and 200,000 globally. [Ecologgie Inc.](#) is promoting a sustainable food alternative in the form of insect-based protein produced in Cambodia with proprietary engineering capabilities from Japan.



Photo: UNDP Japan

Republic of Korea

[Youth Co:Lab Korea](#) is implemented in partnership with local partners in Korea such as the Citypreneurs network and a venture capital firm, 'TheVentures.' Support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and collaboration with the Seoul Metropolitan Government, has benefited Youth Co:Lab Korea participants immensely, through networking opportunities, adopting start-up solutions, and sharing their policies and know-how with fellow ecosystem enablers. With its key partners, Youth Co:Lab Korea co-hosts an annual start-up challenge that provides capacity building, networking and investment support to young impact entrepreneurs in Korea and the Asia Pacific region, with a focus on themes that include 'Digitalization for Equal Opportunities for All,' 'Green Energy and Environment,' and 'Inclusive Health and Quality of Life.' Since 2018, the programme has supported over 180 SDG impact-driven entrepreneurs and ecosystem enablers from across the Asia Pacific region.

Another key component of its national programme; 'Impact Ecosystem Mapping Dialogue,' brings together diverse stakeholders including start-ups, investors, policy makers, civil society and academia to exchange knowledge and make a sustainable impact to the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Photo: UNDP Seoul Policy Centre

Australia

In 2019, Youth Co:Lab partnered with The Foundation for Young Australians to strengthen their [Young Social Pioneers Programme](#) which included bootcamps around the following themes: Indigenous Focus Accessibility, All Female, Education, Employment, and Social Cohesion. Through this programme of capacity building, mentoring and showcasing of impact, 68 young pioneers, including 12 Indigenous youth, received support to develop their social innovations and ideas.

Fiji

In Fiji, Youth Co:Lab has organized activities since 2019. The project has strengthened the capacities of 33 young entrepreneurs. Inspiring youth-led social enterprises addressing social and environmental challenges include, [Tasty Kitchen Collective](#), aims to empower and equip food entrepreneurs to inspire and create local culinary and food entrepreneurship. They help shift the modern food culture back to locally grown and locally made for improved health of people and food security in the face of climate change. [Deaf Consultancy Pacific](#) creates inclusive innovations and provides sign language and other services that are designed to make a meaningful impact on the people with hearing disabilities in the Pacific.

The [UNDP-University of the South Pacific Innovation Hub was launched in Fiji](#) at the end of January 2019. This hub is a co-working space focusing on youth, social innovations, and gender and disability-related projects. It was designed to provide entrepreneurs and start-ups with support through relevant mentoring, training and capacity-building opportunities, including Youth Co:Lab activities. Youth Co:Lab supported the launch of the Hub through the first Youth Co:Lab National Dialogue in Fiji.

New Zealand

In New Zealand, Youth Co:Lab has partnered with Inspiring Stories, a charity supporting young entrepreneurs to amplify their impact through the ['Festival for the Future' \(FFTF\)](#), events since 2020. These events have reached almost 3,000 entrepreneurs, leaders and students over the two years, providing a platform for discussion and learning about social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Through Youth Co:Lab's partnership with Inspiring Stories, young impact leaders have access to Youth Co:Lab's Learning Management System and other learning opportunities.

Samoa

Working in close collaboration with Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, [Youth Co:Lab Samoa](#) has supported young aspiring entrepreneurs since 2018, reaching more than 70 young people and helping create or improve 60 youth-led social innovation ideas.

Youth Co:Lab alumni have returned as mentors and role models, inspiring and empowering each new cohort of Samoa's aspiring entrepreneurs to join the programme. [E18HT SPORTS](#) is one of the successful youth-led social enterprises that have been supported through the Youth Co:Lab Samoa. E18HT is a brand that encourages young women to be strong, independent and resilient, not only on the court or field, but everyday life circumstances, to be able to confront challenges and personal battles on and off the playing turf.

In 2021, the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and UNDP through the UN-Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project facilitated a '[Business Integrity Youth Workshop](#),' for 68 young participants from across Samoa. The session content referred to Youth Co:Lab's resources, such as the Business Integrity Toolkit.



Photo: UNDP Samoa

Solomon Islands

Youth Co:Lab in the Solomon Islands was introduced in 2017 as part of a 'Youth Peacebuilding Innovation Forum,' under the; 'UN Peacebuilding Fund' project. Two forums were organized in 2018, one [in Malaita](#) and one in the Western Provinces, reaching 137 young and aspiring social entrepreneurs. Winners were awarded with in-kind support and smartphones from a private sector partner and were supported by Young Professionals in Agricultural Development, the Young Entrepreneurs Council of Solomon Islands, lumiWaka Co-Working Space (UNDP), government and educational institutions.

Vanuatu

In Vanuatu over the past few years, Youth Co:Lab has supported 153 aspiring young social entrepreneurs. In collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, the Vanuatu Youth Council and the Vanuatu Young Entrepreneurs Council, UNDP hosted the National Dialogue on Youth Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship' in November 2017.

In May 2019, the second Youth Co:Lab event in Vanuatu coincided with the 'Pacific ICT Days 2019' in Port Vila. The event was co-hosted with UNDP, the Government of Vanuatu, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Youth & Sports Development, the Vanuatu National Youth Council and the Vanuatu Young Entrepreneurs Council.

03

The Youth Co:Lab Springboard

Catalysing the Potential of Youth-Led Social Enterprises

The Youth Co:Lab Springboard programme is **an incubation platform for young SDG-focused entrepreneurs** to turn their innovative SDG solutions into sustainable businesses. The participants of Youth Co:Lab National Programmes have the opportunity to join the Springboard programme to receive support in developing their business and amplifying their impact. By supporting social enterprises addressing various social, economic and environmental challenges, the Springboard programme aims to advance the SDGs through youth-led solutions.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab

There are three key Springboard leverage points to shift youth-led enterprises up the value chain and into financially viable SDG solutions:

01

Shifting youth-led social enterprises from a minimum viable product or service status to revenue generation status by strengthening their product market fit and business models with training, mentorship, start-up support managers and a resource hub for bridging opportunities.

02

Bridging youth-led enterprises to obtain resources for scaling through building relationships with investor networks and facilitating capital through grants and financing.

03

Working with UNDP Country Offices and partners on youth social enterprise scouting and training to enhance the youth-led enterprises' efficiency and effectiveness while setting the benchmark for start-up support for young entrepreneurs in the region.

Photo: Youth Co:Lab and Thailand Social Innovation Platform



Results at a Glance

The Youth Co:Lab Regional Springboard Programme launched or improved 1,240 youth-led social enterprises. 430 of these enterprises joined the Regional Springboard programme. As of January 2022, 80 percent of these 430 enterprises were operational*, indicating a high sustainability rate among the social enterprises supported by the programme.

Based on self-reported data, 55,000 livelihoods were enhanced by youth-led social enterprises supported by the programme and millions of users had benefited from their offerings, including, for example:

Technology driven solutions

Clear Plate *(China)*

Clear Plate provides a platform to reward users for clearing their plate and has amassed 7.5 million users to take Zero Food Waste actions, reducing more than 2.6 million kilogrammes of food waste to date.

AI4GOV *(The Philippines)*

AI4GOV provides citizen engagement digital solutions, including the COVID KIRA chatbot for the Department of Health, with over 4.5 million interactions on Facebook and 2.8 million interactions on Viber.

Shuttle *(Bangladesh)*

Shuttle provides a safer and greener commute for women through carpooling, with over 1 million rides booked to date.

Daastan *(Pakistan)*

Daastan leverages technology to bring accountability and transparency in the book publishing industry by connecting key stakeholders through Qissa publishing portal. Their vision is to put a book in every hand and build an active network of physical and digital creative communities to strengthen the pillars of knowledge.

Solutions to support minorities

DeafTawk *(Pakistan)*

DeafTawk has enabled hard of hearing persons and persons with speech disability to have access to affordable and real-time sign language interpreters. This has been instrumental in helping students get into universities, and patients seeking medical support in hospitals.

Mobiliti *(Pakistan)*

Mobiliti is a social enterprise that provides affordable and eco-friendly prosthetic and assistive devices to address challenges faced by persons with physical disabilities and has served 1,020 patients to date.

Borneo Komrad *(Malaysia)*

Borneo Komrad uses profits made by the sales of fishing products to sustain a school for stateless children in Kampung Bangau-Bangau, Malaysia.

*Based on Youth Co:Lab's review of the teams' online presence / collaboration with Youth Co:Lab in 2021. Teams were considered not to be operational if they had not had online or other documented activities for one year at the time of the review.

The [Springboard Learning Platform](#) has over **1,300 users**. It has allowed youth to learn online at their own pace, from anywhere. In 2020 alone, users spent over 2,400 hours on the platform and rated the usefulness of the modules at 8.66 out of a maximum of 10 points. In addition, the Springboard SDG Chatbot provides opportunities for 'micro-learning' and is the first point of contact with Youth Co:Lab. The Chatbot reached more than **15,000 users** over the last few years.

Regional **business mentorship programmes** engaged Citi volunteers and other ecosystem partners, such as the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, CVC Capital Partners and Google for Start-ups to provide mentorship to youth-led businesses.

Springboard alumni received 2,174 hours of tailored support from the programme, which bridged them to **744 opportunities**, including some highly selective awards and resources, with a **33 percent success rate**. These include, for example:

Moner Bondhu, an innovative social enterprise that provides accessible and affordable mental health care and well-being services in Bangladesh. The founder of Moner Bondhu, Tawhida Shirupa, who joined the Youth Co:Lab programme in Bangladesh in 2019, won the 1st runner-up of the [2021 UN Women's Empowerment Principles awards in the Youth Leadership category](#) for her work on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace.

Gaunbata Sanjal, a project by Himalayan Innovations from Nepal, received a US\$25,000 grant from the [Womens Enterprise Recovery Fund](#), launched by The United Nations Capital Development Fund and other partners. Gaunbata Sanjal connects rural smallholder women farmers in Nepal with urban markets through a blockchain enabled e-commerce platform, while providing them with foundational digital literacy and access to finance through the young digital managers through the Girls4Rurals network.

Faysal Islam, founder of [SafeWheel](#) in Bangladesh, [won the overall title of 2021 Commonwealth Young Person of the Year](#) for his work providing low-cost ambulances and medical care to rural people in Bangladesh. Faysal joined Youth Co:Lab in 2019 and was part of the 2020/21 Youth Co:Lab Springboard cohort.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab

Springboard PLUS: An Investment Readiness Pre-Accelerator Programme Powered by Accelerating Asia and other partners

In 2021, Accelerating Asia and Youth Co:Lab extended their existing collaboration and launched the Youth Co:Lab Springboard Plus Program, to support early-stage social entrepreneurs to scale and grow their businesses. The 20-week customised programme featured 8 modules covering key areas for early-stage entrepreneurs. 204 participants from 171 youth-led social enterprises, including 86 women social enterprise founders from 24 countries and territories participated in the programme.

The programme was co-developed and implemented by Accelerating Asia's team of experienced start-up investors, serial entrepreneurs and operations implementation specialists. Based on the post-programme survey, the participating youth-led social enterprises raised US \$195,330 from investors and US \$17,000 from grants during the programme to support the growth of their social enterprises.

Outlook: In 2022, more than 200 young social entrepreneurs have been onboarded to the 2022 Springboard PLUS programme to receive dedicated support from Youth Co:Lab and the programme partners.

For a more detailed account of Youth Co:Lab's partnership with Accelerating Asia, please refer to the case study in [the evaluation report](#).



Photo: Youth Co:Lab and Thailand Social Innovation Platform

Piloting Crowdfunding Support

Youth Co:Lab has been providing crowdfunding support as part of the Springboard offer since 2020. During the first year, support was provided to three youth-led social enterprises, which helped them raise over US\$8,700 to support their growth and amplify the impact of the social enterprises.

DOCHAA (Nepal)

[DOCHAA](#) promotes Nepal's shoemaking culture, indigenous traditions and sustainable and fair labour practices through its hand-made shoes.

In 2021, with the support of Youth Co:Lab, [DOCHAA raised US \\$3,000](#) through crowdfunding and launched their brand internationally with a new line of products.

Aretes Style (The Philippines)

[Aretes Style](#), a social enterprise in Marawi City, Philippines, aims to preserve Mranaw culture and craft traditions through modern products made using traditional techniques.

The social enterprise raised [US\\$1,900 through their crowdfunding campaign](#) to strengthen livelihoods for the internally displaced peoples, especially traditional women weavers who they support through their business.



Photo: DOCHAA

Snapshot of the Project Evaluation Findings Related to the Springboard Programme and National Programmes

Many Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants of the evaluation indicated that they would not have had the confidence, skills or vision to start a social enterprise without the support they received from Youth Co:Lab.

- ◆ The youth participants who have had access to mentoring and business coaching have experienced significant transformations in both how they perceive future possibilities and the ability to grow their social enterprises from the idea stage to a viable business.
- ◆ There is a very high success rate for regional young entrepreneurs nominated by the Country Offices. Youth Co:Lab does not yet systematically track the success rates of all youth-led enterprises that have been supported by the programme. However, there are initial indications from the focus group discussions and participant surveys that those which have gone on to establish a social enterprise have a reasonable chance of being able to sustain their businesses.
- ◆ Springboard National Programme participants who were not winners in the innovation challenges, have found it more difficult to get established.
- ◆ Regional connections and networks are highly valued by Youth Co:Lab participants.
- ◆ Youth Co:Lab's crowdfunding approach has been quite successful but has limited capacity to scale up beyond a small group of youth-led social enterprises.
- ◆ Youth Co:Lab's practice of sharing diverse funding and procurement opportunities with young social entrepreneurs is an effective strategy, particularly when Youth Co:Lab provides assistance with the initial applications or pitch decks.
- ◆ Investment firms that invest in Springboard-supported youth-led enterprises have found that these youth-led enterprises are better prepared to scale up and compete than they expected, including those in the early start-up stage.



04

Youth Empowerment Alliance

The Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA) was established to connect entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders across sectors and to help bridge the gaps in access to funding, mentorship and other opportunities for young people across the region. As of January 2022, the YEA consisted of 202 partners across the region. This includes the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, youth organizations and academic institutions.

The YEA functions as a **core enabling partnership structure for Youth Co:Lab across the project components** highlighted in this report: national programmes, the Springboard programme, Movers, regional events and research.

Besides working with the YEA partners to support young social entrepreneurs, Youth Co:Lab provided opportunities for knowledge exchange and learning between the ecosystem stakeholders via National Dialogue events and Regional Summits.



What the YEA partners say⁵:

What have been some of the key achievements of Youth Co:Lab and the Youth Empowerment Alliance?

“

ANDE first collaborated with Youth Co:Lab at the first regional youth summit in Bangkok. We felt like we were able to connect with ecosystem actors and policy makers that are working in youth entrepreneurship. That was very helpful for us.

Fai Wechayachai, *Former Regional Chapter Manager, ANDE*

“

As we are a global development organization, and we support social innovations in the region, it's really beneficial for us to be also a part of the networks of other organizations and I think the Youth Co:Lab network is really one of the most fascinating networks that we can be a part of.

Bolun Li, *Co-Founder, Diinsider – China, The Philippines, Myanmar*

“

What we have achieved between the AVPN and Youth Co:Lab partnership, is that together we can create a better community, a more responsible business community, especially in the group of social entrepreneurs.

Prae Sunantaraks, *Mekong Region Director, Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) - Singapore, Thailand*

What is the relevance of a partnership such as the Youth Empowerment Alliance?

“

Youth Empowerment Alliance is important because each person and organization has different skills and resources, we can maximise our value through co-operation.

Hyoungmin Kim, *Managing Director, Urban Youth Academy – South Korea*

“

Youth Empowerment Alliance is very important not just for Bangladesh but for the whole world, because the young generation, they are the torch bearers, who are going to promote the agenda for inclusiveness, to promote the agenda for tolerance and also for a green Earth.

Tina Jabeen, *Former Managing Director, Startup Bangladesh Limited - Bangladesh*

⁵ Meet the Youth Empowerment Alliance [Video from 2021]: <https://www.youthcolab.org/yea>

What are the dreams and aspirations for the Youth Empowerment Alliance?

“

We hope to deepen our collaboration with Youth Co:Lab to provide more services for youth empowerment, leveraging on our strength in technology services for youth in the Asia-Pacific.”

Dr. Jianfeng Sui, CEO, TusHoldings Greater Bay Area (GBA)
- China

“

By working together, the Youth Empowerment Alliance can create a better ecosystem in the region to support entrepreneurs and society.

Daisuke Takatsuki, Principal, Asia Operations Team, CVC
Capital Partners – Japan

“

In the future, we hope that we can scale up Youth Co:Lab to other provinces all across the country of Cambodia and also help and support start-ups that create jobs and impact, for Cambodia.

Vandara Sin, Communications and Events Manager,
Impact Hub Phnom Penh - Cambodia

Outlook: The Springboard Amplifier Programme

In 2022, Youth Co:Lab launched the new Springboard Amplifier Programme. This is a capacity building initiative for entrepreneurship support organizations such as incubators, accelerators and think tanks in the Asia-Pacific through a peer-to-peer learning approach. Through this programme, local support organizations will be able to increase the quality of support services to young social entrepreneurs. 27 organizations from 11 countries have attended the 2022 Springboard Amplifier Programme.



Photo: Youth Co:Lab

Partnerships with other UN Agencies

Partner	Key joint activities
ILO – Decent Jobs for Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Youth Co:Lab Summit ◆ Joint webinar to disseminate findings on the impacts of COVID-19 on youth-led enterprises ◆ Collaboration on Decent Jobs for Youth programme ◆ Integrating Youth Co:Lab knowledge products to the Decent Jobs for Youth Knowledge Facility Platform ◆ Joint research on youth volunteerism and skills development for economic empowerment
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Joint research on gender barriers to entrepreneurship and leadership ◆ UNDP-UNICEF partnership for youth engagement and empowerment in Asia-Pacific, including Generation Unlimited in 8 countries
UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Joint programme on Indigenous youth social entrepreneurship ◆ Youth as Researchers programme in Pakistan
UNFPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Youth, Peace and Security Agenda

UN Volunteers

- ◆ Enabling in-person and online youth volunteering
- ◆ [Joint Research](#) on youth volunteerism and skills development for economic empowerment

UNCDF

- ◆ [Joint research](#) on youth engaging in digital economy
- ◆ [Joint research](#) on youth entrepreneurship and financial inclusion

UNESCAP

- ◆ Convened various global and regional thought leadership and policy advocacy dialogues and activities on youth entrepreneurship
- ◆ Asia-Pacific Youth Exchange Programme to support youth in creating community programmes addressing SDGs



Photo: Fiji 2018 National Dialogue

Snapshot of the Project Evaluation Findings

How does Youth Co:Lab add value...?

For Regional Partners

Youth Co:Lab adds value to its regional partners through expertise on youth engagement and social entrepreneurship, strong alignment of institutional values and mandates, and increased credibility from working closely with UNDP.

For National Partners

The regional nature of the Youth Co:Lab project brings multiple benefits to national partners, particularly for civil society organizations and private sector partners.

National partners find the project's regional connections to be important for them. One civil society organization working with Youth Co:Lab would extend their international outreach so they can bring an international perspective and understanding of the latest trends to young people in their country. They also see this as an entry point to help local youth gain international exposure and opportunities.

Participation of speakers from Youth Co:Lab and Citi Foundation network helps organizations reach large audiences and gain visibility. The brand value of UNDP, Citi Foundation, and Youth Co:Lab is a positive element that has helped their events gain more attention and increased participation from youth.

For UNDP

Youth Co:Lab provides considerable support to several UNDP's Regional Hub teams and helps create greater connections between these teams and national UNDP Country Offices on youth issues as well as with regional youth organizations.

Youth Co:Lab has raised the visibility of youth issues in UNDP at the regional and national levels, helped to break the programmatic silos, and increased the number of young staff hired by UNDP.

Strategy Alignment

Youth Co:Lab is closely aligned with key UN strategies on youth, Leaving No One Behind, gender equality and those of its multilateral and civil society organization partners. Its private sector partners, particularly at the regional level, also share many common objectives.



Photo:
Youth Co:Lab
Thailand / Thailand
Social Innovation
Platform



05

What do the participants say?

8.86/10

(based on 9,020 responses to the feedback form).

an average rating on the question: **“How useful was the workshop for your professional and/or personal activities?”**

85 percent

(based on 1,283 responses to the feedback form)

agree with the statement **“I feel more confident that I can become a young leader after the workshop.”**

“SDGs are a life skill we should all know about. If there was more awareness among young people about this, including at the high school level, then we will all have a better world.”

Iris, Movers Program - China Evaluation participant

The Movers Programme

The Movers programme is a regional movement of young volunteers taking action to develop **SDGs awareness, entrepreneurial mindsets and 21st century skills** through localized training workshops across the region, with the aim to engage youth from harder-to-reach communities.

By using a training-of-trainer approach, the Movers programme trained and strengthened the capacities of 506 Movers facilitators between 2019 and 2021. The online and offline workshops organized by Movers volunteers were attended 43,022 times⁴, reaching over 25,000 young people, strengthening their readiness for social innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership.

The Movers programme is founded by Youth Co:Lab and implemented with the support of ILO, LinkedIn and UN Volunteers, among others.

The Movers Programme is based on three pillars of 21st century skills



1

Digital Literacy Skills

Information and communications technology and technological literacy



2

Soft Skills

Leadership, communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills



3

Global Citizenship

Social and cultural competencies to support inclusive and sustainable societies

⁴Number of workshop attendances. Based on the feedback data, it is estimated that each Movers participant takes part in 1.66 workshop on average.

Snapshot of the Project Evaluation Findings

The Movers programme has reached more than 25,000 youth who are now more aware of the SDGs, gender equality and inclusion issues, the potential of social enterprises as a form of employment and diverse soft and digital skills.

- ◆ The Movers programme has been quite effective at reaching and engaging a large number of youth of diverse backgrounds and introducing them to the SDGs and core skills related to social innovation and leadership.
- ◆ Only a small percentage of those who take part in the core Movers training programme go on to become Movers Volunteers. Those who do, however, report significant positive changes in their lives and skills.
- ◆ Although the Movers programme has successfully adopted inclusive approaches and reached out to more marginalized and vulnerable communities, the majority of their trainees come from urban areas and are university students.
- ◆ The cost of conducting in-person workshops can be a factor that limits the extent of future outreach, particularly to more marginalised or vulnerable communities in remote communities.
- ◆ The Movers programme is underfunded for what it is trying to achieve in some countries. This may undermine its long-term sustainability and growth.

Movers Empowering Youth in their Communities



Probin Tripura, an Indigenous leader from the Tripura community, along with a team of Movers volunteers, organized a series of Movers Workshops to empower 150 Indigenous youth across Bangladesh, in April-May 2021.

Mehrin Ruaid has organized a series of Movers Workshops, focused on entrepreneurship and employability, to empower young women from the rural area of Charsadda in Pakistan.

Michael V L Chhandama, an Indigenous young leader, organized a series of climate workshops for the Indigenous community of Mizoram, India.

06

Summits and Other Regional Events

Youth Co:Lab organizes regional events to provide platforms to showcase and celebrate youth-led SDG solutions. Such events allow young people to lead and shape the discussion around Agenda 2030 as well as for stakeholders across the region to come together to share knowledge, experiences and ideas and feel inspired to take action to amplify the impacts of young social entrepreneurs, leaders and social innovators.

During the first five years, the Youth Co:Lab project convened three Regional Youth Co:Lab Summits, co-hosted four Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship events in partnership with the All-China Youth Federation and convened thematic regional dialogue activities on Business Integrity Toolkit and Regional Dialogue on Youth Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge for Human Mobility in Asia-Pacific.

Youth Co:Lab Summits



2018 Youth Co:Lab Summit *Bangkok, Thailand*

Organized in partnership with UNESCAP, the first Youth Co:Lab summit brought together 250 participants, including over 30 young winners from the innovation challenges that took place in the 2017-2018 National Dialogues in nine countries as well as representatives from government, private sector and the social entrepreneurship community. It laid the groundwork for longer-term regional engagement by UNDP and other partners to empower youth on social innovation and entrepreneurship.



2019 Youth Co:Lab Summit *Hanoi, Viet Nam*

The second Youth Co:Lab Summit was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam in 2019. Over 500 participants including young social entrepreneurs and leaders, government officials from 20 countries, the private sector and other ecosystem stakeholders gathered to discuss youth leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship and how the enabling environment for youth-led action can be strengthened. 34 youth-led social enterprises pitched their SDG-solutions at the Regional Social Innovation Challenge.



2021 Youth Co:Lab Summit *Online*

The 2021 Youth Co:Lab Summit was hosted online in June 2021. The summit aimed to advance the visibility of youth social entrepreneurship and innovation, provide showcasing opportunities for young social entrepreneurs across the Asia-Pacific region and foster a sense of community within the ecosystem. The online summit also provided an opportunity to reflect on the past Youth Co:Lab activities, plan the way forward and discuss the trends within the youth entrepreneurship ecosystems in the region to identify entry points for strengthening it. The online event reached around 6,500 youth delegates.

Other Key Regional Events

Business Integrity Regional Dialogue

From 21st to 23rd August 2019, Youth Co:Lab and [FairBiz](#) held a 'Business Integrity Regional Dialogue' event in Bangkok to build young entrepreneurs' awareness and capacity to follow and implement fair business practices. As a result of the workshop, Youth Co:Lab and FairBiz have co-designed a [Business Integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs](#) that has now been translated into Vietnamese and Urdu languages.

Regional Dialogue on Youth Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship

In January 2020, A regional dialogue on 'Youth Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship' was held in partnership with UNESCO, the Asia Indigenous People's Pact, UNDP Business and Human Rights, and the GEF Small Grant Programme. The Regional Dialogue conducted capacity building sessions for young Indigenous entrepreneurs to equip them with entrepreneurial skills to create businesses that preserve Indigenous cultures and empower their communities.

Regional Innovation Challenge for Human Mobility

In 2021, 123 young people from across the Asia-Pacific region participated in the first Regional Innovation Challenge for Human Mobility organized by Youth Co:Lab Philippines and the UNDP Human Mobility Team, in partnership with Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), International Organization for Migration (IOM), makesense, Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat). Five winners emerged from the challenge and were provided with mentorship support and linked to different country offices where the winners are based. The materials produced from the Innovation Challenge were used for the International Migrants Day campaign led by the regional youth team.



Snapshot of the Project Evaluation Findings

What is the added value dimension of the project's regional approach to youth leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship?

- ◆ Highly useful and effective regional and international connections for the project partners and youth participants, particularly through its regional summits and forums.
- ◆ Use the project as an advocacy platform and model for youth participation and leadership.
- ◆ Development of common approaches, models, and resources that different Country Offices could apply as best suited to them at the national level.
- ◆ Creation of a brand that generates excitement about working with youth across the region.
- ◆ Capitalising on UNDP's credibility and experience and mandate to leverage high levels of financing and in-kind contributions from donors, civil society organizations, other multilateral organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.




Photo: Youth Co:Lab Thailand and Thailand Social Innovation Lab

07

Online Communities Promoting Youth Social Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Leadership

During the last five years, Youth Co:Lab has built large online communities on its social media platforms to **promote discussion, increase visibility and raise awareness of youth entrepreneurship, social innovation and leadership**. Social media channels play a key role in engaging stakeholders to support young social innovators and entrepreneurs.


Based on the social media analytics study conducted in 2021, between June 2018 and June 2021, Youth Co:Lab content had 60 million impressions on Facebook and 1.2 million on Twitter. The majority of Youth Co:Lab's social media audience are based in Bangladesh, Nepal and Indonesia and aged 18-24 years old.

Photo: Youth Co:Lab



Youth Co:Lab Online Communities at a Glance


251,111
followers on Facebook


2,963
people in the
LinkedIn Community


2,390
followers on Twitter


5,171
followers on Instagram


818
subscribers on YouTube


9,706
unique website visitors
per month on average

A Snapshot of the Evaluation Findings Related to Communications

Youth Co:Lab's communications team has been successful in using communications to build youth engagement and increase the visibility of social enterprises at the regional level.

It has also made strategic use of regional summits to launch Youth Co:Lab's knowledge products and is actively monitoring and tracking the media coverage of youth issues in the region.

Selected Communication Campaign Highlights

Youth Co:Lab 2021, 'Summit Digital Campaign' garnered 24.7 million impressions and 3.5 million video views. The 'Facebook Live' events reached 183,000 people.

The **Climate Action campaign** for COP 26 was very well received in 2021. Youth Co:Lab collaborated with seven country offices in the campaign which garnered a combined 339,900 impressions on social media. The Youth Co:Lab website saw 8,883 unique visitors during this campaign.



08

Research and Thought Leadership

Youth Co:Lab aims to generate and amplify evidence on resources and means that are necessary to strengthen the ecosystem for youth leadership, social innovation, and entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region and address identified knowledge gaps. Through its publications, Youth Co:Lab increases the visibility of the project's mission and encourages young people and the ecosystem partners to join the movement.

Regional flagship studies and key publications



How Young Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific Responded to COVID-19 (2021)

[iLink](#)



Chapter 4: Solutions From Young Social Entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Youth Solutions Report 2020, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (SDSN Youth)

[iLink](#)



Youth Entrepreneurs Engaging in the Digital Economy: The Next Generation (2020)

[iLink](#)



Youth Entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific 2019

[iLink](#)



Addressing Gender Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Leadership Among Girls and Young Women in South-East Asia (2021)

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Youth Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion: Outlook for Asean and SAARC (2019)

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Youth Volunteerism and Skills Development for Economic Empowerment in the Asia-Pacific Region (2019)

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Business Integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs (2020)

*translated to Urdu and Vietnamese

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Youth Co:Lab's National Ecosystem Studies

Two Pilot Studies and the Way Forward

Youth Co:Lab realizes that developing an enabling environment for youth-led social enterprises requires an understanding of the overall ecosystem, including its strengths, challenges and opportunities.

During the initial years of the project implementation, Youth Co:Lab used the 'Government to Community' framework (G2C), in National Dialogues as a tool to facilitate discussion on the start-up ecosystem. Based on the positive experiences of the use of G2C as well as the identification of some gaps, the project piloted broader youth entrepreneurship ecosystem diagnostic studies in two countries, Bangladesh and Indonesia, in 2021.

Outlook: In 2022, similar studies are being conducted in the Maldives, Singapore and Pakistan. The results of the studies will guide future programme development and help facilitate discussions among the ecosystem stakeholders in the research countries and beyond.

Snapshot of the Project Evaluation Findings Related to Upstream Approaches

Youth Co:Lab has demonstrated its thought leadership by working with regional partners in a strategic way to develop key research products to both inform and influence decision-makers and key stakeholders in the youth social entrepreneurship ecosystem and are among the thought leaders on youth in the region.

Youth Co:Lab has established itself as a thought leader on youth and youth entrepreneurship issues in the Asia-Pacific particularly by:

- ◆ Leading by example through the hiring of young people at the regional and national level to work within the UNDP framework
- ◆ Identifying research partners in the region that can lead studies on specific topics related to youth and youth entrepreneurship in the region

At a more systemic level, the reports on the diagnostics of youth entrepreneurship ecosystems in different countries made youth and entrepreneurship issues more visible with there being some evidence that these are starting to influence decision-makers.

The combination of knowledge products, regional summits, national Youth Co:Lab programmes and the youth entrepreneur ecosystem diagnostics have started to contribute to policy change related to youth and entrepreneurship at the national level in a few countries.

For example:

In Bangladesh, the dialogues with different stakeholders in the ecosystem diagnostic study are influencing the government to consider policy changes. For example, the Government of Bangladesh recently initiated a dialogue and workshop on how to make the taxation system easier for start-up organizations based on the recommendations of the diagnostic study.

In Viet Nam, the government of Viet Nam consulted with UNDP and Youth Co:Lab for inputs on two youth-related policies being developed by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The proposed youth law originally did not include any mention of youth-led enterprises. UNDP and Youth Co:Lab, highlighted youth entrepreneurship related issues during several consultations regarding the policy. The government of Viet Nam issued the final draft of the new youth law in 2020 that included a mention of youth entrepreneurs.

In China, UNDP and Youth Co:Lab's regional summit in 2018 contributed to a new awareness of youth issues within the Chinese government. The UNDP Youth Coordinator collaborated with the Chinese Youth Ministry to formulate the agenda. The Regional Summit forum in China showcased effective youth-led social enterprises. The government of China made a commitment to empower youth to work towards achieving the SDGs and on social enterprise establishment, and extended their collaboration with UNDP for 2 more years. After 4 successful years of collaborating on youth empowerment initiatives, the Government of China has incorporated the UN Youth Strategy in their current agenda. As a part of this new approach, the Government of China and UNDP co-hosted an inclusive youth forum on the theme of the SDGs.

09

Outlook

“This is the time UNDP and Youth Co:Lab needs to ramp it up. It is a hard time around the world, and people are trying to be innovative and stand on their feet. If you can encourage innovations, it is going to be a blessing for our planet and our future. Thank you Youth Co:Lab for the constant support and for keeping me on the radar. They always remember you and support both your professional and personal development too.”

*Young Social Entrepreneur,
Ei8ht Sports, Samoa (Project Final Evaluation)*

Inspired by the thousands of young social entrepreneurs from the Youth Co:Lab community and building on the successes and lessons learnt during the first five years, the project is ready for its next chapter.

The core objective of Youth Co:Lab continues to remain the same: **accelerate the implementation of the SDGs through youth leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.**

The next project phase will have a particular focus on Leaving No One Behind and empowering young people from vulnerable communities, including youth with disabilities, young women, indigenous youth, migrant and displaced youth and LGBTQI+ youth, and will continue to contribute to systemic change that supports youth empowerment.

Youth Co:Lab will tap into the opportunities identified and follow the recommendations provided by the evaluation.

Photo: YouthCo:Lab Thailand
and Thailand Social Innovation Lab



Summary of the Recommendations Provided by the Project Evaluation to Strengthen the Project Approach During the Next Programme Period:

01

Inclusive approach to achieve the UN promise of Leave No One Behind (LNOB):

Targeted and strategic approach to identify the challenges faced by marginalised and vulnerable groups including women, LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and displaced or migrant youth and implement solutions for these communities through the Youth Co:Lab model.

02

Mainstreaming Gender to Promote Gender Equality:

Conduct a gender analysis to guide the programme activities and strengthen the application of gender transformative approaches.

03

National Partners and Approaches:

Develop support systems to localize the Youth Co:Lab approach at the national level and address any existing bottlenecks.

04

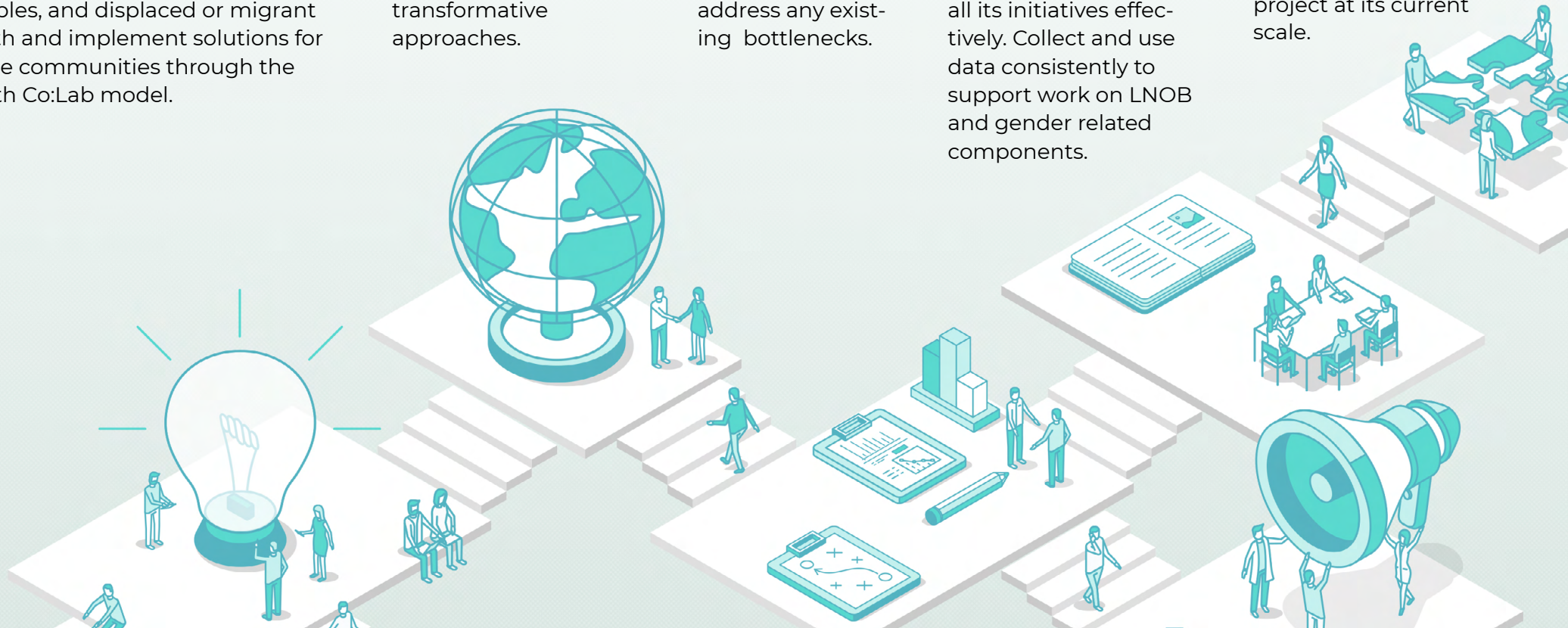
Monitoring & Evaluation:

Strengthen consistent approaches to data collection and monitoring to ensure the project captures the results of all its initiatives effectively. Collect and use data consistently to support work on LNOB and gender related components.

05

Human Resources and Contracting:

Consider reviewing the management structure to ensure it is the most effective and efficient for the project at its current scale.





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