

YOUTH  
CO:LAB

Project Co-Leads



Citi Foundation



# Youth Co:Lab 2021-2022



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Photos: Youth Co:Lab

# Youth Co:Lab

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 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.

During its 2021-2022 programme cycle, Youth Co:Lab continued to implement activities across the three interconnected levels of action:



At the **downstream level**, directly supporting young aspiring and existing entrepreneurs through national dialogues and innovation challenges and the Springboard programme,



At the **midstream level**, connecting and building the capacities of the ecosystem stakeholders, and



At the **upstream level**, producing action-oriented research to contribute to system level change and policy development.

This report presents an overview of the Youth Co:Lab activities and the results achieved by the project during the 2021-2022 programme cycle.



# Snapshot of Results to Date

**14K**

young people across 28 countries and territories supported through social innovation and entrepreneurship activities.

**1,530**

youth-led social enterprises or social innovation teams created or improved.

**210**

stakeholders joined Youth Empowerment Alliance.

**14**

research products published to support data-driven decision-making.

**250K**

people's community on Facebook created to celebrate and raise awareness of youth social innovation and entrepreneurship.

**240K**

participants reached through events hosted or co-hosted by Youth Co:Lab and the Movers programme.



# National Youth Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Activities

Since 2017, Youth Co:Lab has created or improved over 1,530 early-stage social enterprises or social innovation teams led by young people across 28 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region.

Based on results self-reported by social enterprises from Youth Co:Lab's cohorts, they have collectively enhanced over 112,000 livelihoods and served 9.94 million users through their products and services.

During the 2021-2022 programme cycle, Youth Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship development activities organized or supported by Youth Co:Lab reached over 5,100 participants and engaged 63 national ecosystem partners to help aspiring young social entrepreneurs and innovators to strengthen their SDG solutions and turn their ideas into businesses. More than 300 youth teams received business development support through national activities.



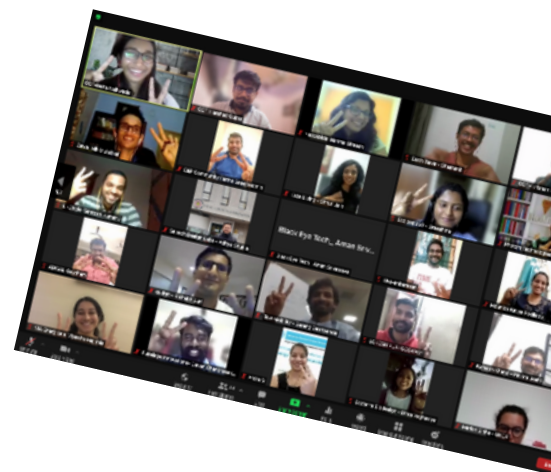
# National Programme Spotlights



## Climate and Green Entrepreneurship Programme in India

In India, 41 social enterprises, including 23 women-led/co-led social enterprises, joined the Youth Co:Lab 2021-2022 cohort. These youth-led social enterprises or innovation teams work in circular economy and waste management, sustainable transportation, sustainable tourism, and sustainable food technology. They participated in a three-month-long national support programme followed by a National Innovation Challenge.

The winners of the programme were PadCare Labs and Li-Circle. PadCare Labs is a social enterprise providing a hygiene management solution that completes the loop of menstrual hygiene economy by generating harmless, recyclable material out of sanitary pads. Founded in 2020, Li-Circle is working on reverse logistics and recycling lithium-ion batteries. It aims to strengthen the global advanced battery storage raw material supply chain through sustainable and eco-friendly urban mining.



## The Bangsamoro Ideation Impact Challenge – Youth Supporting Community Peacebuilding in the Philippines

The Bangsamoro Ideation Impact Challenge (IIC) awarded 19 youth innovation teams that work on community peacebuilding and development projects in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. IIC was led by the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) in partnership with UNDP in the Philippines through Youth Co:Lab and the Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Tolerance and Respect for Diversity Phase II project supported by the European Union.

Twenty-seven qualifying teams underwent the Unfold: Project Development Bootcamp, an interactive learning activity where participants were provided tips and tools to enhance their projects through 14 curated sessions. Out of them, 19 teams advanced to pitch their solutions to a panel of judges.

Youth Co:Lab awarded Php 25,000 to five teams demonstrating sustainability. Among the winners are N'ditarun Tano, which empowers local weavers with products that reflect their culture and identity; Reyousable Is Possible, which seeks to strengthen the call for environmental awareness by reducing plastic pollution; Responsive and Proactive - Youth Serving Organization, which aims to bring the beauty of Tahmu making to the youth and spread native practices; Proyouthactive Philippines, which helps single mothers in need through entrepreneurship education and support; and Kakasie-Youth Serving Organization, which eradicates the systemic problems of waste disposal through a coastal clean-up.

Fatima Marwa Alih Fadzulkarim, representative of Responsive and Proactive - Youth Serving Organization shared that through the Ideation Impact Challenge, she realized that "we have to open our mind to the choices of possible solutions for the communities without disregarding the consideration of what is feasible and most impactful for them."



## National Springboard 4.0 and Employability and Entrepreneurship Training for Transgender Youth in Bangladesh

Youth Co:Lab piloted an initiative in Bangladesh to improve the livelihoods of the transgender community. The initiative was implemented in collaboration with TransEnd, a youth-led non-profit organization that works on improving the socio-economic conditions of the transgender community in Bangladesh. Based on the needs assessment, twenty transgender individuals were provided training in handicrafts and beautification to avail employment opportunities.

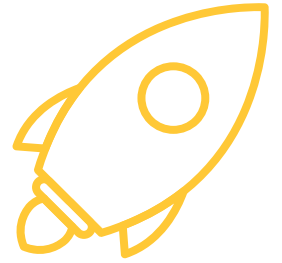
During this cycle, Youth Co:Lab also took the national Springboard Programme to the next level by offering a tailored six-month mentorship programme in partnership with YGAP Bangladesh. The Springboard Programme 4.0 provided one-on-one support to the top ten teams to respond to their unique needs. This was done by curating a series of masterclasses covering crucial business skills and hosting topic-specific one-on-one sessions with subject matter experts. On the final leg of the mentorship programme, the teams participated in a Community Pitch session. The three winning teams were Safepad Bangladesh, Borac Energia and Pcycle.

Check out also the Youth Co:Lab [National Programme Websites](#) where we highlight events, dialogues, and other programme related information.





# Regional Youth Co:Lab Springboard



## Springboard Plus 2022: Amplifying the Potential of Young Social Entrepreneurs

National-level activities are critical stepping-stones for young social innovators and entrepreneurs to access further support opportunities Youth Co:Lab offers to help them strengthen their solutions. These opportunities include regional offers such as the Springboard Plus programme and mentorship support.

The 2022 Springboard Plus pre-accelerator programme was implemented in collaboration with Accelerating Asia to support early-stage entrepreneurs to scale and grow their businesses. The programme was conducted over 20 weeks and included 8 modules on investment readiness and 12 modules on SDG thematic areas, such as climate action, Leaving No One Behind, and women empowerment.

### 2022 Youth Co:Lab Springboard Plus Cohort

- 230 young social entrepreneurs, including 105 female founders, strengthened their capacities and received mentorship through the programme.
- The 180 participating teams are based across 23 countries and territories.
- Based on the session feedback, the participants were very satisfied with the programme. The average scores ranged from 8.53-9.55/10 per session among the respondents.



# Regional Youth Co:Lab Springboard

## Social Enterprise Highlights

**CyberPurify**, based in Viet Nam, uses Artificial Intelligence to filter harmful content on the Internet, helping create a safer Internet for businesses, families, and children around the world.



**Project Kanlong/RADIC** aims to provide micro-mobile housing units for homeless people in Manila, the Philippines. The units are well-designed and upgraded habitation spaces that aim to provide a transitional shelter for the users.

**Code Green** is a social enterprise that provides a one-stop e-commerce marketplace for eco-friendly products and packaging solutions in Pakistan.



**OHFA Tech**, in South Korea, has developed Taptilo, a smart braille learning device for the blind and visually impaired. With Taptilo, the social enterprise aims to increase braille literacy to improve access to learning and quality education opportunities for the blind and visually impaired.



# Regional Youth Co:Lab Springboard



## Graduation Testimonials

"I have loved the diversity of courses/sessions, my interactions with the other social entrepreneurs, and the support of the genuine, friendly, and approachable team. They reach out with opportunities specific to your startup, which is both helpful and adds to the feeling of being a part of a truly authentic and caring team."

- Emaan Rafiq Rangoonwala, Founder and CEO, Code Green, Pakistan

"This platform has given me an opportunity to share my ideas and what I am working on. More than that, it is a platform where social entrepreneurs and youth across the Asia-Pacific region come together to connect, network, and learn from different social entrepreneurs who are trying to make a difference in the world we are living in."

- Yangchen Lhamo, Founder and Owner, Yoga Yangchen

"Our experience with the Youth Co:Lab has been wonderful. The modules are very well designed and cater to all that you need to grow your enterprise. Youth Co:Lab team has always been very supportive and have gone beyond their scope to help us out."

- Aasawari Kane, Founding Member, PadCare Labs Pvt. Ltd.

"Youth Co:Lab Springboard has added value for Dochaa and given us platforms for international and national exposure, and provided us with mentorship. This has been crucial for major business decisions. This experience has taught us to do business beyond borders while putting the planet and people before profits. The networks we have created through Youth Co:Lab have given us more opportunities to collaborate and co-create."

- Watsal Rajbhandari, Co-Founder, Dochaa Pvt Ltd, Nepal

"Youth Co:Lab is a wonderful platform, for people who want to learn new things and meet changemakers. This platform connected me to a global network of social entrepreneurs where we were able to share experiences and learn from each other."

- Kuraish Bin Quader Chowdhury, Founder, MILE

"Getting into the Youth Co:Lab Springboard programme, transformed the way my team and I communicated our whats and whys. The programme also gave us the opportunity to network with other founders from the Asia-Pacific region, some of whom we have partnered with to create an impactful change!"

- Zainab Miskin, Director Sales and Marketing, Lilac Kukuns

# Regional Youth Co:Lab Springboard

## Bridged Opportunities

Since 2017, Youth Co:Lab has facilitated over 1,104 opportunities for young social entrepreneurs, dedicating over 2,915 hours of mentoring in the process. During the 2021-2022 cycle, the Regional Springboard programme bridged youth-led enterprises to various opportunities, including funding, awards and mentorship, as well as specific knowledge transfers such as crowdfunding and e-commerce support. For example:

- Through Youth Co:Lab's nomination, Tamara Gondo, founder and CEO of Liberty Society (Indonesia), is selected as one of the six changemakers to join the recent cohort of Generation 17 Global Young Leaders Network.
- Afruza Tanzi, founder of Protihba (Bangladesh), was invited by Youth Co:Lab to speak at the 2022 ECOSOC Youth Forum Regional Session. Through Youth Co:Lab's 1:1 crowdfunding coaching, Protihba also successfully launched the crowdfunding campaign which aimed to set up a female-convenient Training and Production Center to facilitate free training for aspiring women artisans.
- Youth Co:Lab connected youth-led social enterprises, including enterprises such as Snazzi, Burneo Komrad, LAGOM, LonePack, Yoga Yangchen, Project Kanglong/RADIC, Humans of Safe Places, Code Green, and SHIMMER SDGs Hub, to the Citi Business Mentoring Programme, where young social entrepreneurs received mentorship from Citi's Management Associates on market research, pitch deck refinement, legal support, and business strategy during the 2-month programme.
- 5 Youth Co:Lab Alumni Enterprises, including DeafTawk, iFarmer, Mobiliti, MiTerro and Bioniks were selected for The 2022 The Meaningful Business 100. The Meaningful Business 100 recognises business leaders combining profit and purpose to help achieve the SDGs.
- Youth Co:Lab mobilised and facilitated US\$ 207,000 of grants from partners such as CVC Capital Partners and OPPO, which directly benefitted 16 Youth Co:Lab Alumni Enterprises.



Check the [Spotlight on Youth Co:Lab Entrepreneurs](#) on Youth Co:Lab's website to learn more about the latest successes of young social entrepreneurs and be inspired by the new heights they are reaching every day.

# Youth Empowerment Alliance

As of September 2022, 210 ecosystem stakeholders had joined Youth Co:Lab's Youth Empowerment Alliance. Youth Co:Lab worked with 53 regional and 63 national partners during this cycle to strengthen the capacities of young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs and enhance the operating environment for youth-led social enterprises.

Among 63 national partners, 27 of them received capacity building through the **Springboard Amplifier** programme, which is a new capacity-building programme for entrepreneurship support organisations through a peer-to-peer learning approach. The programme strives to increase **the quality and inclusiveness** of support services to young social entrepreneurs and facilitate networking and knowledge exchange among the ecosystem partners. The participant survey respondents rated the programme 9.5/10 which demonstrates a high satisfaction rate.



Peer-To-Peer  
Learning Approach



Capacity Building of  
Local Incubators



Increased Quality of  
Support Services for  
YSEs



Strengthened  
Ecosystem

Watch a video message from Youth Co:Lab National Partners via [this link](#).



“It was delightful connecting with people from the region with one common goal.”

Maisha Ahmed, YY Ventures Limited, Bangladesh

“This programme has made me feel more excited to help entrepreneurs in their respective journeys. I've gained so many insights that will help me in my organization, and I've also met a lot of great people who inspire me to keep doing what I do.”

Audrey Marie-Louise, The Spark Project



Through the Springboard Amplifier Programme, Youth Co:Lab is establishing national alliances in Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Pakistan to deepen their engagement with local partners and facilitate knowledge exchange. In 2023, Springboard Amplifier Programme Level 2 will be implemented from February to June with an advanced curriculum with a special focus on **Leave No One Behind** agenda.

## UN Partnerships

**International Labour Organization and UN ESCAP** – Youth Co:Lab, UN ESCAP, and ILO partnered with the Commonwealth Secretariat to establish a Strategic Intelligence Hub and build a community of practice around youth entrepreneurship consisting of policy and programmatic leaders at the regional, national and sub-national levels.

**United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme** – Youth Co:Lab continued collaboration with UNV and connected 11 youth-led social enterprises with Online Volunteers, who supported young social entrepreneurs in social media communication, writing and copy editing, strategic marketing, and graphic design. For example, Suri the Goods was able to utilise the help of an Online Volunteer to draft a crowdfunding campaign page story. Code Green received their updated branding guidelines from an Online Volunteer.

## Ecosystem Features

Youth Co:Lab is grateful for the precious support of its partners and stakeholders. We have been delighted to receive recognitions from many stakeholders for our work and collaborative efforts. For example:

- The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) featured Youth Co:Lab in the publication series "Human Rights and Development" as an example of a youth rights-based approach.
- The 2022 AVPN Constellation Awards recognised "collaborative solutions that are addressing complex challenges of our times". The Youth Co:Lab project was selected as a winner in the Economic Opportunities Category.
- The joint research of Youth Co:Lab and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Addressing Gender Barriers to Entrepreneurship and Leadership Among Girls and Young Women in Southeast Asia was awarded as one of the UNICEF's Gender Evidence Award Winners.
- Youth Co:Lab's collaboration with Islamic Development Bank and the joint research with IsDB and Startup Bangladesh Limited were featured in issue 16 of Islamic Development Bank Group's SDGs Digest.





# 2022 Youth Co:Lab Summit

The Youth Co:Lab 2022 Summit was organized in Singapore on 4-7 July 2022. The Summit was envisioned to highlight, encourage, and celebrate the role of youth in the Decade of Action, showcase and inspire youth to action, especially aligning on the larger Youth Co:Lab themes: **Youth in Climate Action and Leaving no Youth Behind.**

The event brought together 260 in-person participants, including young entrepreneurs and leaders, government representatives, the private sector, UN agencies, startup and investor community, and media representatives, and gained 20,000 online views during the event,

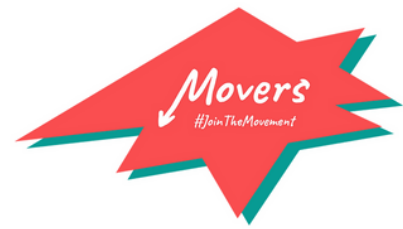


Watch a summit video [via this link.](#)





# The Movers Programme



The Movers programme strengthened young people's 21st-century and entrepreneurial skills through online and in-person workshops organized across the Asia-Pacific region by the Movers volunteers. Over 18,000 participants\* attended Movers workshops during this cycle, and 359 new Movers volunteers were trained and mentored through the train-the-trainer approach.

Youth Co:Lab is a founding partner of the Movers programme. The other key partners include ILO's C-BED programme, LinkedIn, EY, and the UN Volunteers programme.



\*Based on the total number of times the workshops have been attended. Based on the feedback data, it is estimated that one participant attends an average of 1.66 workshops.

# Research and Thought Leadership

Youth Co:Lab continued to strengthen its role as a thought leader in youth social entrepreneurship and contribute to evidence-based programming through action-oriented research.

## Climate Concern to Climate Action: The Role of Young Social Entrepreneurs

Youth Co:Lab report titled "Turning Climate Concern to Climate Action: The Role of Young Social Entrepreneurs" was launched in November, providing an overview of the nexus between young social entrepreneurs and climate action. The study explores the views of young people involved in businesses and non-profit organizations in the Asia-Pacific region on climate change and its impact, how they are engaged in providing climate solutions, the challenges they face in advancing climate action, and their future support needs.

Read an op-ed by Kanni Wignaraja, the U.N. Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the U.N. Development Program's Asia and the Pacific Bureau and Peter Babej, Citigroup's Asia-Pacific Chief Executive. via [this link](#). The op-ed was published by Nikkei Asia.



"Social entrepreneurship has great potential to mobilize the young generation to engage in efforts to achieve SDGs and make a positive impact in the community through their actions."

Survey respondent



## National Studies on the State of the Ecosystem for Youth Entrepreneurship

National studies on the state of the ecosystem for youth-led enterprises were published in Singapore as well as in Bangladesh and Indonesia in partnership with Islamic Development Bank. The studies assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the national entrepreneurship ecosystems and provided recommendations regarding strategic entry-points for strengthening an inclusive operating environment for young entrepreneurs. New studies were initiated in the Maldives and Pakistan in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank and they will be launched in 2023.

Leveraging the learnings from the national studies and other research in the field, Youth Co:Lab and IsDB produced a toolkit that aims to provide actionable guidance to policymakers, development practitioners, researchers, and young people interested in conducting an assessment or facilitating dialogues on youth entrepreneurship.





# Leaving No One Behind

Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is a cross-cutting priority of Youth Co:Lab across the project activities. Youth Co:Lab continued to create visibility to young women and youth from underserved communities who are driving positive change through their solutions. These activities highlighted the opportunities social entrepreneurship provides as well as challenges and obstacles faced by young people on their entrepreneurial paths.

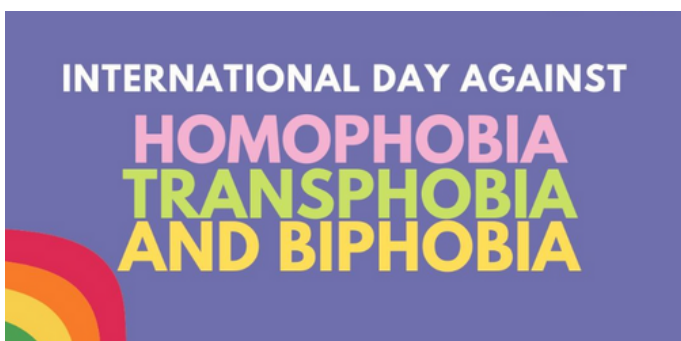
## Showcasing the Journeys of Young Trailblazers

Women's Entrepreneurship Day Campaign gave the voice to young women trailblazers who are driving positive change not only through their SDG solutions but also by acting as inspiring role models to other aspiring and existing women social entrepreneurs.



To mark the 2022 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples Youth Co:Lab held an inspiring panel discussion with insights into the lives of entrepreneurs from Indigenous communities and showcased their stories through a social media campaign.

In view of 2022 International Women's Day the social media campaign featured stories of 6 social entrepreneurs and a Springboard Plus session was held exploring what and why of gender lens investing and how young founders can unlock these investments.



A campaign was carried out in May to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Lesbophobia, and Transphobia. It included 5 videos featuring YouthCo:Lab entrepreneurs, a blog post, and a panel discussion on "Diversity in Innovation - Youth Breaking Gender Barriers in Entrepreneurship".

# Outlook:

## Strengthening the Support Provided to Underserved Youth

During the 2021-2022 programme cycle, Youth Co:Lab continued to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across its youth social entrepreneurship and innovation activities at the national and regional levels.

Youth Co:Lab continues to strengthen its focus on supporting and empowering youth from underserved communities during the next programme cycle. This will be done through a dedicated strategy that focuses on marginalised youth who can be the drivers of change because of their personal, first-hand experience in facing the most pressing social, economic, political, and environmental challenges.

**The key LNOB programme offers include but are not limited to:**

### Springboard4LNOB

**Springboard4LNOB** is a 3-month online programme focusing on networking, dedicated support, and knowledge sharing from young founders and LNOB subject experts. Focused programme component on the LNOB topics will enable young social entrepreneurs to build more inclusive SDG solutions. Youth Co:Lab will also continue featuring social enterprises from underserved communities in communication campaigns to help them increase their visibility.



**Strategic  
Intelligence Hub**

**The Springboard Amplifier 4LNOB** will integrate topics related to startup support with LNOB expertise, aiming to make incubation and acceleration programmes more inclusive and accessible to entrepreneurs from underserved communities and marginalised backgrounds.

Youth Co:Lab continues to contribute to **diversity, equity, and inclusion in youth entrepreneurship ecosystems and at the policy level** through action-oriented research and national and regional stakeholder dialogues to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing.



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