

YOUTH LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ASIA-PACIFIC

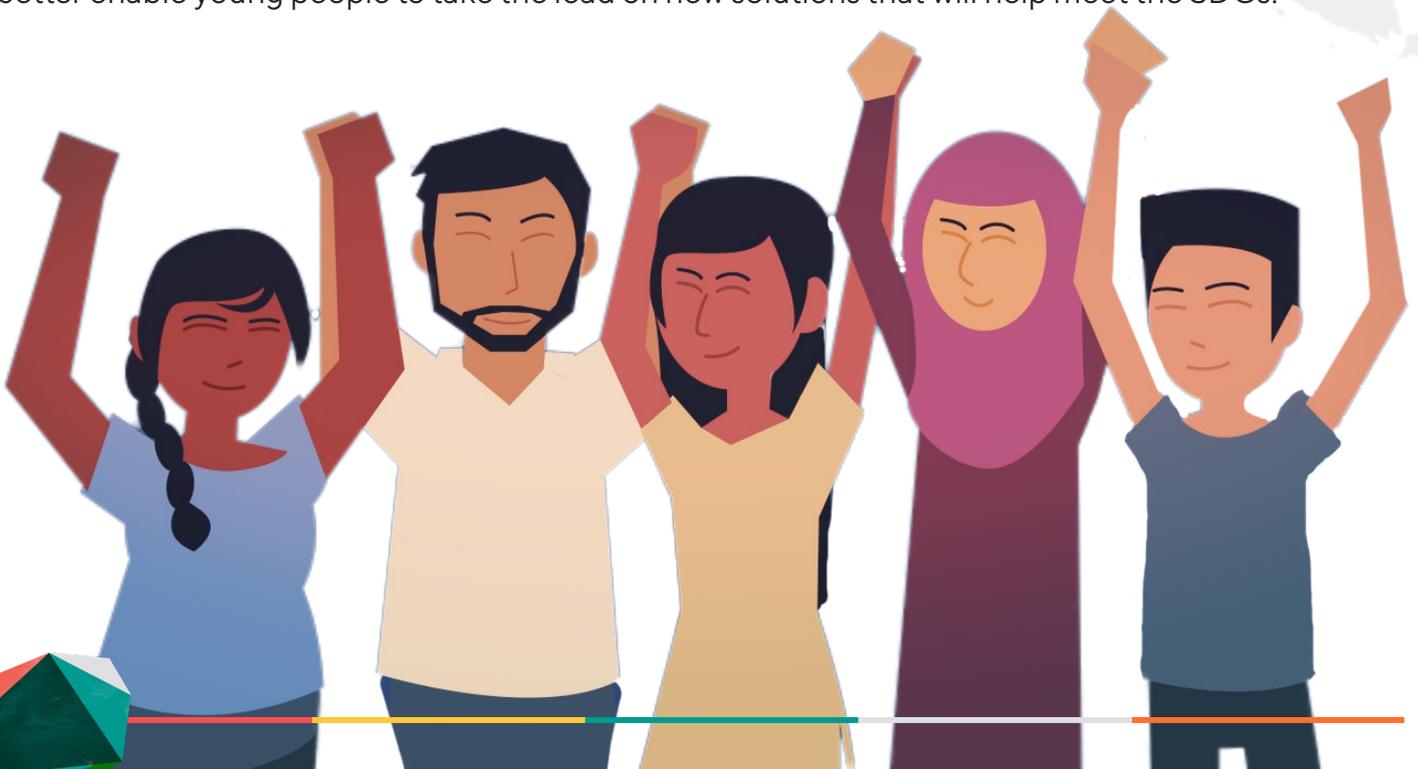
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the **important role of youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and calls for action against the challenges faced by young people that limits their economic, social and political inclusion. Today, young people are **more connected, creative, informed and persuasive** than any previous generation. Young people are responding to the challenges of today with innovative approaches, contributing fresh ideas, creating the world they want, and driving human development for themselves, their communities and their societies.

But at the same time, of the **660 million young people in Asia and the Pacific**, around **160 million are not in employment, education or training (NEET)**, facing dire economic insecurity. In addition, many young people are left out of decision-making processes, which further contributes to their marginalization and exclusion.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

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 Asia-Pacific countries to **invest in and empower youth** to accelerate implementation of the SDGs through **leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship**.

By developing 21st century skills, catalyzing and sustaining youth-led startups and social enterprises across the region, Youth Co:Lab is positioning young people front and center in order to solve the region's most pressing challenges. In addition to supporting youth entrepreneurship, Youth Co:Lab also works closely with **multiple stakeholders across the region**, including governments, civil society and the private sector, to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem and policy support to better enable young people to take the lead on new solutions that will help meet the SDGs.



PROJECT OUTPUTS



Hosting national and regional dialogues, social innovation challenges, and other events across the region to develop 21st century skills of young people, foster youth-led entrepreneurship, provide leadership training opportunities for young people and raise awareness about the SDGs in order to accelerate their implementation.



Creating and strengthening national and regional Youth Empowerment Alliances to support young entrepreneurs – particularly young women and marginalized youth – by connecting them with resources, mentors, partners and other in-kind support to develop their ideas into viable business models for sustainable social impact.



Influencing the development and adoption of youth-oriented and youth-friendly policies on a national and regional level through thought leadership and a multi-stakeholder platform for engagement.



Producing action-oriented research on 21st century skills, youth entrepreneurship and innovation.

PROJECT RESULTS & WHAT'S AHEAD

Over the last **4 years**, Youth Co:Lab has been implemented in **25 countries and territories** in Asia and the Pacific. The national dialogues, regional summits and social innovation challenges have reached over **75,000 participants**. The initiative has benefitted over **8,000 young social entrepreneurs** and helped to launch or improve over **1,000 youth-led social enterprises**. Youth Co:Lab has also established partnerships with **192 key ecosystem players** through a Youth Empowerment Alliance.

By 2022, Youth Co:Lab aims to:

- Expand to 28 countries and territories, to include, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, India, Japan, Laos PDR, Malaysia, the Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.
- Deepen mentorship capacity for youth entrepreneurs through the Springboard programme.
- Engage ecosystem partners in the development of young people's 21st century skills.
- Advance policy solutions to strengthen the enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship in the region.

