

Project Co-Leads



Citi Foundation



# YOUTH C:LAB

# SUMMIT 2023



**Bangkok**

**12 - 14 July 2023**

# CONCEPT NOTE



The Commonwealth



International  
Labour  
Organization

**CVC**

## BACKGROUND

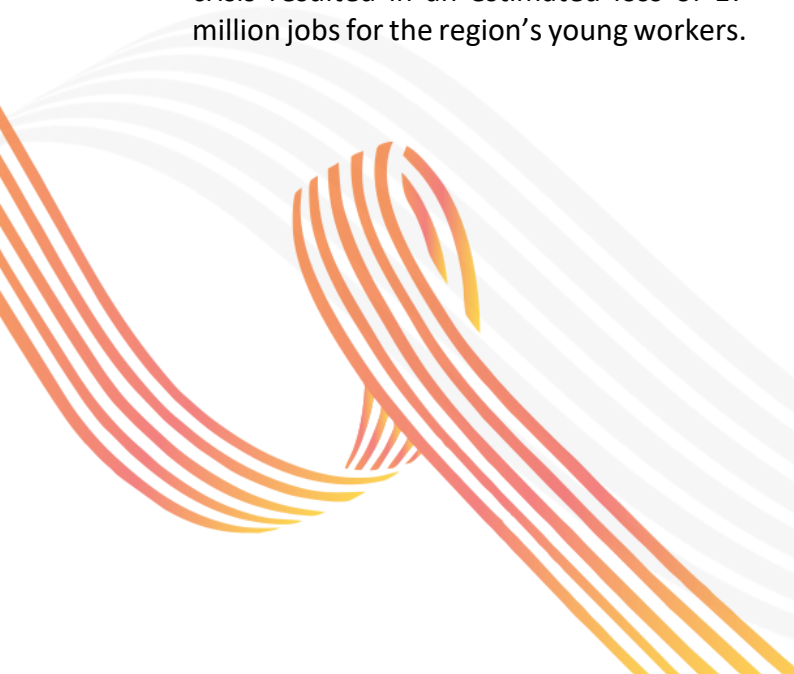
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the important role of youth in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and calls for action against the challenges faced by young people that limits their economic, social, and political inclusion. Today, young people are connected, creative, informed, and persuasive. They are responding to the challenges of today with innovative approaches, contributing fresh ideas, creating the world they want, and driving human development for themselves and their communities. However, around 160 million young people are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). In other words, almost 25 percent of the 600 million young people in the Asia-Pacific region face economic insecurity. In addition, many young people are left out of decision-making processes, which further contributes to their marginalization and exclusion. The COVID-19 pandemic further unleashed an unprecedented global crisis, disrupting the lives of millions and creating long-lasting socio-economic impacts that risk reducing the productive potential of an entire generation. For young people, the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 crisis are exposing and exacerbating their existing vulnerabilities. In 2020 alone, the crisis resulted in an estimated loss of 17 million jobs for the region's young workers.

## WHAT IS YOUTH CO:LAB?

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 the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. By developing 21st-century skills, and catalysing and sustaining youth-led start-ups and social enterprises across the region, Youth Co:Lab is positioning young people front and centre 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.

## OUR STORY SO FAR

Since 2017, Youth Co:Lab has been implemented in 28 countries and territories across Asia-Pacific. The national dialogues, regional summits and social innovation challenges have reached over 240,000 participants. The initiative has benefitted over 14,000 young aspiring and existing social entrepreneurs and helped to launch or improve over 1,530 youth-led social enterprises. Youth Co:Lab has established transformative partnerships with 202 key ecosystem players through its Youth Empowerment Alliance.



Building on past successes and learnings, Youth Co:Lab plans to deepen engagement in existing markets and expand to 29 countries and territories across the region from 2023 – 2024 (namely Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Micronesia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam). The programme will also focus on diversity and inclusion by scaling up outreach to marginalized groups, deepening mentorship and capacity development through the Springboard pre-incubation platform, conduct ecosystem diagnostics and co-create action-oriented research to strengthen entrepreneurship ecosystems, and engage ecosystem partners at the regional and national level in the development of young people's 21st-century skills.

## OUR APPROACH TO YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

To deliver Youth Empowerment means adopting an integrated approach that aims to strengthen individual and institutional capabilities while building an enabling environment that promotes young people's agency in shaping tomorrow's world and achieving the SDGs.

**Our approach is three-pronged: it works at the downstream, mid-stream and upstream levels, concurrently, to actively engage all actors and drive collective action.**

## YOUTH CO:LAB SUMMIT 2023

The Youth Co:Lab Summit 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, co-organized by UNDP and Citi Foundation, will serve as a key milestone for the regional youth empowerment agenda by positioning young people and their innovative ideas, front and centre to solve the region's most pressing challenges. As we celebrate young entrepreneurs' agility and resilience in responding to these unprecedented times, we must also meet the moment and step up our collective efforts to support young people and their transformative solutions to lead the way in our journey beyond recovery towards 2030.

### Theme for the Summit 2023:

The 2023 Summit is envisioned to highlight, encourage, and celebrate the role of youth in our crucial Decade of Action, aligning on **"Inclusive Entrepreneurship", showcasing and inspiring youth action** from underserved communities, as well as youth contributing to solutions to support the most excluded and hardest to reach groups to leave no one behind.

### Inclusive Entrepreneurship

When it comes to achieving the SDGs, the progress in Asia-Pacific is uneven. While substantial gains have been achieved, progress has often been made amongst those groups that are easiest to reach, leaving many of the marginalized and most vulnerable – including youth – behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has also undoubtedly exacerbated the inequality gap further. To fully prosper as a region, it is paramount

that vulnerable and marginalized communities and youth are given the tools and platforms to thrive.

Young people across the region are aware of present-day challenges that affect their communities and are proactive in making a difference. Undoubtedly, by harnessing the youth's entrepreneurial mindsets and involving them in making innovative solutions based on their lived experiences, we are able to build bridges to inclusive growth.

Youth Co:Lab's "Inclusive Entrepreneurship" principle reflects going the extra mile to reach marginalized communities and to support social enterprises that are bringing services and products to underserved groups. With Youth Co:Lab's operational experience and immersion in the ecosystem, some of the key efforts made include co-designing and collaborating with partners from marginalized groups for the regional and national programmes, providing suitable customized mentorship capacity development, and bridging opportunities and resources such as crowdfunding campaigns and small grants. As we look towards 2030 and beyond, it is imperative that Youth Co:Lab, together with partners, continue to support young people's entrepreneurial journey and provide springboards to move further. Moreover, in alignment with inclusive entrepreneurship, we will examine how youth leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship help vulnerable and marginalized communities to thrive and create more resilient, peaceful, and sustainable societies.

Through the inclusion of speakers, and participants, the sessions, and workshop planning, Youth Co:Lab will infuse the element of inclusivity throughout the Summit 2023

agenda. Specific efforts to direct the outreach and communications to vulnerable communities will also be made so the participant profiles are inclusive of all youth in Asia and the Pacific.

#### **The objectives of the Summit are to:**

- Provide a regional platform for young social entrepreneurs across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Foster a sense of community between individuals and partners by providing opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange.
- Discuss key trends and new evidence that are shaping the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem and examine how policymakers can strengthen and future-proof youth entrepreneurship ecosystems across the region.
- Identify and inaugurate collaborative initiatives to further strengthen the ecosystem towards Youth in Action.
- Inspire, engage, and generate platforms of action for youth participants, to further strengthen Youth in Action and Inclusive Entrepreneurship.
- Reflection on Youth Co:Lab national activities 2022-23 and planning for 2023-2024.



## WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

The Youth Co:Lab Summit will be a by-in-vite-only event engaging over 200 participants from various sectors of the youth empowerment agenda, including youth leaders and entrepreneurs, government representatives, academia, champions for development, UN agencies, media, start-ups and the investor community. Videos of the agenda segments (e.g. panels, pitching, hotseat discussions etc.) will be uploaded to various social media channels and virtual platforms after the Summit and are expected to engage a wider audience.

### Youth Co:Lab Summit and Youth in Thailand

While through the Summit, we aim to bring together and engage all Youth Co:Lab Stakeholders, the youth are purposefully at the very center of it. The 2023 Summit, plans to not only involve youth who have been engaged with the national Youth Co:Lab programmes, but also bring forth aspiring young entrepreneurs and youth from across Thailand looking to create change. These include youth who are economically, socially, or politically excluded and discriminated against because of their ethnic identity, race, religion, gender, age, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation, among many other factors, or a combination of these.

### Key Objectives of the Summit for Youth Participants:

- 1. Network and showcase youth opportunities to get further support and scale their existing social ventures.**
- 2. Become a part of a community of regional and national youth that can become a force to take action and create change.**
- 3. Be inspired through the sessions by hearing from other youth, industry experts, and speakers.**

## AGENDA

### Pre-Forum

Pre-forum will consist of sessions and activities based on the key stakeholders of the Summit. National Youth Champions will attend the Youth Co:Lab Regional Springboard, which focuses on capacity building and personal development through workshops and activities. Following the workshops, national youth champions will showcase during the regional demo-day to attract funding and support from investors and the youth empowerment alliance.

Sessions will be curated to engage policy-makers, UNDP and Citi Foundation representatives, and the youth social entrepreneur community. They are envisioned as parallel sessions that could each address a specific conversation agenda and help build the community bond. Further sessions and activities could be co-created that complement the summit structure and bring a greater focus on the thematic areas of the Summit 2023.

## MAIN SUMMIT

### Day 1- INSPIRE & LEARN

Day 1 aims to inspire attendees and provide learning and sharing opportunities. Following the opening remarks from co-leading partners, Day 1 will include keynote speeches and plenaries on the themes of the Summit 2023 including youth in action and SDGs, leaving no one behind, and more. Workshops and lab spaces will provide an opportunity to improve awareness and share ideas related to key challenges and opportunities related to the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region.

In the evening, delegates are invited to attend the “Cultural Night” to witness Thai culture and showcase their own.

### Day 2- CALL TO ACTION

The last day will focus on convening conversations related to the implementation of ideas and building partnerships. Any significant collaboration announcements could be made on this day. Day 2 will also comprise of keynotes, plenaries, workshops and lab spaces to share examples and inspire youth to action. The day will culminate with closing remarks from co-leading partners and Youth Co:Lab leadership.

**To understand our YCL Summits better, you can view our Youth Co:Lab Summit 2022 [here](#) and our past summits [here](#)**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

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