

gen
now



Voices of Change

Interviews with young
activists working towards
a sustainable future

© Bertelsmann Stiftung
January 2024

Bertelsmann Stiftung
Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Responsible
Dr. Regina von Görtz
Dr. Anja Langness

Authors
Dr. Fabienne Tissot
Marius Faber
Jule Schwab
Dr. Regina von Görtz
Dr. Anja Langness

Editing
Josh Ward, pp. 6–9
Dr. Janina Gatzky, Interviews

Design
Dietlind Ehlers

Photo Credit
© nach morgen (Cover and pp. 6–9), Ansichtssache_Britta Schröder (Dr. Regina von Görtz, p. 30), Lotta Schwab (Jule Schwab, p.30), Jan Voth (Dr. Anja Langness, p. 30), Constanze Wenig (Dr. Fabienne Tissot, Marius Faber, p. 30).
Pages 10–29: The photo credits are held by the persons photographed,
photos: Bijan Dawallu.

DOI 10.11586/2023096

gen
now

Voices of Change

Interviews with young
activists working towards
a sustainable future

Content

5 Preface

Regina von Görtz and Anja Langness

6 Young Activists Worldwide: Sparking Change

Fabienne Tissot and Regina von Görtz

Interviews

10 Breaking Taboos, Planting Hope

Lydia Banda's Journey with Aware and Fair

12 Golden Dreams, Lasting Impact

Nomatlou Mahlangu and the Golden Youth Club

14 Empowering Dreams

Rashidah Masraq's Journey with Somero Uganda

16 Catalysts of Change

Mayson Joacimsbarn Persson and the Youth 2030 Movement

18 Bridging Borders for a Sustainable Tomorrow

Ugnė Budriūnaitė's ReGeneration2030 Journey

20 Revolutionizing Education

A Dive into Curriculum for Life with Oli Williams

22 Nurturing Resilience

Sofia Martushchuk's Journey with Alliance of Development

24 Riding the Wave of Change

Carolyn Curtin's Journey with Surfrider

26 Inspiring Change, One Step at a Time

Avalon Bourne and the Sonder Youth Movement

28 Cultivating Social Entrepreneurship Across ASEAN

A Conversation with Syera Buntara

30 The Authors

PREFACE

Regina von Görtz and Anja Langness

As we navigate the complex challenges of the 21st century, few issues are as vital as the concerted efforts towards sustainability and global well-being. “Voices of Change” invites you to embark on a transformative journey through the narratives of ten young people who stand at the forefront of civic initiatives aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stand as a collective vision for a better world—a world where poverty is eradicated, inequalities are addressed, and environmental sustainability is paramount. In “Voices of Change,” we turn our focus to the grassroots, to the voices of young activists who have chosen not just to champion these goals but to embody them.

The interviews within these pages are not just stories, but rather, glimpses into the lives of people who have committed themselves to being architects of change. Each story is a chapter in the larger narrative of a generation determined to redefine what is possible. From community-based projects to international campaigns, these activists demon-

strate the breadth and depth of youth engagement in building a more sustainable and just future.

Consider this publication an invitation to join the conversation. The stories you are about to read are not isolated; they are interconnected threads weaving a narrative of hope, action, and the transformative power of collective ambition.

We would like to thank all of our interviewees for taking the time to share their visions with us. Your stories are an inspiration to us all. We are also grateful to the Wider Sense team for conducting the interviews and to Peer Leader International e.V. for helping us connect with some of the initiatives featured in this publication.

May “Voices of Change” resonate with you, spark conversations, and inspire action. For in these voices, we find not just progress, but the promise of a future we can all strive towards – one where the aspirations of today’s youth become the foundations of a sustainable tomorrow.

YOUNG ACTIVISTS WORLDWIDE: SPARKING CHANGE

Fabienne Tissot and Regina von Görtz

Youth Civic Engagement in the 21st Century

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, shifting social landscapes and, most importantly, an escalating climate crisis, young people worldwide have emerged as eager agents of change in pursuit of a sustainable future. This dynamic and diverse group of young people are harnessing their energy, ideas and passion to drive change in politics and sustainable development in the 21st century.

This generation of young activists is shaped by a world starkly different from that of their parents and grandparents. Their main concerns revolve around critical issues, such as climate change, social justice, income inequality and, notably, mental health, which has gained even greater saliency in the post-pandemic era. This generation has witnessed firsthand the revolutionary potential of social media to advance social movements. They understand that digital platforms are potent instru-



ments for connecting, mobilizing and organizing others. At the same time, rather than overshadowing local civic engagement and face-to-face contact, digital tools are seen as indispensable for achieving their goals.

Youth engagement is “glocal”

The movements Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion and Youth for Climate have mobilized millions of young people across the globe by organizing strikes, protests and

educational campaigns. Their global figureheads may be some of most familiar public faces, but there are many more young people acting locally and laying the foundation for communities across the world focused on a wide range of activities and issues. Although they have realized that the current challenges and concerns cannot be tackled at just the national level, young activists still see the importance of bottom-up movements that start to grow at the local level. This locally generated impact

can bring positive change to individual communities and has the potential to expand to the national or even global level.

Engagement across the World: 10 Case Examples

But who are these young change-makers? What drives them, how do they work, and how do initiatives and organizations manage to inspire other young people to get involved? For this publication, we have interviewed representatives from 10 different organizations across the world – from Scandinavia to South Africa as well as from the US to Australia and Asia. While some of them are grassroots movements, others are supported by a professional organization. The interview subjects live and act under very different circumstances:

In the Global South, Aware & Fair in Malawi has used its menstrual hygiene program to help more than 2,000 girls get a better education. The Golden Youth Club in South Africa creates jobs in the performing arts and trains young people on how to minimize the high crime rate in their community. Somero in Uganda offers a wide range of courses, trainings and recreational activities for children and young women to empower them to improve the living conditions and protection of human rights in their communities and to lead a self-determined life.

In the North, the young activists participating in the Sweden-based Youth 2030 Movement aim to strengthen young people's place in democracy. ReGeneration 2030 in the Nordic countries and Baltic Sea region leads a robust youth movement to realize the vision of sustainable consumption and production.

In the UK, Curriculum for Life brings together young people, educators and experts from around the world to improve educational services for youths. Alliance of Development gives young people in Ukraine the opportunity to escape the realities of war and work on their personal development through a diverse range of courses.

In North America, Surfrider is dedicated to protecting ocean waves and beaches for all to enjoy through a powerful activist network, and the mission of the Australian organization Sonder Youth is to improve young people's mental health by engaging them in positive action. Finally, ASEAN Social Enterprise Development fosters youth social entrepreneurship in Asia while focusing on the UN's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Different Conditions, Same Commitment: Taking Action & Sparking Change

The interviews explore how initiatives succeed in motivating young people to engage in sustainable-development initiatives and what key factors influence their participation in them. The analysis of the 10 interviews shows several overarching themes that drive and maintain individuals' dedication to sustainable development. These themes span a wide spectrum. It begins with the committed individual, for whom a sense of agency, collective identity and purpose emerge as influential motivators. Moving beyond the self, the focus extends to the empowerment of others, emphasizing the link between a commitment to greater sustainability and improved well-being. Then the focus shifts to the broader context of community transformation, which underscores the ripple effect that



committed individuals can have on the collective. Ultimately, the analysis points toward the aspiration for system change, emphasizing the progression from the microcosm of personal commitment to the macrocosm of societal transformation. In essence, the themes underscore a trajectory from the small-scale impact of individual motivations to the broader canvas of systemic change.

1 Youth-Led Approach & Agency

It becomes evident that the youth-led approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. Several initiatives, including Youth 2030 Movement and ReGeneration 2030, highlight the importance of giving young people agency, meaning a sense of their own power to make a real difference. This approach encourages sustained commitment by instilling a sense of responsibility and contribution.

The conviction that individual actions can bring about positive change is evident in the interviews of those involved in initiatives like Aware & Fair, Golden Youth Club, Sonder Youth and ReGeneration2030. They are convinced that their commitment has a concrete, positive impact, which motivates them to continue their engagement. As Somero's Rashidah Masraq explains: "I didn't like seeing my fellow youth suffer and wanted to be a person who takes this problem into their own hands." Or as Carolyn Curtin from Surfrider says: "I wanted to figure out what I could do on an individual level to play a part in contributing to solutions."

2 Collective Identity & Shared Purpose

Collective identity plays a crucial role in sustaining engagement. Initiatives like Alliance of Development, Golden Youth Club and Youth 2030 Movement emphasize the importance of creating communities in which individuals feel a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Golden Youth Club founder Nomatlou Mahlangu states: "We are not just an organization; we are a family. We take care of each other on a personal level and on a professional level." Or as Carolyn Curtin from Surfrider puts it: "What keeps me, and I hope what keeps others inspired, is knowing that we have a vast network of people carrying out our mission every single day, changing the narrative and coming up with solutions."

3 Empowerment & Well-being of Others

Many of the interviewees get involved to empower other young people. Their initiatives aim to provide a supportive environment, foster independence and equip young individuals with skills needed for personal and professional growth. Success is measured not just in terms of infrastructure or organizational achievements, but also in personal growth and the positive impact on individuals. This includes witnessing young people succeed internationally (Golden Youth Club) and the ripple effect of youth-led projects (Sonder Youth). In addition, the improved well-being of the participants in the initiatives is a measure of success and a positive (if often unintended) result. In fact, initiatives like Sonder Youth measure their success by assessing how their actions impact the well-being of participants. There is a recognition that engaging in sustainable initiatives positively affects the mental health of young individuals.



4 Community Transformation

The desire to bring about positive change in communities is a recurring theme, whether it is transforming perceptions about a crime-prone area (Golden Youth Club), empowering local communities (Sonder Youth) or advocating for rights in specific regions (Youth 2030 Movement and ReGeneration2030). As Avalon Bourne of Sonder Youth emphasizes: “I wanted to start something that helped young people to create those changes in their communities.” Lydia Banda from Aware & Fair stresses that community transformation is also a motivating factor for her commitment to the initiative: “I then quickly realized that the work that Aware & Fair does has a big impact on communities.”

5 Advocacy for Political & Systemic Change

Although their motivations differ, all interviewees are convinced that the voices of young people are key to influencing political decisions. Initiatives actively engage in policy advocacy, whether it’s pushing for a lower voting age (Youth 2030 Movement) or participating in international forums to discuss change (ReGeneration2030). Most importantly, respondents want systemic change that challenges the political and educational status quo. They advocate for shifts in political attitudes and policies to better support sustainable development and youth engagement. As Lydia Banda from Aware & Fair says: “Due to the climate crisis, young people are becoming more active. At Aware & Fair, we have plans to talk to politicians in the next year.”

Creating a More Sustainable Future

In sum, the motivations for engaging in sustainable development are multifaceted and include several factors that all play a unique role. Nevertheless, all these young people have a common desire to make a difference, to get involved with like-minded peers who are as passionate about an issue as they are, and to foster change. These are influencing factors for successful collective action and important reasons for participating in movements. Understanding and leveraging these factors can contribute to more effective and enduring efforts aimed at empowering youth for a sustainable future.

The young people see their impact in getting active, advocating for change, encouraging positive thinking and, above all, motivating others. As one interviewee said: “The biggest success for us are the happy faces of the people.” When reading this publication, you will see that despite all the global crises threatening our societies, there are glimpses of hope and sparks for change across the world and that many young people are deciding – and determined – to take action.



BREAKING TABOOS, PLANTING HOPE

Lydia Banda's Journey with Aware and Fair



»I would tell them that every single person can change the world.«

Lydia Deborah Banda
POSITION Member,

Founder of Flying Girls Malawi
(organization within Aware and Fair)

MEMBER SINCE 2017

What motivated you to join Aware & Fair?

I joined the Aware & Fair Club at my school when I was in secondary school because I wanted to become part of a club but also because of positive peer pressure. I then quickly realized that the work that Aware & Fair does have a big impact on communities. Today we have an Aware & Fair Club at almost every school around Blantyre.

What are some of the projects you do at Aware & Fair?

One of our most important projects is the menstrual hygiene project. At Aware & Fair we did some research as to why so many young girls drop out of school. One of the main reasons was the fact that they did not have the necessary hygiene products to attend school when they were having their period. Additionally, there is a stigma in Malawi that it is not appropriate to talk about menstruation in public nor in a private setting like with your parents. In order to tackle this problem, we visit schools and talk to the young girls to teach them about menstrual hygiene. We also teach them how

to sew their own menstrual pads so that they can go to school. With this program we have reached more than 2000 young girls so far.

What has been the greatest success of Aware & Fair but also for you personally?

One of our greatest successes of Aware & Fair was being recognized by the Ministry of Education. We were asked to work with them on developing a sports program to demonstrate the importance of physical activity.

After the devastating flood in March here in our region, we took on the responsibility to bring back our environment by replanting the trees that were lost in the flood in Blantyre City. We even received a certificate from the Blantyre Water Board for planting so many trees.

What goals do you want to achieve with your work at Aware & Fair?

When I first started my period, I was alone at boarding school and had no one to talk to. When I told my mom about it, she was not open enough to tell me how to manage my period. This is because menstruation is not a topic that we talk about openly in Malawi, since we believe that only elders can counsel you. I believe that

»In the past,
politicians
only cared
about older people.
Due to the
climate crisis, young
people are
becoming more
active.«

Lydia Deborah Banda

there are many Lydias out there who feel like they are alone with this topic. I want to teach them all about menstrual hygiene and make sure that they can participate in everyday life and don't have to stay at home because of their period.

Did you also experience some difficulties during your work at Aware & Fair or things you did not agree with?

How did you deal with them?

Since Aware & Fair does not have any sponsors, financial resources are tight. We rely on in-kind donations of sewing machines or fabrics to be able to sew menstrual pads. Currently, most of the pads are sewn by hand. If we had more sewing machines, we would be able to produce as well as distribute more pads.

When we first started our work around the topic of menstrual hygiene, we were facing a lot of resistance from communities. Teachers did not want us to come to their schools to talk about menstruation since it is such a taboo topic. We started talking to just a couple of girls who then told their friends about our work. Slowly and

step by step we were able to convince more teachers that the training is important not only for young girls but also for the boys. Today we actually have more men sewing menstrual pads than women.

What is the role of youth movements when it comes to young people participating in the established political sphere?

I think that young people are just starting to play a role in politics here in Malawi. In the past, politicians only cared about older people. Due to the climate crisis, young people are becoming more active. At Aware & Fair we have plans to talk to politicians next year. But we are cautious when speaking to politicians since we want our work to remain independent of politics.

What advice do you have for young people that are interested in getting active?

I would tell them that every single person can change the world. You have to realize that not everybody is the same, everybody has different strengths and talents. Once you recognize your talents, you can use them to get active. One of my friends played the part of a lawyer in one of our plays at the Aware & Fair Club. She then realized that she loved being a lawyer and is now in her final year of law school.

aware&fair

Name

Aware & Fair

Location, Founding year

Malawi, 2013

What are we advocating for?

Aware & Fair is committed to the global sustainability goals and supports activities for environmental and climate protection, biodiversity, human rights, culture, education, and fair trade.

Who participates?

Young students

How do we get involved?

Aware & Fair offers a wide range of activities: organizing trainings for young girls on menstrual hygiene, planting trees or educating students about the importance of biodiversity.

What have we achieved?

Aware & Fair has reached more than 2000 girls with their menstrual hygiene program.

How do we finance ourselves?

Aware & Fair relies on in-kind donations since they do not have any sponsors.

GOLDEN DREAMS, LASTING IMPACT

Nomatlou Mahlangu and the Golden Youth Club

What made you found the Golden Youth Club?

I grew up in an area that has a reputation as a crime zone. I wanted to change the image people have of my area. So I established the Golden Youth Club. We started out by helping young people with their homework as well as motivating them not to drop out of school. We've always focused on issues that affect the daily lives of our learners. We reflect on them and turn thoughts into artistic performance – whether it's a song, a dance or a play. Our aim is to convey that regardless of where you come from, there is one language we can all understand. We do not need to speak the same tongue. Art sends the message to everyone, from one end of the globe to the other. We also facilitate a Skills Development Program where we create jobs for young people by utilizing their skills.

How does the Golden Youth Club differ from other initiatives?

The Golden Youth Club is like a home away from home. We are not an organization where people drop in once

and then leave. Young people come to us when they are vulnerable. We provide a safe space where we support each other. The Golden Youth Club teaches young people to be independent and to stay strong. We try to help them use their strengths to earn a living. We are not just an organization, we are a family, we take care of each other on a personal as well as on a professional level.

What has been the greatest success of the Golden Youth Club?

Our greatest success has been that we now have our own center, a solid building. The second success, for me, is seeing my young people going out into the world, finding themselves, and being independent. It's great seeing the skills, like leadership, we planted in them multiply.

What goals do you want to achieve with your involvement with the Golden Youth Club?

The main goal for me is creating sustainable jobs for the people living in my community to break the cycle of poverty in rural South Africa. I also want to make sure that the small branches that we have opened in other provinces also do well.

What are difficulties that you face?

One major difficulty that we face, and I think this is not only a South African problem, is the educational system. We are being taught how to be employees, but not how to be entrepreneurs. The educational system doesn't allow us to be ourselves. This is part of a larger problem we face – the political system. Although I believe that the democratic system has done good, I believe that we can do better. During the time that we still recovered from the apartheid era, most people working in politics were working into their own pockets. I think we've had enough, it's about time that politicians take responsibility for what they are doing for society.

What was the most positive thing that you have experienced so far?

Seeing my young people being successful and then to travel internationally. Our resources are scarce, but at the same time helping motivated young people who keep being positive regardless of the circumstances that they are facing around them is a positive achievement.



»... regardless of where you come from, there is one language we can all understand. We do not need to speak the same tongue. Art sends the message to everyone, from one end of the globe to the other.«

Nomatlou Mahlangu

POSITION Founder & Managing Director
MEMBER SINCE 2001

What advice would you give to young people who are also interested in founding an organization to help young people?

Don't wait for anyone, start now. Whatever comes your way, you will learn how to deal with it. Your background doesn't determine your future. It's very important to remember that when you experience challenges in life, it doesn't mean that your life will always be like that. The world is round, it keeps on turning. Things can change from one day to another and whether you are in South Africa, Germany or any other countries, if you feel uncomfortable in a situation, do something about it. You are not a tree. Move.

Has your experience at the Golden Youth Club changed your political views?

I am a person who understands politics, but who is not an activist. I'm a silent activist. I need to exercise my rights whenever I can. My work at the Golden Youth Club has taught me to teach people around me to exercise their rights and never allow anyone to violate their rights.

What do you think is the role of youth movements when it comes to young people participating in politics?

Youth movements have power, but it's not being recognized enough. The older generation and the younger generation should forge a relationship so that they can collaborate. Young people are changing and challenging the mentality of doing things. At the same time, the younger generation can learn from the older generation, the older generation must teach the younger generation how to adapt to the new world. You cannot lead me when you don't understand how I am.



Name

Golden Youth Club

Location, Founding year

South Africa, 2001

What are we advocating for?

Training youth in order to lower the high crime rate in our community, helping avoid teenage pregnancy by exploring young people's talents through the theatre. Creating jobs through the performing arts.

Who participates?

Children from the age of 8 up until the age of 30

How do we get involved?

Skills Development Program: developing skills of young people to secure employment in order to break the cycle of poverty in rural South Africa
Performing Arts Project

What have we achieved?

We finally have a Golden Youth Club center, a solid building which we use for our activities.

How do we finance ourselves?

We work with partners like Peer-Leader International or Educational Greenhouse

EMPOWERING DREAMS

Rashidah Masraq's Journey with Somero Uganda



»I didn't like seeing other young people suffer and wanted to be a person who takes this problem into her own hands.«

Rashidah Masraq

POSITION Youth Mentor and Secretary
MEMBER SINCE 2018

What motivates you to be involved with Somero?

I didn't like seeing other young people suffer and wanted to be a person who takes this problem into her own hands. That's why I started working as a youth mentor and youth influencer at Somero. I really love working with peers, changing their capacity of thinking and their lifestyle through conversation. I want to encourage them to do different things and be who they are, to give them hope for their lives. The work also gives me a lot in return since it allows me to enhance my experience and skills.

Which projects does Somero offer to young people?

Somero helps children and young people receive a meaningful education through skill building, livelihood development, and health initiatives. It promotes and protects human rights of children who are exploited as child laborers and young girls who are sexually exploited. Therefore, we have several projects. A current example is a community project where we work with girls and young children to improve their lives in the realm of mental health.

What has been your biggest success?

The most wonderful thing is to watch the development of these young people. After they complete a course or training, they return to their communities and train others using the skills they learned from us. And after a few years you may find that person in a leadership position somewhere or they have started their own business – thanks to Somero Uganda's groundwork.

»Don't sleep
on your thoughts.
Wake up and
make your dream
come true.
Be positive.«

Rashidah Masraq

Have you experienced difficulties while working at Somero?

Sometimes we have difficulties with funding. You may find someone at the start of the project who supports us in the beginning, but in the middle of the project or afterwards you are left with no funds. We try to handle this situation pragmatically and according to our style, encouraging young people to utilize the resources available.

What is the role of youth movements when it comes to the influence young people have in Uganda?

There are some youth movements in Uganda. However, young people don't have a big platform to express their feelings and ideas. Therefore, they need more empowerment and should be louder and advocate for themselves. What I could tell other young people is this: "Don't sleep on your thoughts. Wake up and make your dream come true. Be positive."



Name

Somero

Location, Founding year

Uganda, 2010

What are we advocating for?

Teaching knowledge and skills to children and young women to strengthen their rights and enable them to lead a self-determined and fulfilling life in good conditions

Who participates?

Children and young people up to the age of 25 years

How do we get involved?

Wide range of courses, trainings, and recreational activities for children and teenagers: e.g., livelihood skills development (IT, finances), e-learning projects, leadership development, child labor education, HIV / AIDS prevention, socio-psychological support.

What have we achieved?

Transfer of knowledge to many children in the city, who apply what they have learned and pass it on to more people in their community

How do we finance ourselves?

Grants from foundations and organizations worldwide

CATALYSTS OF CHANGE

Mayson Joacimsbarn Persson and the Youth 2030 Movement

Why did you get active in the first place and what made you join Youth 2030?

Being part of the LGBTQI community inspired me to become active for the rights of my community. At the same time, I've always been passionate about climate, human, children's and animal rights. When Greta Thunberg started school striking, I was the first person to join her, even before I was allowed to vote. Then I founded Youth 2030, which works closely with democracy as a power and center of our life in and as a society. When we speak about young people, we want a young person to speak up. When I started as a spokesperson, I was the first young person to have that role.

Can you tell us more about the work you do for the Youth 2030 Movement?

One of our first large projects was "Youth Up North" which started in 2019 and focuses on young people living in the peripheries of Sweden to enable them to influence local politicians and governments by using our workshop method called "Hackathon". Fortunately, the municipalities have hired young people to work for the local government who will

assure the continuity of our work. I've been working mostly with national politics, finalizing the international report on lowering the voting age and young people's political commitment to reach more people.

What is a goal that you want to achieve?

I want to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 and enable children even younger than 16 to have as much influence as adults do. We had a shift of government from the center left to the right in 2022, which is making our work more difficult, but we're trying to mobilize the different parties. Hypothetically, 2030 would be the first election where 16- or 17-year-olds would be allowed to vote.

What has been your greatest success since you've been involved with Youth 2030?

The greatest success for me has been that people started recognizing Youth 2030, especially, since we have been working very hard. We are happy to see that we've pushed the topic of lowering the voting age with both politicians and society, which was practically invisible before 2017. All the lives of young people that we have affected and the adults, especially



»... the biggest issue is that a lot of people don't take children and the youth seriously.«

Mayson Joacimsbarn Persson
POSITION Vice Chair & Spokesperson
of Youth2030 Movement
MEMBER SINCE 2021, since 2018
involved in youth movements
(Fridays for Future & LGBTQI Rights)

YOUTH — 2030

Name

Youth 2030 Movement

Location, Founding year

Sweden, 2018/2019

What are we advocating for?

Strengthening the power of young people in democracy

Who participates?

Individuals and organizations – youth, adults, activists, and allies

Founded by the Stenbeck Foundation

How do we get involved?

#rösträtt16: lowering the voting age to 16 (#voting16)

Youth Up North: shaping a more livable rural area

Utopia Lab: developing solutions together for a better future

What have we achieved?

Promoting political and social discourse on lowering the voting age in Sweden, networking and collaboration among committed individuals

How do we finance ourselves?

Funds from the Karl-Adam Bonnier Foundation, government and private project grants

those holding power, that we have taught how to listen to us to make a better world. Currently, a personal success for me is that I am one of the leading experts in Sweden on lowering the voting age, having worked on it for five years.

How does the Youth 2030 Movement finance its work, considering you do not have any official members?

The basis of our support comes from two foundations that started the organization. In addition, we have projects that get financial support from government agencies, and private persons who partially pay for the people we hire. This isn't always easy since in order to get financial support from the government, you need to have a certain number of members which we do not have due to the great administrative effort it takes to get them.

Have you also experienced difficulties during your work?

With lowering of the voting age, the biggest issue is that a lot of people don't take children and the youth seriously. But for the short amount of time that we have existed as a formal organization, we have had a lot of successes, especially with the Youth Up North project, having it approved to continue and getting to reach more people.

How has your work at Youth 2030 changed your political standpoint and your view on politics?

I was quite confident in my political views going into Youth2030, but I have acquired a lot of knowledge and tools which have shaped me. I've always been guided by the basic right to be included in society and that democracy is important. Those stances have only been strengthened and deepened.

Do you see politicians with different eyes since you've worked at Youth 2030?

When I worked with LGBTQI rights and was vice president in that organization, I thought that the politicians were our enemies because they were restricting our rights. At Youth 2030 now I view most politicians more as partners, we're collaborating much more.

What advice would you give other young people who are interested in making young voices heard?

We are a good choice if you want to do very impactful short projects. This year we bring together almost 300 persons, young people and politicians and other adults with power who discuss, incorporate, and find solutions for different problems in society. If you are really committed to listening to children's and young people's voices, you can run for our board and do the work from our national perspective.

How do you describe the role of youth movements concerning the participation of young people in the political sphere?

I believe youth movements have done a lot for civil society and democracy, not just in recent years but for a long time in Sweden. We are organized, and we take pride in it. The youth movement is going strong, and that is very important.

BRIDGING BORDERS FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

Ugnė Budriūnaitė's ReGeneration2030 Journey



»... the young generation will have to deal with tragic events that will happen in 10-20 years and will suffer the consequences of not taking enough action now.◀◀

Ugnė Budriūnaitė

POSITION Chairperson of the Board
(Board = Main legislative power of the organization)

MEMBER SINCE 2021

What made you join ReGeneration2030?

In Lithuania, we don't have a strong environmental youth movement. ReGeneration2030 covers the Nordic and Baltic Sea region – so Lithuania as well. Its international and inclusive approach were a unique feature that made me join the movement. Additionally, one of my personal goals is to give this issue a voice among youth and society in general in the Baltic region. ReGeneration2030 was the place where I could get two things I needed: Getting involved and receiving the knowledge that I needed to act.

What are projects you do at ReGeneration2030 and what has been your biggest success?

The ReGeneration Week is an annual event where we gather around 100 youth activists on Åland island in Finland for almost an entire week. We come together to learn from each other, discuss with decision-makers about how change can be made possible. One of the biggest successes of ReGeneration2030 was the atten-

dance of the EU Commissioner for the Environment. To have this high-level politician coming, was a huge success, especially because environmental youth movements often don't reach decision-makers. Another project will start in spring, an educational program on sustainability and advocacy supporting young activists with knowledge and skills on sustainability.

ReGeneration2030 is different from other youth initiatives because of its international approach. How do you manage to be active in so many countries and how do you coordinate this work?

Our volunteer network is the base of our organization, and we try to cover as many countries as possible. Additionally, we have a small paid secretariat and the youth board who also works voluntarily. Apart from that, we try to collaborate with other youth movements, which is often difficult because grassroots youth movements usually don't have organizational structures and contact persons change often.

>>It is still
upsetting
to see how
concerned some
people are about
climate change
while others do
nothing and are
still profiting.<<

Ugnė Budriūnaitė

Did you experience difficulties during your work at ReGeneration2030?

One difficulty is being spread across different countries. Therefore, we work online and it's very hard to feel a sense of community. This may be why we have a high turnover. It was also a challenge to reach consensus on the adoption of our position paper for the entire organization last year, but we managed to bring the different views together.

Do you feel that you can effect change with your work at ReGeneration2030?

I think that this is possible if we get in touch with the decision-makers personally. When you look at grass-roots youth movements like Fridays for Future, you can see that they are a big success story and are able to catalyze change.

How did your work at ReGeneration2030 change your political standpoint and your view on politics?

The work has sharpened and strengthened my political standpoint and helped me be more confident. It is still upsetting to see how concerned some people are about climate change while others do nothing and are still profiting. That makes me look at politicians and other decision-makers through a different lens.

What is the role of youth movements when it comes to the participation of young people in the established political sphere?

Youth movements are an important tool for expressing young people's voices – particularly for those who don't have the right to vote yet and are therefore not of interest to politicians. Environmental movements are very important, since the young generation will have to deal with tragic events that will happen in 10–20 years and will suffer the consequences of not taking enough action now. Therefore, it is an excellent tool to stress that urgency and advocate for the necessary changes.

ReGeneration 2030

Name

ReGeneration 2030

Location, Founding year

Nordic countries and Baltic Sea region, 2020

What are we advocating for?

Building a strong youth movement to realize the vision of sustainable consumption and production

Who participates?

Young people between 15–30 years old

How do we get involved?

With a platform for young people and youth-oriented organizations in Scandinavia and the Baltic States for networking and ReGeneration Week (annual 4-day summit).

What have we achieved?

High-level political exchange with EU Commissioner concerning the environment to articulate the demands of youth movements with one voice. Trained and skilled-up over 300 young activists throughout its existence.

How do we finance ourselves?

In particular, grants from foundations and organizations in the Scandinavian region, such as Nordic Council of Ministers

REVOLUTIONIZING EDUCATION

A Dive into Curriculum for Life with Oli Williams

What is the motivation behind Curriculum for Life?

Curriculum for Life was born out of the observation that the world is clearly changing at an increasing rate and many educational systems are struggling to keep up with this change. Just take the example of artificial intelligence and education, where we can see dramatic shifts. In addition, much of the education system has been designed by adults, educators, and experts and rarely includes the voice of youth. With our work, we want to change this and try to make a difference on four levels: We help young people to develop positive relationships with themselves, with each other, with the places they live, and the planet.

How do you want to tackle these issues in your work?

Our core mission is to democratize access to life skills learning so that all young people have the same opportunities for inner development. Unfortunately, it's often only available to a selected few in privileged settings. We want to address this issue and make life skills learning free for everyone. Therefore, we just launched a free online learning space designed for 6- to 18-year-olds. Life skills learning includes personal development, social and emotional learning, coaching, systems thinking, leadership, sustainability, and so much more. In our view, this is necessary to help young people overcome challenges and thrive in both their personal and professional lives. Part of the democratization is co-creation where the voice of young people is essential. We co-create all the learning resources, the curriculum, through a process which includes young people from around the world. It brings in educators, subject-matter-experts, and we go on a journey of co-creation through a number of workshops to develop any learning. Thereby, we bring diverse perspectives together and synthesize them.

How do you include young people in your work?

Young people sit at the core of what we do. We don't create anything without their input and guidance. We have a youth board, currently made up of five young people, who we've worked with multiple times during co-creation journeys. They're an excellent team with members from the Philippines, Afghanistan, Hungary, India, and we've worked with them to recruit other young people from around the world. Also, we've partnered with a number of organizations like Learning Planet or Youth by Youth, which is a youth-led educational activist movement. Meanwhile, we have a great network of young people who are ready to co-create and engage, and who also see it as a developmental opportunity for themselves. We've worked with young people from over 40 countries so far and want to include even more.



»I feel very grateful to work with similarly minded young people from around the world who are truly committed to this issue and are willing to give their time and energy to co-create and democratize access to life skills learning.«

Oli Williams
 POSITION Co-founder,
 Project and Youth Lead
 JOINED IN 2020

What motivated you to get involved with Curriculum for Life?

Before I joined, I was also part of the climate movement in several organizations. What really emerged for me over the years was a recognition of how essential education is in the context of global challenges like the climate and ecological crisis, particularly for the inner development of young people. So, we believe in this idea that external challenges cannot be overcome unless we foster inner development at scale and make it accessible for everyone. With Curriculum for Life, I was able to engage from an early stage to make an impact in the field of education for inner development. I feel very grateful to work with similarly minded young people from around the world who are truly committed to this issue and are willing to give their time and energy to co-create and democratize access to life skills learning.



CURRICULUM FOR LIFE

Name

Curriculum for Life

Location, Founding year

United Kingdom, 2020

What do we stand for?

Co-creational life skills learning should become a part of every young person's educational journey, empowering them with the awareness, values, and capabilities to develop positive relationships with themselves, each other, the places they live and the planet.

Who is involved with us?

Young people, educators, and subject-matter-experts

How do we get involved?

We focus on life skills learning, which includes among other things personal development, social and emotional learning, coaching, systems thinking, leadership, sustainability. Young people actively participate in the development of the learning program.

What have we achieved?

Bringing together young people, educators, and subject-matter-experts from around the world to improve the educational services for youths. Hosting a free online learning space for everybody.

How we finance ourselves?

We've been self-funded for the initial three years and we are now submitting funding bids to enable us to continue doing this work to support young people.

NURTURING RESILIENCE

Sofiia Martushchuk's Journey with Alliance of Development

How was the Alliance of Development founded and what classes do you offer?

Some years ago, a few teenagers, including me, started this small organization called the Carpathian Flowers. We planned events around the city of Verkhovyna to connect the local people in my region and worked together with the German organization Peer Leader International to organize youth exchanges between a few countries. If we talk historically, Carpathian Flowers was the start of Alliance of Development. When the war started in 2022, we were in panic, and a lot of internally displaced persons came to our region, since we are located in the Western part of Ukraine. From the very first day, we gave them humanitarian items since they had nothing anymore. Later we realized that the people had suffered mentally and needed to deal with this situation.

Then we wrote to the organization Schüler Helfen Leben that is also our partner in Alliance of Development. It was a crazy idea when we told them that we would like to offer yoga courses, painting, or art therapy. But in the end, it worked out and Alliance of Development was created. Now we offer even more classes, like psychological support, excursions to the forest and mountains, swimming, dancing, acting or special courses for children. Currently, we are active in eight cities where we offer our classes, for example, in Verkhovyna, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Kyiv.

Which feedback do you receive from the people who join your courses?

Sometimes they come and are like "Oh my God, I'm just crying. I don't know what to say to you" because they really appreciate it. I just somehow forget about all the problems when I'm in this space and I really feel safe. There is this one sentence that describes it really well: "People inspire us, and we inspire people." You know, it's this big circle of giving and receiving.



»»The biggest success for us are the happy faces of the people.«

Sofiia Martushchuk
POSITION Project manager
MEMBER SINCE 2022



Name

Alliance of Development

Location, Founding year

Ukraine, 2022

What are we advocating for?

Give people in the Ukraine the opportunity to escape the realities of war and work on their personal development through a diverse range of classes.

Who participates?

All age ranges, many young adults

How do we get involved?

Wide range of offers at eight locations: e.g., talk therapies, yoga, drawing, swimming, dancing, excursions to the forest and the mountains, special offers for children

What have we achieved?

Enabling a more "normal" life for people who have fled the war and helping them with mental health issues.

How do we finance ourselves?

In particular, grants from foundations and organizations from Ukraine and Germany, such as Peer Leader International and Schüler Helfen Leben

What initially motivated you to get involved with a youth movement?

Back then, when I was maybe 15 years old, I was in school which was not so exciting. At the same time, I wanted to do something, meet new people, learn English, and create something. Then a German organization did some small seminars here and I realized that I wanted to do the same as them and did it. I can say that this has been the best choice I've made in my life.

How does your work look like during the ongoing war?

It is kind of crazy and sometimes dangerous, but we work really well. When we hear air raid sirens, we stop our courses and wait in the basement. Sometimes it's hard when you have to stop the class over and over again, but actually everything in Ukraine is working like that right now. The blackouts have been really hard. There have been times when we've had no light and electricity and it's really cold during the winter months. But our partners have also helped us and brought us generators.

Who's involved with Alliance of Development and how do you work together?

It's a really nice team. We have people of different ages who are involved with Alliance of Development, but most of them are in their twenties. Most of them are employees of the organization, since we all work a lot. We also create jobs for internally displaced persons who offer courses. Of course, we also have volunteers who like to support our work for free with their skills. We are open to all ideas and opportunities that they can give us. Between our eight locations we primarily work online. But last year we had seminars where we came together, which was really inspiring and helped us a lot.

Do you feel that you can effect change with your work at Alliance of Development?

Yes! Unfortunately, a lot of people will probably have a post-traumatic stress disorder due to the war. I think that our work is successful because these people receive help from us, when they talk with our psychologists instead of sitting in their apartment and thinking about these terrible situations all by themselves. When they join our activities, they forget about it. Overall, the biggest success for us are the happy faces of the people. We are working towards a better future and have this huge community which can change a lot.

RIDING THE WAVE OF CHANGE

Carolyn Curtin's Journey with Surfrider



»You don't have to be an expert to get involved. You just have to care about the future.«

Carolyn Curtin

POSITION Surfrider Student
Network Coordinator
ACTIVE SINCE 2019

Why did you join Surfrider?

Prior to joining the staff full-time, I was a volunteer throughout my time in college at Florida State University. I was looking for an organization of like-minded individuals who cared about the climate and ocean. The Surfrider Foundation was the perfect outlet to have fun and build a community while making a difference in coastal conservation. I think at that time in my life, and even sometimes currently, I was very overwhelmed with climate change. I wanted to figure out what I could do on an individual level to play a part in contributing to solutions. When you think about the collective impact of Surfrider, it's really inspiring, uplifting, and motivating to remain optimistic in the fight for a healthier ocean.

What are some of the projects that Surfrider does?

Our mission is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's ocean waves and beaches for all people through a powerful activist network. Our main pillars include plastic reduction, clean water, beach access, ocean protection, and coast and climate. Some of our programmatic work includes ocean-friendly restaurants, ocean-friendly gardens,

our Blue Water Task Force, and then various coast and climate initiatives such as sand dunes and mangrove restoration projects. We also have the education and advocacy and policy side to our work. During my time as a volunteer, I did some water quality testing on our local beaches, plastic reduction initiatives, and climate advocacy.

What has been the greatest success for you working at the Surfrider Foundation?

One of the most impactful experiences and feelings of success was getting to attend our Coastal Recreation Hill Day in Washington, D.C. This is an annual event where we bring together volunteers, staff, and industry leaders from all around the United States and Puerto Rico and advocate for the protection of our oceans at the highest level of government. It goes to show that you don't have to be an expert to get involved. You just have to care about the future of our oceans and unite together over the passion of protecting our oceans for generations to come.

What goals do you want to achieve with your involvement?

For me personally, being able to carry out Surfrider's mission every day and to uplift and support our volunteers has been super rewarding. Within our student club program, we're really looking to cultivate and inspire the next generation of coastal leaders and empower youth. That looks different for everybody. If we can provide multiple opportunities for involvement and engagement and inspire others to take action, we can make huge advancements. Overall, it's a huge goal of mine to continue to see the Surfrider's Student Club Network grow and to be able to support the youth in this movement.

What was the most positive thing that you have experienced so far?

Getting to interact with students from all over the country and hearing their motivations and interests for wanting to get involved in ocean conservation and environmental advocacy work is really inspiring. It's also interesting to look at Surfrider's emphasis on local solutions because communities in different areas have different issues that they're facing. Having local people on the ground who can then come to us with solutions which we scale up at the state and federal level is really exciting. This past year, we did an annual club cleanup competition. We sent our student clubs scales so they could weigh the trash that they were collecting at their beach cleanups. Then they could input that information into our national cleanup database. This allowed us to quantify what types of plastic and how much they were finding. We were able to use this data for policy asks and evidence. That's a really great example of how local action can be scaled up and quantified into national priorities.

What are some of the difficulties you have experienced?

One of the difficulties of working or volunteering in the environmental space is remaining hopeful and optimistic at times when you hear about negative news surrounding our oceans. As humans, it can be overwhelming and hard to process. But on the flip side, what keeps me, and I hope what keeps others inspired, is knowing that we have a vast network of people carrying out Surfrider's mission every single day, changing the narrative and coming up with solutions. It's super important to remain optimistic even when you're faced with challenges.

Has your involvement with Surfrider strengthened your political views?

Do you see democracy with different eyes after that experience?

Surfrider operates in a nonpartisan way. That has really shown me the importance of getting both sides of the aisle on board with what we're doing, because at the end of the day, environmental issues are human issues that affect us all. I believe that the issues our oceans are facing should transcend political lines. Since joining Surfrider, I've learned so much on how I can take personal action in the political sphere. It has made me feel more empowered and excited about what I can do. There are so many avenues for young people to get involved – you can call your local elected officials, write letters, register to vote, and raise awareness within your circle of friends and family. The youth is the future of our planet and of democracy. We must continue to empower and uplift young people to get involved in environmental policy. No action is too small. As long as you're excited and interested in getting involved, I say go for it. You may surprise yourself and find a source of inspiration by getting involved politically.



Surfrider Foundation

Location, Founding year

North America, 1984

What are we advocating for?

Surfrider's mission is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's ocean waves and beaches for all people through a powerful activist network.

Who participates?

Surfrider Chapter Network:
Anyone

Surfrider Student Club Network:

High school and college students

How do we get involved?

Surfrider's main pillars include plastic reduction, clean water, beach access, ocean protection, and coast and climate.

What have we achieved?

144 student clubs in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico

How do we finance ourselves?

Surfrider is financed primarily through grants & contributions, membership fees, and corporate partners.

INSPIRING CHANGE, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Avalon Bourne and the Sonder Youth Movement

What made you found Sonder Youth?

Prior to Sonder, I was doing a lot of work with grassroots organizations overseas. I became interested in what happens when people in a community are empowered to step up and create the change that needs to happen from their own perspective. Coming back to Australia, I wanted to start something that would help young people to spark those changes in their communities. Sonder's purpose is to improve the wellbeing of young people through engaging them in positive action. We give our young people a platform to collectively engage in the issues that are affecting them and create change to do something about it. And in doing that, they can improve their own psychological wellbeing.

What are some of the projects you do at Sonder Youth?

Once a year we organize the South Coast Changemakers Forum, a weekend called the "Changemaker Challenge". The 50-60 participants pick an issue that affects them as young people in rural Australia. They brainstorm causes as well as consequences of that issue, and develop a strategy

to tackle it. We offer insights into the multitude of ways one can address an issue, whether through campaigning, collaboration with politicians or leaders, creating community awareness and trying to change culture and norms, or if it's through direct action like tree planting or fire prepping. We also invite guest speakers and offer skills development sessions on topics like communication, teamwork, pitching ideas, and strategizing. At the end of the program, participants pitch their ideas, and the winning ideas will go into our Changemakers program. During this time, they'll implement that idea in their community.

What has been the greatest success for Sonder Youth but also for you personally?

Some of our program leaders started programs with us when they were 15. I really love to see how people start with us and then get an idea or a spark for change-making and doing something positive. Some have started businesses or projects within the Changemakers program that are still running today. This ripple effect has probably been the most rewarding thing for me.

Seeing the diverse changes that the young people come up with and knowing that even when it comes to fruition and they've finished their project, it was their work. It was 100% the young people and we lay out all the tools and resources that helped them to get there. I really love the authenticity of that. Them having an idea, feeding, and watering it and see that grow into something.

What goals do you want to achieve with your work at Sonder Youth?

Currently, we are taking our programs from New South Wales to statewide and expanding into most rural regions in New South Wales in the next five years. We are mostly interested in the impact we're having on the individuals and their wellbeing as well as the projects that come out of the program. We are working towards a shift in thinking around young people: They are not helpless to the things that affect them, but there's a whole bunch of new-driven projects that are tackling these issues. They can step up, they can do things, and there are other people in their communities who care about the same.



»I really love to see how people start with us and then get an idea or a spark for change-making and doing something positive.«

Avalon Bourne
POSITION Founder & Director
MEMBER SINCE 2017

We measure the pre-imposed well-being status for our young people on the EPOCH wellbeing scale. And we see our impact, we see how much six months in this program and working on this project have helped their wellbeing.

Have you also experienced some difficulties during your work at Sonder Youth or things you did not agree with? How do you deal with such challenges?

After initially charging a service fee, we realized that these young people, many of a lower socioeconomic demographic, would not have access unless the programs are free. In Australia, youth mental health has been a significant cause for concern – which fortunately means a lot of funding in

this area. But one of the biggest challenges initially for us was to restructure ourselves, switch gears, and go down the charity route.

The second challenge has been having the culture around the mental health shift. Most interests and funding go towards the treatment of mental illnesses instead of prevention.

How has your work at Sonder Youth changed or sharpened your political stance and your view on politics?

It has strengthened it. Through our work we have engaged with some of our political leaders in Australia. While my standpoint hasn't changed, I've become a lot more aware of political processes and how especially young people are being influenced by politics.

What is the role of youth movements when it comes to the participation of young people in the established political sphere?

I think that the teenage demographic and even some of the younger voters have been a little bit neglected by our leaders since they can't vote yet – a real oversight. But that doesn't mean they should be neglected. Therefore, youth movements, especially those that educate young people around democratic processes they can engage in, are so important and so powerful.

What advice do you have for young people who are interested in getting active?

My main piece of advice is just to take one step at a time. It seems insurmountable if you look at the whole picture and have a dream and a goal for the end. So, one step at a time, and you'll get there. Eventually you'll look back and realize that you've done a whole lot.



Name

Sonder Youth

Location, Founding year

Australia, 2017

What are we advocating for?

Improving youth mental health through engaging young people in positive action by giving them a platform to collectively engage in the issues that affect them and create change.

Who participates?

Young people aged 14 – 18, but Sonder Youth also started working with 18- to 25-year-olds, who've been through their program and are now delivering it.

How do we get involved?

Through the Changemakers Program, Sonder Youth works in small groups once a week after school for about six months where participants get to put their ideas for positive change into action.

South Coast Changemaker Forum

What have we achieved?

Some of our program leaders started with us when they were 15 and now they run the program. Others have started businesses or projects within our program that are still running today.

How do we finance ourselves?

We are a registered charity, most of our funding comes from either government or private funding and fundraising.

CULTIVATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS ASEAN

A Conversation with Syera Buntara

What is the ASEAN Social Enterprise Development Program?

ASEAN SEDP is a program that aims to empower youth-led social enterprises in the ten ASEAN countries through capacity-building, training, and mentoring. Trainings and mentoring opportunities are customized, and we design the curriculum based on participants' needs. That's what makes this program so unique. It is already the program's second cohort, which is why it is called "2.0"; this year we are working with TikTok and SAP.

We are an intergovernmental organization (IGO) and whenever we implement a program, we always try to invite ASEAN secretariat or ASEAN senior officials, like ambassadors. So, when we want to organize networking events to introduce social enterprises to government officials, it's also not a great challenge because we can just invite the senior officials. That is a unique feature of this program.

How can interested young social businesses apply for the program and how do you support them?

This year we received 145 applications for the program. We then select the

most feasible and impactful businesses, based on defined criteria. The best performing social enterprises will receive seed grants to implement their business plan. In the end, we chose 20 social businesses from ten ASEAN countries. Our goal is to improve market and financial access for social enterprises. Therefore, we offer networking events with investors and government representatives. We also organize a so-called Demo Day where 20 social enterprises pitch their project ideas and get seed grants to implement the projects. Additionally, we try to find mentors and trainers for our participants to support the development of their social businesses.

What motivated you to get involved with ASEAN SEDP?

I am quite new to the foundation. Previously, I worked in peace-building and the interfaith relations field. My personal motivation for joining this program of the ASEAN Foundation a few months ago is my interest in and passion for social entrepreneurship. I also want to be a social entrepreneur one day, and I think this program is a great start to achieve this goal because I can learn more

»We are proud of our inclusive approach. ...inclusivity means that we engage with marginalized communities.«

Syera Buntara

POSITION Project Coordinator
JOINED IN 2023

about social entrepreneurship from trainers and social entrepreneurs in this program.

What has been the greatest success during your work for ASEAN SEDP?

We are proud of our inclusive approach. We want to engage with participants from all ten ASEAN countries and always try to have at least one representative from each ASEAN country in the program. This is also sometimes a challenge because in some countries there are only a few social enterprises. However, we try to reach out to them and invite them to apply to ASEAN SEDP 2.0. Furthermore, inclusivity means that we work with marginalized communities. In ASEAN SEDP 2.0, a lot of marginalized communities applied. For example, we received eleven applications from social enterprises led by people with disabilities and 69 social businesses led by women. The enthusiasm of the applicants is really great. In the end, we selected a diverse cohort of 20 businesses. Out of 20 social enterprises we selected to participate in the program, 2 are led by people with disabilities, while 11 are led by women. Most of the 20 social enterprises work in the field of environmental sustainability and agriculture. Other businesses are involved in the inclusion of people with disabilities, social inclusion of refugees, child development, and women. This also creates more jobs for marginalized communities.

What advice would you give other young people who are also interested in social entrepreneurship?

I think it's very important for social entrepreneurs to also think about how they can make a profit in order to become more sustainable, which will help them create more social impact. Some social enterprises care a lot about social impact, but they don't

think about profit. They just give the product for free, and this is not very sustainable in the long run.

Do you feel like your involvement with ASEAN SEDP can create change?

What kind of impact do you create?

Yes, the trainings and mentoring opportunities are very customized, and tailored to the participants' needs. Based on their testimonials, most of them feel our trainings and mentoring sessions have significantly helped them to be better strategic thinkers and have a clearer plan for their social enterprises. They are also grateful that this program does not limit participation to CEOs only, but staff can also join ASEAN SEDP 2.0. This helps social enterprises to empower their staff and scale up their business. Last but not least, after joining this program, all participants mentioned that they have benefited from forging strong networks of social entrepreneurs within the ASEAN region. Some of them have discussed potential business collaboration between fellow social enterprises who joined ASEAN SEDP 2.0.



ASEAN FOUNDATION

Name

ASEAN Social Enterprise Development Program (SEDP) 2.0

Location, Year established

Indonesia, 2021

What do we stand for?

Give youth-led social enterprises opportunities to grow their sustainable business idea and strengthen the social enterprises ecosystem in the ASEAN region.

Who is involved with us?

Young adults

How do we get involved?

The program includes capacity-building, customized trainings, and mentoring sessions, as well as networking events.

What have we achieved?

Strengthening social businesses from all ASEAN countries that are working on diverse issues like environmental sustainability,

Agriculture, the inclusion of people with disabilities, social inclusion of refugees, child development, and women following our inclusive approach.

How we finance ourselves?

This year our partners are TikTok and SAP.

THE AUTHORS



DR. FABIENNE TISSOT is a Senior Consultant at Wider Sense. She has long experience in conducting qualitative research and impact consulting. She currently works with a focus on transformative philanthropy.



MARIUS FABER is an Analyst at Wider Sense and studies political science. He worked on psychological determinants influencing political participation in youth movements and gained professional experience in the fields of research and consulting.



JULE SCHWAB worked as an Intern at Wider Sense. She is a passionate advocate for sustainability and a dedicated Master's student in Management at the University of Mannheim. Her academic focus revolves around exploring the intersection of management and sustainable practices.



DR. REGINA VON GÖRTZ, Senior Project Manager and project lead at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, has extensive experience in the areas of child and youth engagement, education, prevention, well-being and addressing social inequalities. She is committed to empowering youth for a sustainable future.



DR. ANJA LANGNESS, Senior Project Manager and project lead at the Bertelsmann Stiftung, has extensive experience in the areas of child and youth engagement, education, prevention, well-being and health. She is committed to empowering youth for a sustainable future.

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
Germany

Dr. Regina von Görtz

Senior Project Manager
Bildung und Next Generation
Phone +49 5241 81-81593
regina.von.goertz@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Dr. Anja Langness

Senior Project Manager
Bildung und Next Generation
Phone +49 5241 81-81169
anja.langness@bertelsmann-stiftung.de

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de
www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/nextgen-society
www.gennow.de