Session name: **2.2 Young women and men leading social enterprises to address developmental challenges**

Session date: **Day 1, 23rd May 2022, 15:30-17:00pm**

Session Objective

The structural unemployment, working poverty, increasing vulnerabilities to the dire climate change challenge, and the persistent inequalities in the Arab countries have obliged to rethink the way of doing business. The impact is not gender blind, it is felt harder by young women, and those who are facing intersectional forms of exclusion. Market and government in many countries today fail to satisfy the needs of populations in terms of employment and service delivery, protection of the environment, etc. One response to this failure is the emergence of social enterprises (SE), as part of the growing Social Solidarity Economy (SSE).

Social entrepreneurship offers not only a path for young people to transform their own lives, fostering employment and revenue generation, but is also a way to empower others, including those who are the most marginalised and vulnerable, and impact positively on the achievements of the SDGs, . However, social entrepreneurs' preferences, on whether to orient their enterprises toward "profit maximization" or "greater social impact", might vary across countries, sociodemographic variables, and available financing from investors. Today, young female and male social entrepreneurs have a key role to play in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), increasingly using innovative business approaches to respond to today's challenges and tomorrow's problems, on sectors such as health and care services, education and training, housing, finance, as well as building resilience to cope with crises, shocks and climate change.

Social entrepreneurs need a favorable and enabling business ecosystem to thrive and to bring their impact to scale, while ensuring opportunities for young women, and marginalized young people. These entrepreneurial ecosystems require the collaboration of different stakeholders as well as specific interventions and programmes supporting innovations.

Governments are increasingly realizing that they must accelerate partnerships with young social innovators to meet the SDGs, reach those furthest behind, and support its development via new legislations, policies and programmes.

Session Objectives:
a) Bringing an understanding of what role social entrepreneurship can play in youth economic empowerment, gender equality and transition to decent work.
b) Having conceptual clarity and understanding on what social entrepreneurship is, sectors and fields of work and impact, good practices (including from other regions).
c) Pointing out what kind of policies/ecosystems are needed to support social entrepreneurship (access to finance, social security, taxation policies, governance, legal framework etc.), especially when it comes to youth and those furthest behind
d) Identifying support/skills needed, business development support, key mindsets and skill sets that help make successful social entrepreneurs, especially when it comes to vulnerable youth

e)   Exploring sectors that have potential for social entrepreneurship in the region (e.g., health, education, waste management, water and electricity management, sustainable tourism, care work,).

f)   Impact management and monitoring: how to evaluate the impact of social enterprises using specific indicators.

g)   Show-case young women and young men's social entrepreneurship and its role in addressing challenges of those furthest behind.

Session Speakers

Moderator: Ramzi Maaytah UNDP Jordan

Mr. Abdelqader Bataineh, Director of Policy & Strategy Unit, Ministry of Digital Economy & Entrepreneurship, Jordan
Ms. Majd Khalifeh, CEO, Flow Accelerator, Palestine
Ms. Safiya Abdulrahman, Young social entrepreneur, Sudan
Mr. Mohammed Jamal, Managing Director of Research, KAPITA, Iraq

Session Outcomes

Part 1: Speaker panels

During the first discussion, the moderator engaged the panelists in discussion around three topics.

Conceptualizing Social Entrepreneurship
Mr. Maaytah led discussion on how do we define social entrepreneurship and how does it differ from 'regular' entrepreneurship. A video on the topic was also shown, which you can access here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_F5U-XHZ4c . The video was based on a process of developing a Policy Roadmap to Social Entrepreneurship in Jordan in 2021.

Role of Social Entrepreneurship for youth and for society
Mr. Bataineh and Ms Abdulrahman discussed the role of social entrepreneurship for youth and for the wider society. Ms. Abdulrahman shared also her story as a social entrepreneur and how she sees the role of social entrepreneurship for youth in Sudan.

Challenges related to SE and responses
During the third discussion, all panellists discussed what are the key challenges that youth face when they go on their journey in social entrepreneurship.

Ms. Abdulrahman raised key issues that she had faced during her social entrepreneur journey, such as difficulty in accessing funding, and the negative attitudes the society has towards young female entrepreneurs.

Mr. Bataineh described how the Ministry has been partnering with UNDP and other stakeholders in the "Jordan Roadmap to Social Entrepreneurship" and how that collaboration has promoted the role of young social entrepreneurs in Jordan.

Ms. Khalifeh described how FLOW Accelerator is supporting young Palestinian entrepreneurs to build their businesses and access mentorship and funding.

Mr. Jamal shared KAPITA's experience in Iraq in developing the entrepreneurship ecosystem, and highlighted the role of research in helping young people develop their businesses.

The audience was also able to contribute to the discussion via Mentimeter, where they identified the greatest challenges. The most important challenge was voted as "Access to finance and investment", second was "Lack of culture of social innovation", third "Legal frameworks and barriers" , and fourth as "Social attitudes towards women and young people".

Part 2: Dialogue in breakout groups

The participants were divided into breakout groups based on which stakeholder group they represent. Each group came up with key recommendations on how they could best support young social entrepreneurs.

The recommendations are as follows:

Group 1 Private Sector:
- Providing moral and material support to young people and empowering their abilities
- Provide support according to need (not as a charity)
- Share experiences

Group 2 Civil Society:
- Connecting young people and innovators with decision-makers to build companies at the local and national level
- Providing material support
- Empowering capabilities
- E-learning through platforms available to all and reducing obstacles to accessing them

Group 3 Youth:
- Involving success stories in entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship training in the local and international community
- Advocating and supporting youth and raising awareness about entrepreneurship
- Research and studies on the problems facing young people
- Creating alliances to champion youth projects and pressure governments
- Youth social media platforms
- Cooperation and exchange of experiences locally and globally and attracting opportunities for entrepreneurship

Group 4 policymakers:
- Boosting income for entrepreneurship
- Organizing business, providing resources, support, and the legal environment

The top 3 recommendations were submitted for the closure session:
1. Inclusion of entrepreneurship materials in educational curricula
2. Advocating and supporting youth and raising awareness about entrepreneurship
3. Cooperation and exchange of experiences locally and globally and attracting opportunities for entrepreneurship