



YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK

Working program

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Prepared by:

The Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive summary	2
Introduction and background	3
Structure	3
Objectives and strategies	4
Conclusion	8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes the strategic road map for the Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network (YES Network) over the next two years. The Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network was established in 2014 following the decision of the founding partners to establish a formal dialogue between the Network and the civil society organizations. The Network was established to group together those civil society organizations that focus on youth entrepreneurship.

This plan adopts a strategic approach that is aligned and congruent to the strategic intentions of the YES Network and demonstrates the value that the YES Network will add to the civil society organizations. This overall strategic process agenda also includes a comprehensive operational plan with clear delineation of activities, responsibilities, initiatives, performance measures and indicators to operationalize the broad strategy focus areas over the period of one year.

The context for the articulation of this plan is the YES Network Vision and Mission statements which are respectively:

Vision:

“A strong civil society sector influencing policies and actions at all levels to empower young entrepreneurs and promote sustainable socio-economic development”

Mission:

“To strengthen civil society organizations’ capacities by fostering partnership opportunities, contributing to policy and stimulating actions for supporting youth entrepreneurship.”

Objectives:

- 1. To enhance the role of civil society in supporting youth entrepreneurship*
- 2. To strengthen policy development in the area of youth entrepreneurship through enhanced partnership between civil society organizations and government institutions*
- 3. To maintain and enhance the capacity of the YES Network*

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network is a mechanism for fostering civil society organizations' networking for the purpose of increasing their capacities to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs in order to speed the process of their labor market inclusion. The objective is to offer value-supporting services to our members, to open new opportunities for sustainable development and to influence national policy for the benefit of the civil society. We want to build on our achievements to support members and to help them to make the most of opportunities. We want to facilitate the sharing of good practice across the country and beyond.

2. STRUCTURE

The YES Network has adopted its structure in August 2014 to enhance its capacity and ability to effectively undertake its work. The structure comprises the following elements:

2.1 Membership

Currently 20 organizations form the current membership of the network. This includes local and national youth related CSOs. Members are being empowered to participate actively in outreach and implementation activities of the network. The membership database is being currently enhanced and a membership drive will be undertaken to enhance participation in all regions of the country. The membership admission process and maintenance of the membership database is a responsibility of the network.

Criteria for membership selection

- The organization must be a non-profit organization
- It should specifically include youth entrepreneurship as one of its objectives
- The organization shall have a constitution/statute to guide its operation and be registered or recognized in its country of origin
- The organization must have a proven track record of addressing youth entrepreneurship
- Willingness and ability to contribute to the work of the network
- The organization must agree to follow the obligations of membership including contributing to the development and implementation of activities and programs as well as sharing experience with other members of the network

Benefits of membership

- Receive updates on the activities of YES Network
- Be notified from time-to-time of funding and capacity building opportunities as well as upcoming network meetings and events
- Be able to contact and exchange experience with other members of the network
- Be able to participate in consultation and assembly meetings

Responsibilities of membership

- Contribute to the development and implementation of YES Network activities and programs

- Share their expertise and experience with other members of the YES Network
- Participate as appropriate in activities organized by the network
- Maintain their non-profit status and a level of activity and involvement in activities related to youth entrepreneurship
- Agree to respect the rules and procedures of YES Network

2.2 Coordinating Assembly

The coordinating assembly is the overall governance body of the network. It meets once per year. It has established a number of sub-committees to assist its work including on governance, outreach, strategy and technical issues. The subcommittees facilitate inputs from member organizations to the assembly. The leadership of the subcommittees is distributed to members of the coordinating assembly with relevant expertise.

2.3 Board

The board manages the work of the network through adopting the annual program of activities of the network. It is responsible for implementing the decisions set by the coordinating assembly. In addition, the board is responsible for organizing the annual meetings of the assembly and for proposing agenda with discussion topics.

2.4 President

The president of the network is responsible for the daily operations and for organizing the work of the operational management. The president is the legal representative of the network and is also president of the board.

3. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 OBJECTIVES

Based on a research of the needs of young entrepreneurs and through examination of the strengths and weaknesses of youth related CSOs, we define the following objectives:

1. To enhance the role of civil society in supporting youth entrepreneurship

Civil society organizations play critical role in supporting young entrepreneurs. Increases in knowledge and capabilities will empower CSOs to be strategic partner to the government institutions in achieving national benefits.

2. To strengthen policy development in the area of youth entrepreneurship through enhanced partnership between civil society organizations and government institutions

This objective builds on the important role of the network to contribute and provide feedback to policy making in the field of youth entrepreneurship as well as the pursuit of advocacy to continuously highlight the issues affecting the civil society sector.

3. To maintain and enhance the capacity of the YES Network

In order to deliver the defined objectives and strategies the YES Network needs to enhance its capacity. Complimentary capacity building agenda will be developed alongside the objectives and strategies identified.

3.2 STRATEGIES

For each of the objectives a number of strategies have been identified.

Strategic Objective 1: To enhance the role of civil society in supporting youth entrepreneurship

Strategies:

- Strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations to address youth entrepreneurship issues through supporting actions at local level
- Support outreach and awareness on youth entrepreneurship initiatives
- Document and disseminate experience and best practices to address youth entrepreneurship issues

Strategic Objective 2: To strengthen policy development in the area of youth entrepreneurship through enhanced partnership between civil society organizations and government institutions

Strategies:

- Encourage CSOs contributions to the negotiation and implementation of policies for supporting youth entrepreneurship
- Enhance CSOs capacities for advocacy and lobbying

Strategic Objective 3. To maintain and enhance the capacity of the YES Network

Strategies

- Enhance governance capability of the YES Network
- Promote active membership
- Improve the network's procurement of funding

The key elements of the envisaged strategies are elaborated in more detail below.

Strategic Objective 1

To enhance the role of civil society in supporting youth entrepreneurship

Strategy 1.1 Strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations to address youth entrepreneurship issues through supporting actions at local level

- Organize regular trainings for increasing the capacities of CSOs for applying and managing projects funded by international donors
- Provide granting opportunities for the realization of project proposals at local level

Strategy 1.2 Support outreach and awareness on youth entrepreneurship issues

- Undertake outreach campaigns to raise awareness on key youth entrepreneurship issues in partnership with the network members and other regional/national networks

Strategy 1.3 Document and disseminate experience and best practices to address youth entrepreneurship issues

- Collect and promote best practices by CSOs in the field of supporting youth entrepreneurship

Strategic Objective 2

To strengthen policy development in the area of youth entrepreneurship through enhanced partnership between civil society and government bodies

Strategy 2.1 Encourage CSOs contributions to the development and implementation of policies for supporting youth entrepreneurship

- Organize regular meetings, dialogues and public debates between CSOs, government bodies and policy makers to foster communication and to influence recognition and involvement of the CSO sector in the process of developing public policies
- Establish effective linkages between the network's sub-committee for lobbying and policy influencing and the CSO members to contribute to the evaluation and improvement of proposals aimed towards influencing policy for youth entrepreneurship

Strategy 2.2 Enhance CSOs capacities for advocacy and lobbying

- Organize periodic trainings and other capacity building activities on the subject on advocacy and lobbying
- Share best practices and success stories from network members or other regional networks in the field

Strategic Objective 3

To maintain and enhance the capacity of the YES Network

Strategy 3.1 Enhance governance capability of the YES Network

- Strengthen communication between the operational management and the executive team
- Prepare a financial management framework including budgeting process to manage and administer YES Network funds and budget

Strategy 3.2 To promote active membership

- Maintain and strengthen membership base

Strategy 3.3 Improve the network's communication and procurement of funding

- Develop and sustain a communication channel between the various stakeholders
- Establish and support a communication strategy to ensure that all country regions have adequate representation at council meetings
- To secure adequate resources for the network from international donors

CONCLUSION

The YES Network is committed to the effective realization of its stated strategic intent as outlined in the abovementioned. It is firmly committed to working with the CSOs and government institutions as a value-adding partners in support of the network's purpose of facilitating tangible benefits for the young entrepreneurial community in the country. It has the ability, expertise and more importantly the commitment to create the capability to act meaningfully in articulating its mandate and therefore play the critical role in bridging the links between the CSO and the government sector.