

Breakout Session

Youth Entrepreneurship and Volunteering: Promoting Engagement at Local and International Levels

ACTIVITY REPORT

FACILITATOR: Mr. Oluwafemi Aganran (Service Civil International – SCI)

EXPERTS: Ms. Rocio Ruete (The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service-CCIVS)

Ms. Hanouf Alajmi (Entrepreneur Selection and Growth Manager, Endeavor KSA)

The breakout session on Youth Entrepreneurship and Volunteering proceeded according to the objectives it was set to fulfill; to give participants a chance to give their position, to give feedback, to ask questions and importantly to make proposals for action. The presence of 70% youth delegates at the forum confirmed the commitment of UNESCO and MiSK foundation to engage youth as a key player in creating positive societal impact. The various debates at the session were focused on understanding what are the bottlenecks and opportunities to fostering engagement of young people in entrepreneurship enterprise and in volunteering.

The breakout session commenced with the facilitator introducing the topic, explaining the methodology of the activities and how the results will be disseminated. This was followed by the 1st Polling question: What level of impact can youth Volunteering and Entrepreneurship opportunities have in driving social change?

→ high impact = 66%, low impact = 4%

Experts pitch: The experts agreed that volunteering and entrepreneurship are interrelated and can have big impacts on personal and community levels and explained that we are living in an era when ignorance is a choice; young people are able to find information on volunteering and are harnessing the opportunities they find to become engaged. Expert ticks the 66%-high impact response to the 1st polling question.

Feedback in plenary:

The delegates were invited to share their points of views regarding the polling question

- NGO and its institutions, helps to develop leadership mindset in young people, given the people courage to initiate their own enterprise and create solutions to social issues. The relationship between volunteering and social entrepreneurship was emphasized.
- Volunteering is seen as a means to channel free time for something positive, this especially true for young people given the high rate of youth unemployment, free time may be used for negative things if not properly harnessed for responsibility.
- Volunteering increases productivity and innovation, gives young people a sense of purpose

- Volunteering impacts starts on the personal level to the community and international levels. It is important to think globally and act locally
- It is important to educate/train volunteers about the importance and essence of the work they undertake, so that they are not misled to believing it is only for meeting people, having fun and travelling.

The Facilitator asked which mechanisms should NGOs then put in place to enable youth become entrepreneurs? Since entrepreneurs are made not born, we need to consider the opportunities we have in helping youth to make the transition from being just volunteers to becoming entrepreneurs. Facilitator enjoins delegates to discuss the question with their neighbors in pairs and feedback to the plenary.

- Activity in schools to change mindsets; teach kids early how to think like an entrepreneur.
- Get the knowledge and skills across to those who need them
- 'Vision 2030' in KSA was cited as an example that is mainstreaming the mechanisms to promote youth entrepreneurship in the Saudi. Need to enhance the culture of volunteers, focus on quality not quantity
- Concept of volunteering is rising in our community but the type of volunteering is not very impactful on the volunteers. It ends up to be mostly about socializing because sometimes we do not work with people who really need our help, in brief our voluntary action is not impacting us a lot
 - Facilitators pitch: Can we therefore see this as the need to reach out to the most excluded people of the society
 - Hanouf: this is the problem of organisations, they should implement volunteering frankly
 - Rocio: Volunteering must come together with critical thinking and perception of reality
- Professionalizing NGO sector: We need to challenge the volunteering aspect for youth professionals, we must not expect that young professionals will continue working for free in their organisations, youth need to see a career in this direction. Allowance should be made by grant organisations for youth workers to be paid for human resource within projects.
- Create digital visibility of voluntary and entrepreneurship youth actions, to inspire and create a positive narrative on youth social impact.

Facilitator: Vision 2030 in KSA is a lofty example for many countries, even though several southern countries have similar visions to diminish their over reliance on natural resources while improving the socioeconomic conditions of their societies. It is important to empower and align the youth through these visions and strategies in every country. Recent political developments in many countries and the draconian austerity mostly felt by youth underscore the contemporary relevance of entrepreneurial engagement for young people and have drawn public attention to the corrosive effects of disengaging/excluding youth, especially the global South

Experts Feedback

Rocio: CCIVS – grassroots local organisations working together on an international level: There are different way of participating and getting involved in voluntary service

Hanouf: At endeavor KSA we saw the mindset of youth change positively since we created programs for youth to help us with initiatives and community engagement.

The facilitator moved to assess the perception about the level of accessibility of opportunities to young people in different countries via the 2nd Polling question: How do you rank the level at which young people in your country can access opportunities to be engaged in volunteering and entrepreneurship?

33% - not accessible	9% - very accessible
29% - not very accessible	18% - not very accessible

The polling results shows that accessibility to opportunities is perceived to be very low, it can be a starting point to consider that Young people face unequal and therefore unfair access to opportunities which bound them to a certain limited range of possibilities and participation in decision making

Experts pitch:

Hanouf: accessibility needs to be improved upon. For example it is also about the market size, the accessibility to information (not just volunteer jobs), to access information about our performance.

Rocio: There is the need for impact measurements within volunteering and entrepreneurship. She cited the ongoing research at the University of Illinois on the impact of International Voluntary Service, which Benjamin Lough is involved in.

Facilitator: In order to be more effective it is important to have the scientific fact about the impact we are making as NGOs

Call to Action:

Delegates were enjoined to think about what worked and what didn't work in their countries, when it comes to removing the bottlenecks to creating inclusive and accessible opportunities for young people. Now identify the concrete steps that are needed to be taken and strategic actions that are required to foster opportunities for youth engagement in Volunteering and entrepreneurship.

Delegates discussed on the subject in groups before reporting to the plenary. Governments, institutions and relevant stakeholders were urged to take action on the following recommendations;

Proposal for action

1. Delegates recommended that young people need to be facilitated to engage in dialogue with leaders at the local, national and international levels;
2. NGOs need capacity-building to be able to create impactful opportunities and programming with young people;
3. There should be better outreach to the most excluded youth in society, including those with special needs;
4. Companies should offer more volunteering opportunities for staff, possibly embedded in contracts as part of corporate responsibility;

5. There must be a more scientific approach to NGO impact;
6. More opportunities should be given for young people to be paid while working for NGOs;
7. Opportunities should be created for retirees to become volunteers so that they can transfer their experience to young people;
8. Funding should be boosted for monitoring and financial management in projects and to enable NGOs to recruit consultants.
9. There is need to have a database for volunteering per country

3rd Polling question: How well did this session meet you expectations?

Result: 67% - Very much

4% - not at all

Conclusion:

“Before we thought that the future belongs to cooperating organisations, I believe now that it belongs to networking organisations.” Ms. Hanouf Alajmi

The breakout session closed with the facilitator highlighting the important contributions of the delegates and experts; thanked everyone for their commitment to make a difference by promoting the engagement of young people and creating opportunities for their involvement in volunteering and entrepreneurship initiatives.