

# Shaping A More Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Future: Supporting young social and green entrepreneurs

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# Introduction

## *Empowering young people to create a fairer and greener future*

When people start businesses, they create income, jobs, and economic growth. Young people are the entrepreneurs of the future and working to solve the greatest challenges of our time. They are reimagining business, bringing new ideas to market, strengthening communities and economies, and building opportunity - not just for themselves, but for us all.

The world is facing an unprecedented youth employment challenge. Over the last 15 years, the global proportion of young people not in employment, education or training has remained stubbornly high. It's worse for those who are often discriminated against due to factors including gender, race and , disability. For example it stands at 30 per cent for young women and 13 per cent for young men<sup>1</sup>. Even in places where youth unemployment is low, this often masks poor job quality, especially in developing countries<sup>2</sup>.

The situation has been further exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, which has left young people unemployed in far greater numbers than

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<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organization. "Youth labour statistics." <https://ilostat ilo.org/topics/youth/>. Accessed December 6, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

other adults<sup>3</sup>. The employment prospects of young women have been hit especially hard<sup>4</sup>. The UN estimates we now need to create 600 million new jobs over the next 15 years to meet the employment needs of young people<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, young people worldwide are extremely worried about the future, and the threat posed by climate change<sup>6</sup> as well as social injustices and rising inequality. They recognise they are living through a time of unprecedented social, economic, and environmental challenge.

But they are also on the front lines of vital social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter and Fridays for Future. They are quickly adopting new technologies - new ways of connecting and communicating. At the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, it was their voices that resonated loudly, demanding a just transition to a more equitable, inclusive, and green global economy.

While there is no doubt that generations of young people will inherit what today seem like intractable problems, they will also create new solutions and opportunities.

YBI believes social and green entrepreneurship can unlock the potential

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<sup>3</sup> The World Economic Forum. "The pandemic has damaged youth employment: Here's how we can help." 15 July 2021. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/07/pandemic-damaged-youth-employment/>. Accessed September 28, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. "World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda."

<sup>6</sup> Nature. "Young people's climate anxiety revealed in landmark survey." 22 September 2021. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02582-8>. Accessed 28 September 2021.

of young people as agents and leaders of change, creating vital economic and employment opportunities in the process. We provide support to youth-led enterprises of all shapes and sizes, with a special focus on the small and micro businesses that sustain livelihoods, provide decent work, and form the backbones of economies around the world.

In this paper, we explore what social and green entrepreneurship means for YBI. We bring together insights from our commissioned research, our Social Impact Accelerator initiative, our experience of running inclusivity labs, and the insights of our longstanding partner and supporter Accenture.

We outline what good support looks like for aspiring young social and green entrepreneurs. We use our successful integrated approach – incorporating personal development, business development and facilitating the enabling environment – to anchor our thoughts on the additional needs of young social and green entrepreneurs. We aim to inform learning about how youth-led micro and small businesses can achieve social and green impact.

As we roll out new support for young social and green entrepreneurs, we welcome collaboration and learning. We commit to sharing our experiences, the insights of our members, and, most importantly, the stories, passion, and successes of young entrepreneurs.

# 1. Defining social and green entrepreneurship

We set out to find a generally acceptable definition of a social or green enterprise that would resonate across the globe. We quickly learned that no such definition exists. Instead, we discovered debates about whether social enterprise is a sector, movement, or designation.

We understand that there are no universally applicable criteria for social or green entrepreneurship. For the purpose of our work, we will guide our understanding on the basis of principles, characteristics, and considerations, drawing a distinction between responsible business and social or green enterprise.

## *Business with a head and a heart*

Smart Kolektiv, our YBI member in Serbia is solely focused on ‘impact’ entrepreneurs. It attempts to assess whether the young entrepreneur is interested in ‘me’ or ‘we’. A telltale sign for them of a social or green entrepreneur is the focus beyond their own personal ambition or income and the recognition of building a business that benefits society. These entrepreneurs bring both “head” and “heart” to the business.

## A responsible business

YBI believes a responsible business is defined by *how* a business goes about its activities, and the considerations it factors in its decision-making.

To YBI, a responsible business:

- meets all legal requirements and chooses specific and meaningful areas in which to exceed legal obligations
- embraces human rights and the provision of decent work as a responsibility of the business, including job creation, rights in the workplace, social protection, and social dialogue
- takes steps to understand stakeholder expectations and address them through business operations
- always considers its impact on people (the workforce, the community, and society at large) as well as the environment
- makes efforts to mitigate negative impact and achieve net positive effects on the environment and society.

[Find out more about YBI's work in Responsible Business.](#)

## A social or green enterprise

YBI believes a social or green enterprise is defined by *why* the business exists and what the business is solving for. Its social or green purpose sits at the heart of its vision and mission, and is therefore fundamental to its decision-making.

To YBI, a social or green enterprise:

- is a purpose-led business by definition and design, and is explicit about its social or environmental purpose
- embeds its social or environmental purpose in its vision, mission, values and business model
- enshrines its social or environmental purpose to the extent that it becomes a critical factor guiding the decisions of the business.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help an entrepreneur articulate the impact(s) that the business intends to deliver. The SDGs are widely recognised and can help more visibly connect the business to pressing social and environmental issues.

These are:

- No Poverty
- Zero Hunger

- Good Health and Well-being
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Affordable and Clean Energy
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Reduced Inequality
- Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Responsible Consumption and Production
- Climate Action
- Life Below Water
- Life on Land
- Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- Partnerships to achieve the Goal



## 2. Exploring the support needs of young people aspiring to be social and green entrepreneurs

### *Communicating clearly*

The experience of YBI members is that young ‘social’, ‘green’ or ‘environmental’ entrepreneurs don’t necessarily identify with those labels. Many don’t explicitly acknowledge that they are building a social or green enterprise. They are more likely to see themselves as entrepreneurs who have found an opportunity to address a problem by starting a business.

Support organisations therefore need to think carefully about how they communicate the services they offer and the types of entrepreneurs they support.

For example, ideaLab - a YBI member in Mozambique - noticed the term ‘green entrepreneurs’ lacked resonance for young people and they had difficulty attracting young entrepreneurs to their programme. As a result, they realised they needed to help young entrepreneurs identify as “green.” They have successfully used Instagram to target businesses with environmental impact potential to join their programme which focusses on green solutions and climate change.

## Our integrated approach

YBI's global approach to supporting young entrepreneurs is grounded in research and learning, and underpinned by human-centred design principles.

This approach has been developed by, for and with our members over our 20-year history. Members customise our approach for their local context to maximise impact.

The local context is important in the social and green sector. Solutions often need to be local. Many social and green innovations cannot be imported into countries—geography matters. This is because there are usually geography-specific factors that vary, such as the state of infrastructure or the economy. There could be local variations in materials, technology, value chains, regulations or incentives that could greatly affect a business model and operations.

Our approach integrates three components to enable the success of young entrepreneurs:

**Personal development** - building positive mindsets and attitudes through mentoring, soft- and life-skills training, and increasing leadership capabilities.

**Business development** - technical training and guidance on how to start and grow a successful business, with on-going aftercare to support the young person long after their initial training has ended.

**Enabling environment facilitation** - access to finance, markets and networks.

We know this approach effectively delivers on the fundamental support needs of young entrepreneurs across sectors, geographies, and business models. Here, we outline how we can build on this approach to account for the particular needs of those with social and green ambitions.

## Personal development

Every entrepreneur needs a positive mindset and attitude, alongside traits like leadership, resilience, curiosity, risk-taking, and critical, innovative thinking. Personal development is especially important for young entrepreneurs, who often lack the life experience that helps develop these skills.

Alongside these attributes, we believe social and green entrepreneurs need additional traits and skills based on navigating *passion with purpose*, and *patience with persistence*. They also need *visible role models* to mentor, inspire and support them through the process.

### Passion with purpose

Young social and green entrepreneurs sometimes have incredible passion but find it difficult to connect it to purpose and profit. They need the skills to *channel* their passion into developing a marketable business idea that has economic value and purpose. They need to align passion and purpose alongside profit, and to develop leadership qualities to help them navigate potential tradeoffs.

Personal development support for social and green entrepreneurs – whether through training, mentorship and/or coaching – needs to help build confidence and capability in these areas. It needs to help the young entrepreneur tell their story, and the story of their business, with

conviction and authenticity.

### **Patience with persistence**

Young social and green entrepreneurs may need a greater degree of patience and persistence than their entrepreneurial peers.

Social and green business models and ideas – although growing in number and stature – remain nascent concepts. Innovative ideas and approaches may not be immediately understood by customers, investors, networks, or other actors in the ecosystem. It takes time to socialise the idea and bring people along. In many cases, an entrepreneur may need to build the market for the product or service from scratch. This requires additional patience and persistence.

### **Leadership skills to navigate a new decade of challenges**

Amid inequality, the promises and perils of technology, and the glaring effects of climate change, Accenture believes businesses and organisations are facing a range of challenges that are forcing them to redefine responsible leadership.

They have developed the “Five Elements Model of Responsible Leadership.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Forum of Young Global Leaders, The Global Shapers Community and Accenture. "Seeking New Leadership: Responsible leadership for a sustainable and equitable world." 2020.

## The five elements model of responsible leadership

- **Stakeholder inclusion:** Safeguarding trust and positive impact for all by standing in the shoes of stakeholders when making decisions, and fostering an inclusive environment where diverse individuals have a voice and feel they belong.
- **Emotion and intuition:** Unlocking commitment and creativity by being truly human, showing compassion, humility and openness.
- **Mission and purpose:** Advancing common goals by inspiring a shared vision of sustainable prosperity for the organisation and its stakeholders.
- **Technology and innovation:** Creating new organisational and societal value by innovating responsibly with emerging technology.
- **Intellect and insight:** Finding ever-improving paths to success by embracing continuous learning and knowledge exchange.

*Source: Accenture Research. Based on complementary surveys of more than 5,000 executives, stakeholders and Young Global Leaders and Global Shapers.*

## **Visible role models**

Young social and green entrepreneurs need more visible role models. They need to see more success stories and case studies, particularly of young people across the globe who have successfully built social and green enterprises.

As social and green enterprise development is still niche, it is helpful for young entrepreneurs to have a pool of expert volunteers, advisors, coaches and mentors with specific market knowledge or relevant experience. Our members have leveraged renewable energy and other environmental and non-profit professionals, for example. They have relied on successful social entrepreneurs who are alumni of their programmes to mentor the next generation.

But mentors don't necessarily need to be social or green entrepreneurs themselves. Nor do they need to have specific technical experience. A good mentoring relationship can help the entrepreneur develop skills and attributes they need to be successful without domain expertise - such as soft skills to navigate the challenges of connecting passion with purpose, for example.

# Business Development

Running a business – whether a traditional, social, or green business – requires hard business skills, such as:

- business planning
- budgeting
- accounting
- costing
- pricing
- marketing.

These skills affect business viability and performance, and help young entrepreneurs translate their motivations into concrete businesses.

They empower young people to assess the feasibility of their ideas and create a business model canvas, or to improve their business management and operations.

YBI members run training sessions, both in-person and online, focused on teaching these hard skills for starting a business and equipping young people to analyse business decisions. Members also offer aftercare services, supporting entrepreneurs to respond to challenges long after their initial training period has ended.

We've identified specific needs and approaches for how business



development support can cater to the needs of social and green entrepreneurs.

## Choosing a legal form

Determining a legal form for a social or green enterprise is an important decision and one that is not always straightforward.

A social or green enterprise can be for-profit, non-profit, a cooperative or community-based enterprise, or take other forms, so long as the enterprise can be financially sustainable, break even at some point, and commercial activity is a strong revenue driver.

With all options on the table, deciding on the right legal form can be challenging, particularly for young people who may lack prior experience of setting up an enterprise. Considerations which can help an entrepreneur choose the right legal form for them include:

- the role of governance, membership, and accountability
- complexity, cost, and compliance issues
- their planned growth trajectory, and access to finance and funding
- principles around profit sharing
- tax implications
- what their legal form communicates about them to their stakeholders.

## **Effectuation**

Through effectuation, young people identify and assess the resources that they have at hand:

- who they are - their passions, values and ambitions
- what they know - their knowledge and experiences
- who they know - their networks.

Effectuation can help identify a social and green purpose for a young person's business. This can then inform how the business evolves across different stages of operation. [You can read more about YBI's work in effectuation here.](#)

## **Boot camps and hackathons**

Boot camps and hackathons can help social and green entrepreneurs self-identify and test out their idea in a safe space. These types of programmes can support young entrepreneurs to align profit and purpose, test out the viability of their idea, and better understand how it can be translated into a market opportunity.

## **Business model canvas and impact**

Many YBI members work with a business model canvas or similar tools to help define the essential elements of a business - its value proposition, customers, route to market, and revenue model.

Various organisations have built upon these core elements to include a social or green value proposition, beneficiaries, other critical

stakeholders, and impact metrics.

Social business model canvases have been developed and tested by leading social enterprise institutes to help entrepreneurs interrogate the social and environmental impact of their idea, and to visualise how impact is integrated within the business model.

Conversations about revenue models and pricing can be difficult to navigate with young social and green entrepreneurs. What is the value of a product? How should it be priced? Who should pay? These conversations help support organisations to determine whether a young entrepreneur has the mindset to be an entrepreneur. They can give insight into how the entrepreneur will align profit and purpose, consider short term trade-offs for long term gains, and whether their business model can indeed be sustainable.

Governance structures can also help reinforce a social or environmental purpose and provide transparency and accountability. For example, surpluses and profits can be reinvested into the social or environmental mandate of the business.

As one member noted, “They need to understand that profit is not a dirty word.”

## **Sustainability DNA enablers**

In addition to its five essential leadership qualities, Accenture has defined a Sustainability DNA: the embedded practices (categorised by enablers) that drive the human connections, intelligence and accountability needed to navigate a rapidly changing world and meet stakeholder expectations.<sup>8</sup>

**Human dignity:** Champions inclusion, diversity, and equity inside the organisation and beyond.

**Tangible empathy:** Upholds the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

**Open dialogue:** Is consultative and listening by default.

**Active resilience:** Shapes workplaces and stakeholder experience to build mental and physical resilience.

**Animated purpose:** Embeds the organisation's purpose in all activity.

**Dynamic ethics:** Takes a systematic approach to upholding and enhancing business ethics.

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<sup>8</sup> Accenture, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum. "Shaping the Sustainable Organization: How responsible leaders create lasting value and equitable impact for all stakeholders." 2021.

**Planetary boundaries:** Elevates good citizenship of Earth's natural and human environment

**Progressive technology:** Harnesses emerging tech to solve problems without creating harmful side effects

**Learning culture:** Prepares people for the future world of work through targeted learning and development

**Deep metrics:** Analyses inputs, impacts and risks across multiple time horizons

*Source: Accenture Research.*

## **Defining the mechanisms of change**

A business will best achieve its social or green ambitions if there is clarity over the desired impact and pathways to achieve it.

Developing a *theory of change* helps entrepreneurs identify and articulate their intended outcomes and impacts, and to understand how the product or service helps enable or contribute to change.

The Impact Management Project's *Five Dimensions of Impact* can help

an entrepreneur better define and understand their impact. There are a series of supporting questions and frameworks to help entrepreneurs define the various dimensions of impact for their business.

ideaLab supports green entrepreneurs with *impact forecast training* through a workshop format. They note in their experience that young people don't always like working with metrics, but many young entrepreneurs know they need them - especially if they want to pitch to social and green investors.

### **Impact management and measurement**

Social and green enterprises often benefit from *measuring* their impact in some way - if the business exists to make an impact, an entrepreneur probably wants to know whether it is actually doing so.

With limited resources, measuring impact can be a vital component of effective planning and strategic decision-making. By figuring out what's working and what's not, social and green enterprises can focus their time and effort to where they matter most. Measurement can also be a critical part of risk management, giving sight of potential threats and providing an evidence base for mitigation.

Externally, an entrepreneur may increasingly need to demonstrate their impact to their stakeholders, particularly as awareness grows of green or impact 'washing'. Measuring impact can help ensure accountability

and transparency - not only to the team, but also to customers, donors, and beneficiaries. Furthermore, hard metrics may be critical for some certifications, such as carbon credit schemes, while access to grants or impact-related investments will often be contingent on some form of on-going impact measurement.

There are various forms and degrees of impact management. Some entrepreneurs develop management, monitoring and measurement systems to track and report on performance against defined impact parameters. Others find this too costly or time-intensive, may not see the need, or may not have the necessary skills at the start-up phase. YBI members encourage young entrepreneurs to consider key performance indicators of impact— or else they won't know if the business has any impact at all.

There is continuing innovation in the field of impact management and measurement. Innovations such as Lean Data for example - focusing on speed, repeatability, and comparability through phone surveys – can help social and green entrepreneurs capture impact information efficiently and cost-effectively. This, in turn, can help entrepreneurs understand what matters most to their business, their customers and their beneficiaries, and what difference they are making.

## Facilitating the enabling environment

YBI and its members match young people with local funding, market opportunities, networks, and other resources to help their business succeed. Our members are embedded in their communities. They are aware of organisations and institutions that can complement their offerings. They leverage these relationships to help young people access low-risk funding opportunities and identify market and partnership opportunities.

### Capital

Access to capital can be crucial to the success or failure of any business. A young person starting a social or green enterprise may face particular difficulties accessing finance, due to:

- risk aversion in the financial sector towards businesses with a social or environmental purpose
- unsuitability for traditional funding structures due to a conscious decision to balance financial return with social or environmental impact
- lack of understanding of the funding landscape, among both financiers and enterprises, e.g. entrepreneurs not knowing whether to focus on grants, traditional commercial financing, or specialised social or green capital
- lack of access to the right networks and contacts.



In many ways, the funding needs of social and green enterprises are linked more closely to their stage of development, sector, and geographical location than their cause-driven purpose. They may, however, face some additional considerations, including:

- the implications of trade-offs between financial sustainability, profitability, and impact - with more focus on impact in some cases meaning less profit or even periodic losses, thus affecting the risk profile of the business as a potential investment
- their ownership structure and legal form, and what this means for access to finance
- the longer timeframe that may be needed to achieve adoption and therefore financial sustainability, particularly if their approach is highly innovative
- increased operational costs from investment in impact measurement activities.

While NGOs have traditionally accessed grants while businesses have accessed loans and equity, social and green enterprises can potentially access all three. In fact, different stages of a social enterprises' life cycle may require different types of funding, with grant-based or patient capital upfront, followed by more traditional commercial forms.

There has been significant progress in the nascent field of *impact*

*investing*, alongside growing opportunities for other forms of innovative impact funding. Impact investment is often defined by its focus on ‘measurable impact’, regardless of the nature of the investee, while other models, definitions and funds take a keener interest in the recipient of the funding.

Our research has found:

- By definition, many social/green business models are more innovative and risky, and less profitable. Yet, over the longer term, their foundations and interconnections can give them greater resilience and longevity. They may therefore need patient capital to thrive.
- Green economic government policies and several innovative financial mechanisms, such as social or green impact bonds, have been put in place to support social enterprises. Over the coming years, international organisations and impact investors are also expected to increase their investments in social and green enterprises.
- Social enterprises which can demonstrate a viable and sustainable market-based model are more likely to get funding. Investors want to see self-sustaining and scalable models with large potential reach.

YBI members are critical guides for young social and green

entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the funding landscape and signposting appropriate financing opportunities. They can also help educate local financiers on the capital needs of young social and green entrepreneurs.

### **Market linkages**

Markets for social and green products and services aren't always straightforward, particularly for new and innovative solutions. In some cases, a young entrepreneur may need to develop the market themselves. This requires partnerships, networks, capitalising and thinking 'outside the box' to find new pathways to market and market opportunities.

YBI members can help young social and green entrepreneurs identify partners and channels, and facilitate introductions.

Similarly, young people may need resources to develop and test their products. This can require connections with universities, labs, innovation centres, and institutes. This is an area where YBI members can create value. In Mozambique, for example, ideaLab has pursued tech collaborations and partnerships with universities, enabling young entrepreneurs to test, prototype and certify their innovative products.

### **Building awareness**

Social and green entrepreneurship remains a relatively nascent area of youth entrepreneurship. Building awareness is critical to realising its

potential. This could include conferences, awareness events, learning initiatives, networking, hackathons and competitions. These events can help to socialise the meaning and importance of social and green entrepreneurship. They can educate and inspire a more vibrant and inclusive ecosystem.

## Summary of support needs of young green and social entrepreneurs.

YBI's Integrated Approach to Supporting Young Entrepreneurs		Additional Needs to Support Green & Social Entrepreneurs
<p><b>Personal Development</b></p> <p><i>Personal development focus on soft skills, life skills and leadership capabilities and is supported through mentoring, training and coaching.</i></p>	<p>Instilling competencies such as team building, time management, delegation, conflict resolution and stress management; and traits such as resilience, curiosity, risk-taking, and critical, innovative thinking through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to build positive mindsets and attitudes.</li> <li>• Soft and life-skills training.</li> <li>• Mentorship.</li> </ul>	<p>Support to integrate passions with a business purpose</p> <p>Instilling patience and persistence to build a market for new and innovative ideas</p> <p>Storytelling skills to 'sell' impact</p> <p>Role models that have succeeded in delivering green and social impact</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership training and support.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Business Development</b></p> <p><i>Development of the business focus on training and advice on hard skills.</i></p>	<p>Technical training and guidance on how to start and grow a successful business, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Costing</li> <li>• Pricing</li> <li>• Marketing</li> </ul>	<p>Guidance to choose the right legal form</p> <p>Training using theory of change and/or business model canvas with impact elements</p> <p>Skills to measure the impact of the business</p> <p>Specialised technical advice</p>
<p><b>Enabling environment facilitation</b></p> <p><i>Local facilitation of an enabling environment to help businesses get a foothold.</i></p>	<p>Access to finance, markets and networks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to navigate the funding landscape</li> <li>• Skills to secure investment</li> <li>• Support to navigate legal and compliance issues</li> </ul>	<p>Knowledge and linkages to of the different funding options available to green and social businesses</p> <p>Specialised support in developing new markets for innovative products and services</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Market linkages</li><li>• Connections to networks</li></ul>	Green and social events, including conferences, hackathons, and networking
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# YBI's role in driving social and green youth entrepreneurship

YBI's network of 51 members supports young people in 46 countries, equipping them to build the skills, confidence and connections they need to beat the odds and become successful business owners.

We support young entrepreneurs with all kinds of dreams and ambitions, across sectors, geographies and social contexts. At our core, we are committed to a social mission:

- **Enabling decent work and transforming prospects and livelihoods** of 18-35-year-olds across the globe, and helping these young people build businesses that create employment and benefit local communities.
- **Driving inclusivity** by actively creating space and access for the hardest to reach youth. We are committed to reaching any young person with a desire to be an entrepreneur, regardless of their identity, background, or circumstances. We remove barriers to access and equitably empower them to develop their skills and realise their business dreams.
- **Supporting the next generation of responsible business leaders** who look beyond financial value – leaders guided by values, who



value their stakeholders and the environment, and who recognise their responsibilities and contributions to building better businesses, markets, communities, and societies.

As we continue to pursue, deepen, and amplify our social mission, we understand the importance of empowering young people to maximise the social value of their businesses. We are committed to supporting them on their path to doing good, and to nurturing those who found their business on an intrinsic social or environmental purpose.

We see the rise of social and green enterprise and the increasing number of young people at its heart. We hear the evolving conversation on sustainable business. We feel the urgency of addressing the climate crisis and inequalities, and the need for businesses to offer solutions to social and environmental problems.

## Reflections

Global challenges to our environment, economies and communities demand new ways of doing business. We believe the next generation of young entrepreneurs will build the inclusive, responsible, social, and green businesses to meet them.

We are ready to help these young people navigate the complex trade-offs of purpose and profit, and to equip them with the skills and resilience they need to persevere and prevail. We are determined to help them embrace the *Five Elements of Responsible Leadership* and embed *Sustainability DNA* into their businesses.

We believe YBI's integrated approach of *Personal Development*, *Business Development*, and *Enabling Environment Facilitation* is well-placed to provide valuable support to young entrepreneurs on their journey to make a better world.

In this mission, we invite insights, collaboration and learning from others. We commit to sharing our experiences, the insights of our members, and, most importantly, the stories, passion, and success of young entrepreneurs.

## Case studies

**Marta Vânia Uetela, 25 years old**

**CEO and Industrial Designer, BioMec Prosthetics**

**Supported by YBI Member: ideiaLab, Mozambique**

*BioMec Prosthetics is a Mozambique-based company. It designs and makes prosthetics using plastic collected from the sea, with the twin aims of bettering the environment and allowing physically disabled people to feel and experience a life without limitations.*

Marta, at the age of 23, wanted to help a friend who was in an accident and lost a limb. In an effort to protect its pristine coastline, she and her friends spent the early days of the pandemic lockdowns collecting plastic bottles found along the shoreline of the beaches of Mozambique. It was then that Marta's training as an industrial designer and mechanical engineer collided with her passion for protecting the environment and helping her friend. BioMec was born.

Marta's personal social and environmental mission is at the heart of BioMec. She wants to contribute to the circular economy by finding a purpose for all the discarded plastic she sees in Mozambique. She wants to design beautiful, high-quality prosthetics to build the self-esteem of those who use them, and for those who need a prosthetic to be seen as capable. She learned that very few hospitals in Mozambique offer prosthetics and wants to increase their availability across the country.

Marta is on a journey to make BioMec a commercial success. Whilst Marta has a technical background, she had no business skills and knew she needed a commercial approach. She found YBI member ideiaLab, which runs the Climate Launchpad initiative of EIT Climate-KIC, providing training and coaching for green startups.

BioMec was considered one of the 16 best green innovations in the Climate Launchpad competition global final. Through the program with ideiaLab, Marta was able to connect with other green entrepreneurs, increase the visibility of the business, and form the partnerships BioMec needs to automate production and build scale. She also found a mentor with an environmental background. This mentor has helped the team quantify its CO2 impact - critical for proving the impact of the product to investors. Through the support of ideiaLab, Marta learned how to overcome her shyness and communicate with confidence and conviction.

Marta has big ambitions for BioMec. She wants BioMec to be the reference for medical devices with strong green credentials. Each prosthetic produced by BioMec comes with the information about where the bottles were collected from so that there is a connection from the product to the local environment. She wants customers to feel good about the products and take pride in their artificial limb.

Marta is teaching kids in schools about the environment and encouraging young people to be part of the circular economy. She is excited to be part of the new green movement in Mozambique and is proud to be a young green entrepreneur: “We need to think about what we use, how we can use better, how we can design and produce better, and how we discard.”

Her advice to other young people interested in green and social entrepreneurship: “Just do it! Just try it – don’t overthink. It might be good and if it is not it is a great lesson.” She also reminds us, “Don’t underestimate people in their 20s!”

**Universal Prayther Age 32**

**Founder & CEO, Over Innovation of Inertia**

**Supported by YBI Member: Sky’s The Limit, USA**

Over Innovation of Inertia is a research firm that challenges the status quo for low- and medium-income communities. It creates positive social impact and improves or enhances health, economics, law, and policy (H.E.L.P).

Universal was instilled with a sense of community, wanting to help people, and an innate sense of curiosity from a young age. At eight years old he became enthralled with Newton’s First Law of Motion: inertia is a property of matter. As a college student studying and involved in research around community health and wellness, he kept

questioning why there were such great social and economic disparities in low- and medium-income communities in the Chicago area. In a quest to answer this question, to overcome inertia, and to solve the problems of inequity through empowerment, Over Innovation of Inertia was born.

At its heart, Over Innovation of Inertia is a platform for people to express their needs in their communities. Through these rich insights and data, Universal and his team of five create programmes that provide services and solutions back to the communities, often around employment and economic inclusion. These programmes are designed to help community members gain skills and education to progress, and to eradicate barriers and root problems in their communities.

Universal set up Over Innovation of Inertia as a non-profit, and social impact is at the heart of its work. However, Universal recognises the need for a commercial model to be able to sustain and grow the impact of the initiative. Universal identifies as a social impact entrepreneur but would never use the word entrepreneur to describe himself without the words social impact in front—social impact is paramount to who he is, what he believes, and what Over Innovation of Inertia stands for. He will always prioritise people over profit.

Universal participated in a social impact accelerator offered by YBI member Sky's The Limit. Two things stood out for him. Firstly, he was able to access lawyers who helped him with legal advice around intellectual property, trademarks, contracts, and non-disclosure agreements.

Secondly, and more importantly, Sky's The Limit matched Universal with Brian, a Sky's The Limit mentor who works for Accenture. Brian has been invaluable in sharing his expertise and desire to help. Piece by piece, they examined every aspect of Over Innovation of Inertia. Universal credits Brian with helping him set goals – particularly S.M.A.R.T. goals. He is always checking in to see how Universal is progressing. Universal says, “The team is now thinking about our goals all the time.”

“Working with Universal has been inspiring,” says Brian. “Universal combines his passion for improving his community with a clear, compelling vision for how to affect positive social change. If you have the opportunity to speak with Universal and learn about Over Innovation of Inertia, you can't help but be inspired and excited for what he can accomplish.”

Universal's advice to others is: “Be true to yourself and your purpose, make things happen, don't give up and you will reap the rewards.” He believes people are our strongest assets, we all need to help people, and that the nation will be stronger if we all do that. He hopes that Over Innovation of Inertia is that example.

# Thanks

## Accenture

As a long-standing supporter of Youth Business International, Accenture has been essential over the last decade in helping YBI increase the size and impact of our global network. Today, the partnership is multi-faceted, and the network continues to expand the number of young people it supports.

Accenture acts as an advisor and partner to YBI, providing funding, time, and skills to guide our strategic development in empowering underserved youth. During the last five years, Accenture and Accenture Foundations have awarded YBI and our country members more than \$18.5 million in both cash and pro bono services.

As part of its Skills to Succeed corporate citizenship initiative, Accenture has provided valuable support to grow and strengthen YBI's global network. Over the duration of our partnership, Accenture and YBI have worked together to equip some nearly 370,000 young people with the skills necessary for success in a digital future. A key aspect of our partnership has been stimulating innovation and digital approaches for both YBI members and young entrepreneurs, alongside building the core capabilities of members around the world in skills such as mentoring and training. The partnership is now poised to drive value through



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## **Credits**

This work has been informed by research and insights from:

Dan Gregory (Social Enterprise UK), Lana Lovasic (Simanye), Turkey Social Entrepreneurship Network, Caren Holzman (Enabling Outcomes Ltd.), and Peter Ptashko (Cambio).

Special contributions from YBI Members:

B'YEAH, ideiaLab, Qcredits, Sky's The Limit, Smart Kolektiv, and SOMO.