



# European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE) Final Report - Short Version



## About us



**UnLtd** is the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs, a UK registered charity set up in 2002 and the leading provider of support to early stage social entrepreneurs in the UK. UnLtd's mission is to reach out and unleash the energies of people who can transform the world in which they live: we call these people social entrepreneurs. UnLtd supports them to start up, thrive and grow through a unique and individually tailored package of cash, practical development support and networking including access to a variety of learning resources. UnLtd has reached 1,000 people each year to help them turn their idea of a better world into a reality, supporting them in the early stages of setting up their social venture. In addition to enabling community entrepreneurs to start-up, UnLtd also supports those with more established ventures to scale up. We are also committed to developing an ecosystem of support which makes it easier for social entrepreneurs to access the support they need.



The **Global Social Entrepreneurship Network (GSEN)** is the network for organisations supporting early stage social entrepreneurs. It was launched in 2013 by UnLtd and gathers organisations supporting social entrepreneurs in more than 50 countries in the world (of which 20 European countries). GSEN helps practitioners to become increasingly sustainable and effective in their support, by offering knowledge sharing activities, expert resources, and peer-learning opportunities. The ELYSE project is an initiative made possible thanks to GSEN and its members. CEDRA HR, Project Ahead and Social Entrepreneurs Agency are three of the engaged GSEN members in Europe, supporting young social entrepreneurs.



The **Cluster for eco-social innovation and development (CEDRA HR)** is a Croatian national umbrella organisation formed a cluster of five regional centres gathering organisations with long-term records of activities in social entrepreneurship, rural development, social inclusion and capacity building. CEDRA acts as a support centre for social entrepreneurship, creating and linking systems of support and capacity building for eco-social development and social entrepreneurship infrastructure for sustainable development of the communities across Croatian regions.



**Project Ahead (PJA)** is a cooperative founded in 2001 in Naples, Italy. It provides consulting about conceiving, preparing and managing complex social innovation projects. Its activities are particularly oriented towards the development of interventions regarding youth, social entrepreneurship and social policies, as well as international cooperation and corporate social responsibility.



**Social Entrepreneurs Agency (SEA)** is a non-profit organisation founded in 2007 by a group of Portuguese social entrepreneurs. It implements projects that promote the economic integration of local communities and individuals through social entrepreneurship, combining innovative techniques such as personal branding with place-based interventions and trainings to place local people in jobs.



**Youth Business Poland (YBP)** is part of Youth Business International, an international organisation supporting youth entrepreneurship in almost 40 countries in the world. Youth Business Poland was launched in 2006, and now operates as part of the Technologic Incubator Foundation. It provides young people with high-quality support (mentoring, business trainings and accelerator programme) in the creation and development of their ventures.

## The European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE) project

The European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE) project was launched in May 2015 with the support of the European Commission. ELYSE has been implemented by a consortium of five organisations working with entrepreneurs, young people and social entrepreneurs in the UK, Portugal, Italy, Croatia and Poland. It has been a journey to discover best practices, share insights and unearth the best ingredients required to support the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

### The ELYSE project aimed to

- gather knowledge of organisations with extensive experience in the field of youth and social entrepreneurship;
- provide an overview of different methodologies implemented by youth organisations, universities, local authorities, accelerators and incubators, charities, social enterprises and investors, to support young social entrepreneurs;
- collect best practice from practitioners and young social entrepreneurs themselves;
- set out key-findings and recommendations for young social entrepreneur supporters.

We explored the following questions:

- What are the motivations for a young person to become a social entrepreneur?
- What barriers does a young social entrepreneur face?
- What issues do practitioners face when reaching out to young people?
- What would an ideal support package for young social entrepreneurs look like?
- What networks would be beneficial to young social entrepreneurs to further develop their social ventures?
- What enabling factors would make the overall ecosystem of support for young social entrepreneurs more inclusive and effective?

### ELYSE in numbers

- 18-30 the age range of young European people surveyed
- 423 young people responded to an online survey distributed in Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal and in the UK
- 98 semi-structured interviews realised with practitioners working with youth and social entrepreneurs in Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal and in the UK



# Youth and Social Entrepreneurship in Europe

## Perspectives from young social entrepreneurs

- The majority of young people surveyed are aspiring entrepreneurs, who have not yet started turning their idea into a viable social venture, or early-stage entrepreneurs, running a venture with a trading history of less than three years.

### At what stage is your social venture?

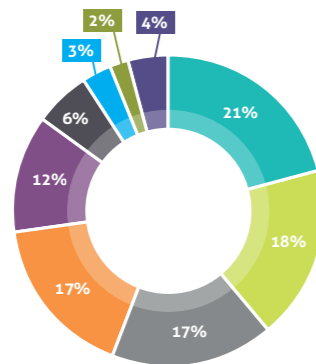
Stage Of Development	%
Idea	37%
Testing	19%
Early-stage (start-up but already trading)	26%
Scaling up	15%
N/A	3%

- Young Europeans come to social entrepreneurship through diverse routes, motivated by the desire to improve existing products and services, by the opportunity to be their own boss while improving their communities and their lives, by the wish to change the world and solve unmet needs.

### What motivated you to become a Young Social Entrepreneur (YSE)?

#### Motivation

- Doing something better
- Being your own boss
- Meeting a need
- Changing the world
- Taking an opportunity
- Avoiding a corporate career
- Can't think of anything better to do
- Becoming Rich
- Other



*“They are experiential entrepreneurs. Something happened to them and they want to change it for other young people (...).”*

*Islington Impact Hub (UK)*

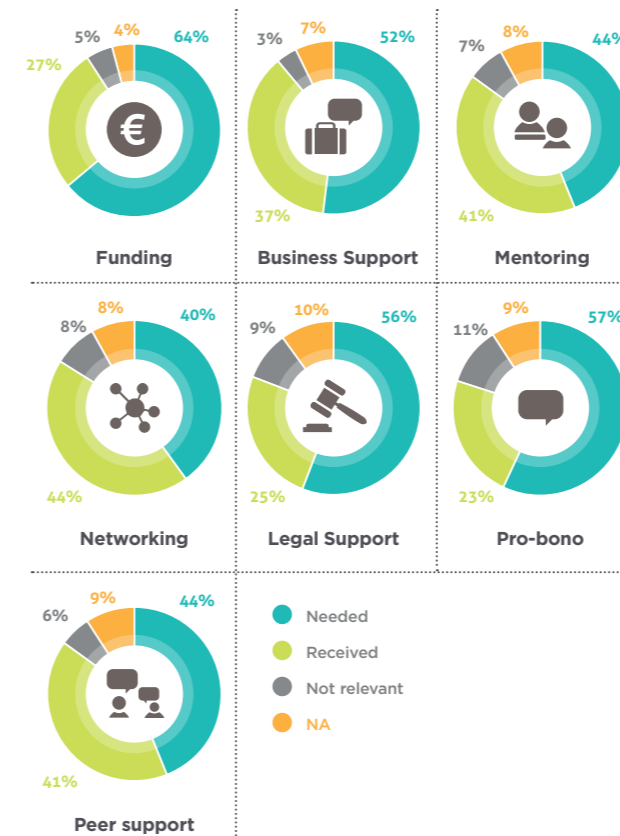
- Young people face several constraints in setting-up and growing their social ventures. They mentioned difficulties accessing funding opportunities, legal and administrative burdens and lack of business experience as the main barriers.

### What is the main issue or barrier do you face or have you faced as a young social entrepreneur?

Barriers	%
Lack of financial resources	23%
Legal and regulatory framework	12%
Lack of business experience	9%
Lack of a team	8%
Lack of business support and development services	7%
Trade-off profit or social purpose	7%
Hard to access to market	7%
Hard to communicate your value	6%
Lack of self-confidence	5%
Age	5%
Hard to scale	4%
Lack of training and research	3%
Lack of leadership skills	2%
Competition	2%

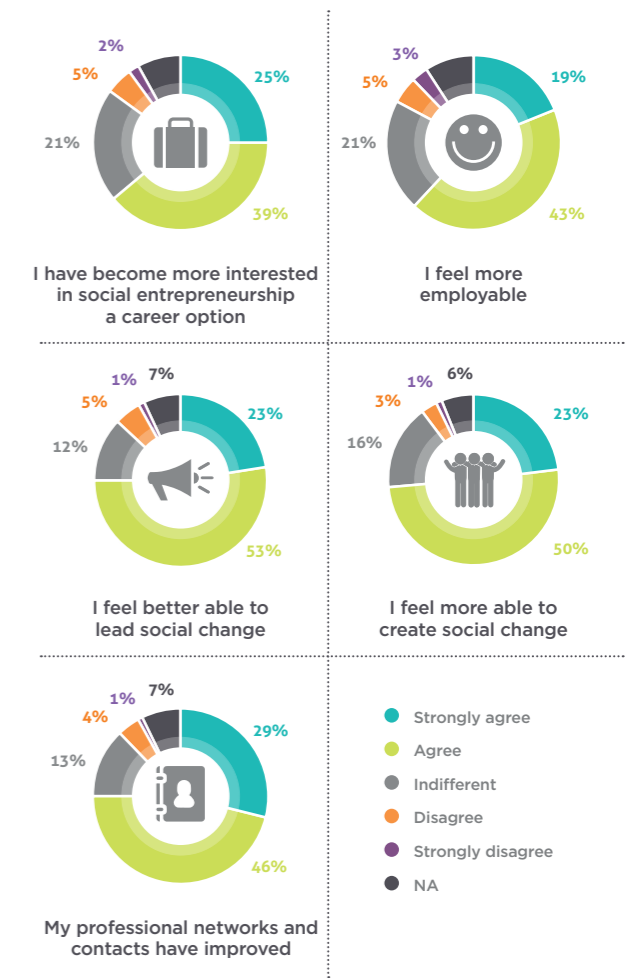
- While financial support is seen as the most important aspect, according to young social entrepreneurs the ideal support is much broader. Most of the young people surveyed also stated the importance of elements of non-financial support such as pro-bono advice, specific legal support and overall business support. Mentoring, peer support and networking opportunities are also needed to improve skills, connect with people and build a professional network.

### What kinds of support do you need?



- There is strong agreement amongst young people on the positive impact of the support, in terms of leadership skills, improved professional networks and ability to act as catalysts for change. Most of the young social entrepreneurs also mentioned how the support received has positively influenced their long-term career choice and improved their employability skills.

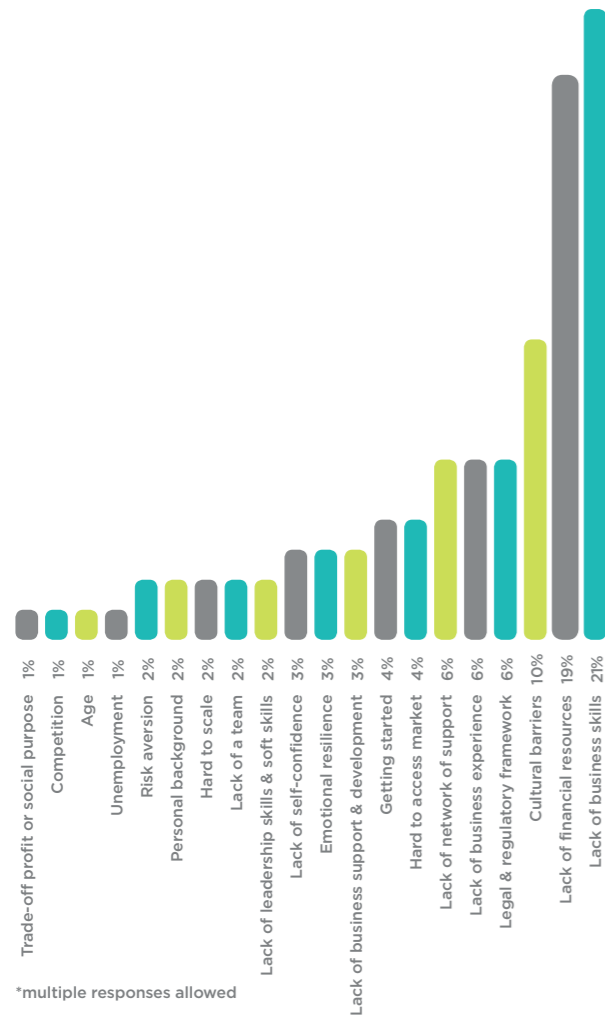
### Overall, how far do you agree or disagree with these statements? As a result of the support received, ..



## Perspectives from European practitioners supporting young social entrepreneurs

- According to practitioners, in line with the barriers perceived by young people surveyed, inadequate business know-how, difficulties faced in accessing funding opportunities and the lack of visibility of social entrepreneurship and youth initiatives at country level are the issues young social entrepreneurs are often confronted with. Administrative and regulatory burdens, a lack of business experience and family and friends not being supportive have been suggested as other critical barriers for youth social entrepreneurship.

### What issues do young social entrepreneurs face?\*

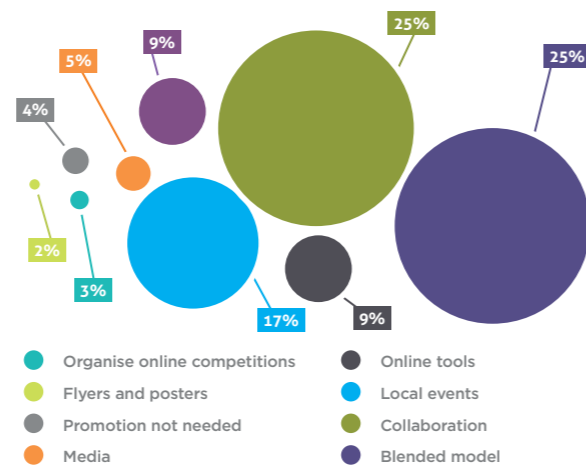


*“Social entrepreneurs sometimes find the business related aspects very difficult. They need support on a daily basis to develop their business plan and their strategy.”*

*Alto Comissariado para as Migrações - ACM (Portugal)*

- Any outreach strategy for young social entrepreneurs should be organised in collaboration with other local organisations, schools, universities, community groups and should adopt a blended model, in which online tools are offered alongside with offline events. To plan an attractive event, able to hook young people in, practitioners suggest organising it locally, keeping it informal and interactive, and engaging young people and fellow social entrepreneurs in the organisation.

### What does effective outreach to young social entrepreneurs look like?\*



*“When it comes to creating bonds and building relationships (...) offline outreach is more powerful than online outreach. A combination of the two is the best approach to finding the young people for your programme.”*

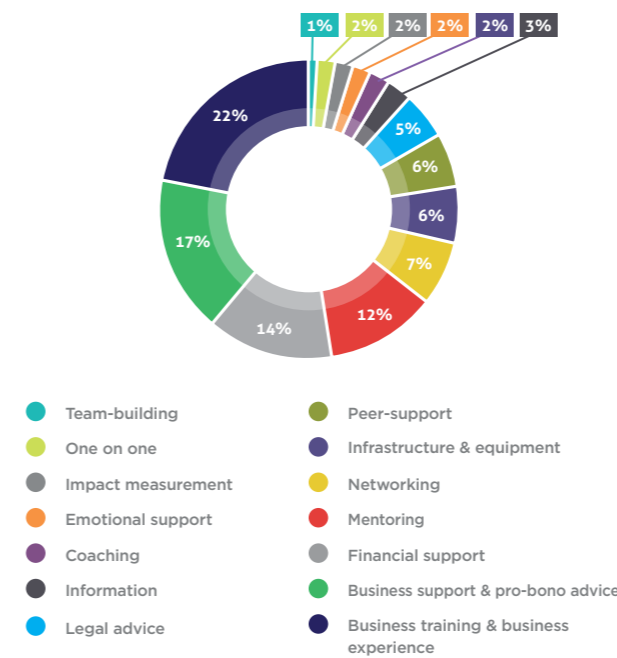
*Ashoka UK (UK)*

**Social Wolves** is a social enterprise based in Warsaw, Poland. It organises an online social enterprise competition, called 'Exempt from Theory' ([www.exemptfromtheory.com](http://www.exemptfromtheory.com)). In 2014-2015 it involved 18,000 students from Poland, encouraging them to create their own social project. From social campaigns to charity events, the participants impacted their communities, reaching half a million beneficiaries. Students were supported by an online app which served as a management training programme and was certified by the Project Management Institute of Poland.

Social Wolves then created a 'Social Wolves Ambassador programme' to engage its Alumni and reach out to more young people. Alumni receive a training to become ambassadors of the organisation. After being trained, they promote the online competition in schools and universities. So far, Social Wolves has created a network of 150 Ambassadors, who actively promote the online competition in over 70 schools across Poland, engaging the next generation of 'social wolves'.

- The ideal support package for young social entrepreneurs should be tailored to the stage of development of the social enterprise. Several elements of support have been mentioned by practitioners in their interviews, and data suggests that business training and business experience, business support in developing the entrepreneurial idea and funding opportunities to get started or grow are the most vital to a support programme. Mentoring, networking opportunities, co-working space and peer support have also been mentioned by the organisations interviewed.

### What kinds of support do young social entrepreneurs need?\*



*“In-kind support and mentoring are very important in our support package. Our beneficiaries mainly want money, but we see they primarily need knowledge.”*

*ETAP Organisation (Poland)*

**Year Here** is a London-based social enterprise that has piloted a model to help bright graduates and young professionals to build smart solutions to entrenched social problems. Over the course of the 10-month immersive programme, Fellows try their hand at building creative and entrepreneurial responses to social problems, supported by industry mentoring and a rigorous social innovation curriculum. The support methodology consists of a combination of: four months' frontline placement to understand the social challenges and identify space for innovation; a two-month consulting project, during which the Fellows, working in teams, produce a tangible output for clients, such as local governments, social enterprises and companies; four months at an incubator to prototype their ideas and pitch at a final crowdfunding event.

Year Here Fellows have launched successful social ventures such as:  
 - Rootless Garden (<http://www.rootlessgarden.org/>), running nature-inspired activities to reduce the isolation of older people;  
 - Birdsong (<http://birdsong.london/>), an online marketplace selling fashion products made by vulnerable women.

Year Here was launched in March 2013 and, since then, has run four programmes for 63 graduates and been named one of Britain's 50 New Radicals by Nesta and The Observer. As part of the course, Year Here Fellows have collectively volunteered 40,000 hours in frontline services - including homeless shelters, community centres and Pupil Referral Units.

**UnLtd webinar series** are part of the support package offered to social entrepreneurs. They are a series of 45- to 60-minute online seminars and master classes, each focusing on a business topic relevant to start up social entrepreneurs, such as how to create a one-page impact report, developing your sales pipeline and sales techniques, introduction to social franchising, amongst the others.

Upcoming webinars are listed at <https://unltd.org.uk/2015-webinar-series/> and recordings of all previous ones can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQZ9ucOSQNxvvrk10eOowAHlo4IDo7gq>

**Social Entrepreneurship Akademie** have created a **Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on Social Entrepreneurship**: the MOOC has been created to enable entrepreneurs to shape a better world. Over an eight-week period, the course provides thousands of students and professionals from all over the world with the practical and scientific expertise needed to enable them to start their own social enterprises. Students from across disciplinary backgrounds can learn in virtual teams and generate their own social start-up models to resolve global social issues through real, problem-based cases from China, Mexico, and Germany. More here: <http://globalsummerschool.org/mooc>

**MakeSense hold-ups** are the offline part of MakeSense. The objective of the hold-ups is to connect social entrepreneurs with individuals, to invent together solutions and take up their challenges. They are challenge-solving workshops set up individually in different cities, in an informal setting, aiming to suit social entrepreneurs' specific needs. Social issues tackled by social entrepreneurs belong to many different areas of interest: civic engagement, human rights, economic development, environment, health and education/e-learning. The hold-ups are the offline meeting-point between a community of socially-minded people ('sensemakers') and the social entrepreneurs. Hold-ups help resolve social entrepreneurs' challenges and create a network of support, while achieving MakeSense's mission to accelerate the impact of social entrepreneurs' projects and create a space in which young social entrepreneurs can meet motivated people wishing to become actors of change.

MakeSense is an open project built by a community of people interested in social entrepreneurship, innovation, web applications and IT solutions. It was born in January 2011, set up by two young students attracted by Muhammad Yunus' concept of social business. The MakeSense methodology has been used worldwide in different countries, creating a community of social entrepreneurs and sensemakers in Paris, Berlin, London, Barcelona, Shanghai, San Francisco, São Paulo, Medellin, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, and many other cities.

**Mouraria Creative Hub** in Lisbon, Portugal, is a co-working space for young social entrepreneurs. It is the first hub to support projects and business ideas from the creative industries, especially in the areas of Design, Fashion, Music, Tiles and Jewellery. It offers fully equipped workstations, a wide network of mentors, training and consulting solutions, access to financing solutions and support in marketing products and services. It values the social gathering of a group of people who are still working independently, but who share values and interests and can benefit from the synergies that can happen sharing the office. Co-working is not only about the physical place, but about establishing a community of people.

Mouraria Creative Hub was launched in May 2015 and has supported successful start-ups such as Red Clay, producing musical instruments from clay rediscovering the traditional craft of hand-throwing red clay, and Corque Design, producing design furniture using the traditional Portuguese cork.

**Interesting engagement opportunities for young people:**

**Meetup** is the world's largest online network of local groups. It makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face. More than 9,000 groups get together in local communities each day, each one with the goal of improving themselves or their communities. Meetup's mission is to revitalize local community and help people around the world self-organize. <http://www.meetup.com/>

Other online groups that you can find interesting to engage with are:

- +Acumen <http://plusacumen.org/>
- Global Shapers <https://www.globalshapers.org/>
- Ashoka Changemakers <https://www.changemakers.com/>

A **hackathon** is a gathering where computer programmers, graphic designers and project managers collaborate on a software project, over a short period of time. Hackathons typically last between a day and a week. Some hackathons are intended simply for educational or social purposes, although in many cases the goal is to create usable software. Hackathons tend to have a specific focus, which can include the programming language used, the operating system, an application, or the subject and the demographic group of the programmers.

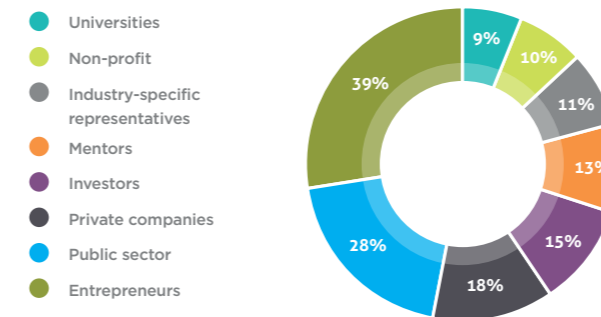
**PechaKucha** is a presentation style in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each (6 minutes and 40 seconds in total). The format, which keeps presentations concise and fast-paced, powers multiple-speaker events called PechaKucha Nights. A typical PechaKucha Night (PKN) includes 8 to 14 presentations, sometimes combined with live bands or entertainments.

**'Dream Act Inspire'-type events:** 'Dream Act Inspire' is a series of events created and run by UnLtd in the UK, where we showcase inspiring and passionate young social entrepreneurs and innovators. We bring together social entrepreneurs - individuals, organisations and communities of people who combine their passion for positive social change with entrepreneurial flair. More information on these events: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2NKmW2zDEA>

- Young social entrepreneurs would benefit from more networking opportunities with other entrepreneurs, with the public sector and with private companies.

*"A key factor (...) is the network of social entrepreneurs, both virtual and physical, to enable the exchange of experiences, information and knowledge"*  
ACT Group (Croatia)

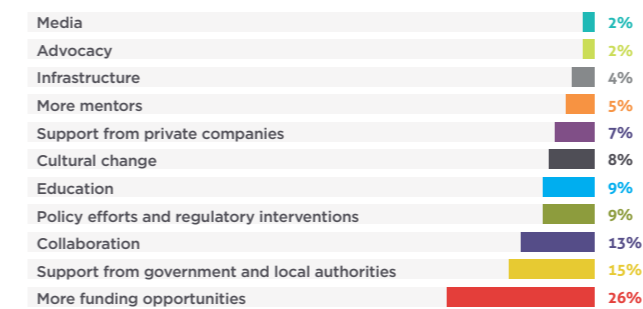
**What networks are required for young social entrepreneurs to further develop their social ventures?\***



\*multiple responses allowed

- Concerning the overall ecosystem of support and how to create a more social entrepreneurship-friendly environment for young people, practitioners interviewed made clear the importance of more funding opportunities for both young entrepreneurs and support organisations. Several other factors that could be improved to benefit young social entrepreneurs have been identified, such as more active involvement of government and local authorities, and increased collaboration among practitioners.

**What is needed to make the ecosystem of support more inclusive?\***



\*multiple responses allowed

**SEE Change** is the UnLtd's programme to support universities and Further Education colleges to build a vibrant culture of social entrepreneurship in Higher and Further Education. SEE Change is supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It aims at supporting students, staff and graduates to grow business acumen and networks, helping to mainstream social entrepreneurship in education. SEE Change is developing an ecosystem of support in the Higher Education sector where social entrepreneurs can thrive. Over the past 7 years, UnLtd has worked with 89 universities and 30 FE colleges in England, and has supported universities in India, Thailand and USA. SEE Changemakers is the booklet showcases 30 of the 1600 social ventures supported through SEE Change University Partners to date. It is available at [https://unltd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SEE\\_Change\\_Case\\_Studies\\_Booklet.pdf](https://unltd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SEE_Change_Case_Studies_Booklet.pdf). Visit the online peer learning and knowledge sharing portal here: <https://see.unltd.org.uk/>

**The apprenticeship scheme for entrepreneurs.** In March 2016, a group of employers led by UnLtd gained government backing for a first of its kind learning experience: the apprenticeship for entrepreneurs, with a pathway for social entrepreneurs. This is an innovative initiative that UnLtd has been developing working closely with The UK Government and 100+ employers, training providers and entrepreneurs nation-wide. The apprenticeship will offer young people the opportunity to develop their own businesses and business skills, by incubating them among established organisations. Employers get a fast track to innovation from the next generation of enterprise leaders, while young people get an opportunity to learn by doing, gaining valuable employable skills, a qualification and a structured pathway into entrepreneurship.

This is also the first time the role of an "entrepreneur" is officially formulated and recognised by The UK Government. For more details regarding the knowledge, skills and behaviours of an entrepreneur as recognised by this apprenticeship please visit [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524897/Entrepreneur\\_Apprentice\\_-\\_Standard\\_.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524897/Entrepreneur_Apprentice_-_Standard_.pdf)

# Key-recommendations

## When designing a support programme for young social entrepreneurs...

- **Identify where your target group is in its entrepreneurial journey.** There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution in terms of support methodology. The needs of young people would differ according to the stage of development of their social venture:
  - **Idea and Testing stage**, includes all young people who have an idea but need some experience to build their confidence and skills, and those who are already testing their idea on a small scale but need to improve their business and soft skills and access funding to get it off the ground;
  - **Early stage**, includes young social entrepreneurs who have piloted their idea on a small scale and have started their venture. They have already business activities in plan and have been trading for less than three years. They look for funding to help get the project up and running, as well as business and development support;
  - **Growth stage**, includes young social entrepreneurs already running a financially sustainable venture creating sustainable social impact. They need funding or investment to get their venture to the next level and need more intensive development support and networking opportunities.
- **Combine different ingredients in a balanced mix:**
  - Individual support, including activities such as one-to-one support, coaching to overcome business issues and develop emotional resilience, shadowing opportunities to learn what being a social entrepreneur looks like, mentoring and pro-bono opportunities to offer expert advice;
  - Collective support, such as peer-support to let young people exchange practices and know-how, training to develop soft skills (such as creativity, teamwork, self-confidence, leadership) and workshops on different business domains (such as idea generation, market research, business planning, pitching, value proposition, financial sustainability, marketing and communication, monitoring and evaluation), networking events during which they can build relationship, learn and have fun (e.g. hackathons, hold-up, etc.), and site visits to inspire them and help them getting into social entrepreneurs shoes;
  - Physical premises, offering young social entrepreneurs the opportunity to work in a co-working space can be beneficial in terms of synergies and network with entrepreneurs at later stages in their journey.
- **Identify partners.** Assess your strengths in terms of support services, what good quality ingredients you have already available in your kitchen and how you could source other components to create the best possible recipe of support. If you do not have the capacity to expand your offer internally, look for partners. Collaboration and joining forces is always a good answer. Partnering would strengthen your offer of support and would therefore benefit your target group that in the end will be able to receive a more inclusive support mix.

A useful resource that you can use is the Confidence Curve that describes how support can be set up so that young people can really own social change.

<https://unltd.org.uk/2012/11/05/the-confidence-curve/>



## To reach out to young people...

- **Define the scope of your outreach strategy.** According to the target group you want to engage, you should invest different resources and partner with different organisations. Practitioners suggest thinking carefully about the scope of your outreach campaign, whether you are planning a local, national or international promotional strategy.
- **Identify partners.** Try to find partners who can do what you cannot. Working closer together with other practitioners with similar or complementary goals, rather than competing with one another's efforts, avoids duplication of resources and ensures increased outreach. Thinking of your target and scope, try to identify role-models, groups or organisations you could join forces with to more effectively reach your target audience. With limited time and resources, collaboration can really make the difference.
- **Keep your events local** - young people cannot or do not like to travel too far;
- **Keep your events informal** - young people do not enjoy or feel uncomfortable dressing up or when the atmosphere is too formal;
- **Plan your events regularly** - young people like to know when they can next get involved and meet with others;
- **Avoid boring talks and adopt a 'hands-on' approach** - young people enjoy very interactive and participatory activities rather than PowerPoint presentations and classroom-style events;
- **Let social entrepreneurs tell the story** - nobody can explain the journey of a social entrepreneur better than a social entrepreneur. This is particularly true for young people, who bring a distinctive and valued approach to engaging their peers and for whom the chance to feed off others doing similar things can be terrific;
- **Social media are not the panacea** - social media are useful tools and you should not forget to be active online, but even though young people are digital natives, they still value meeting people in real-life. Use a blended model, combining social media to offline events;



Plan in advance



Be attractive and informal



Work locally



Adopt a blended model



Let them do the speech



Adopt a learning-by-doing approach

Read the European Learning for Youth in Social Entrepreneurship (ELYSE) Report  
Available at: [www.gsen.global/projects/elyse](http://www.gsen.global/projects/elyse)



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