

# BACKGROUND GUIDE



## Economic and Social Council

*Leveraging Social Entrepreneurship to  
Tackle Global Youth Unemployment*

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# Letter to Delegates

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUN4Schools 2025 and to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). We are thrilled to have you join this platform where diplomacy meets development, and where your voice, ideas, and research will help address one of the most pressing issues facing the global youth today: unemployment.

As members of ECOSOC, you represent nations seeking to uplift their people, particularly the young, through sustainable development, innovation, and cooperative solutions. The agenda — "Leveraging Social Entrepreneurship to Tackle Global Youth Unemployment" — invites you to think creatively and critically about how the power of youth and business can merge to build a better, fairer world.

We understand that many of you are participating in MUN for the first time. This guide has been crafted to help you navigate not just the facts and figures, but also the spirit of diplomacy. It will give you a strong foundation to build upon, but your own effort — your independent research, your speeches, and your collaborations — is what will bring this committee to life.

We look forward to hearing your voices and seeing the future leaders you are becoming.

Warm regards,

Sarvesh Teja, AK Ananya

ECOSOC Executive Board

# The Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six main organs of the United Nations, established in 1945. It plays a leading role in coordinating international economic, social, and environmental policies. ECOSOC is responsible for formulating recommendations, hosting high-level forums, and supervising many UN agencies that work on development, education, health, and equality.

ECOSOC consists of 54 member states, elected by the UN General Assembly for three-year terms. These are distributed regionally to ensure equal representation: 14 from Africa, 11 from Asia-Pacific, 10 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 6 from Eastern Europe, and 13 from Western Europe and Others.

In addition to its central work, ECOSOC operates functional and regional commissions, such as:

- The Commission on Social Development (CSocD)
- The Commission on Population and Development (CPD)
- The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) — the UN's central platform for follow-up on the Sustainable Development Goals

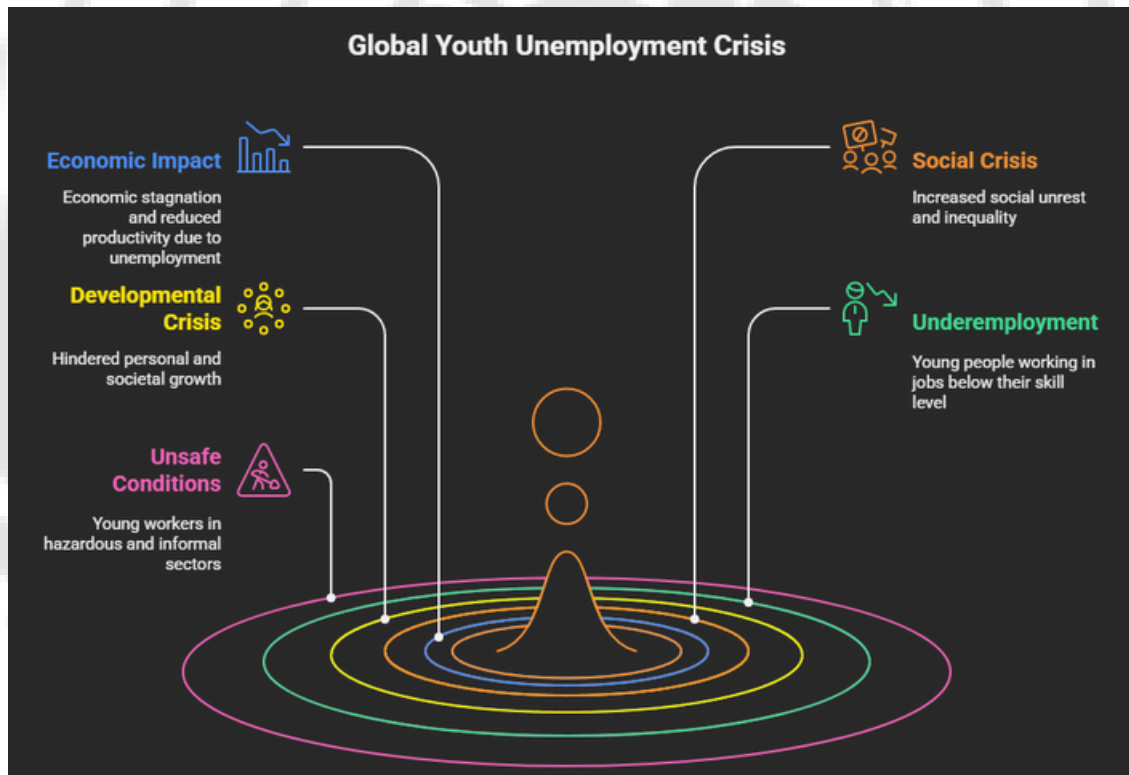
This makes ECOSOC a unique platform where global problems are not just discussed but solved through partnerships between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and youth.



# Introduction to the Agenda

## Leveraging Social Entrepreneurship to Tackle Global Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is not just an economic issue — it is a social and developmental crisis. Over 73 million young people are unemployed globally. Many more are underemployed or working in unsafe, informal conditions. With the world's youth population growing rapidly, especially in Africa and South Asia, the pressure to provide decent, meaningful employment is rising.



However, while traditional job markets are shrinking or changing, young people are also creating new kinds of jobs — ones that solve social problems and build sustainable communities. This is the world of social entrepreneurship: businesses that aim not just to make money, but to create positive change.

**From a young woman running a recycling startup in Nairobi, to a group of students creating an app that connects rural artisans with global markets — youth social entrepreneurs are changing the game. The question is: how can the international community support them better?**

**In this committee, delegates will debate what policies, funding mechanisms, education systems, and international collaborations can encourage this powerful youth-led movement.**



# Key Terms of ECOSOC

- **Social Entrepreneurship:** Creating businesses that address social issues like poverty, education, or health, while also being financially sustainable.
- **Youth Unemployment:** When young people aged 15–24 are actively seeking but unable to find work.
- **Microfinancing:** Providing small loans to individuals or small businesses that lack access to traditional banking.
- **Start-up Ecosystem:** The community and environment that supports the growth of new businesses, including mentorship, investors, tech support, and education.
- **Informal Economy:** Economic activities that are not monitored by the government and often lack job security, contracts, or legal protection.

# Background Information

## The Global Crisis of Youth Unemployment

Today's youth are the largest generation in history — but millions of them are stuck in cycles of poverty due to unemployment. In developing countries, challenges include weak infrastructure, poor education systems, and lack of job opportunities. In wealthier countries, technology and automation are shrinking certain sectors. COVID-19 worsened the problem dramatically. According to the ILO, one in six young workers lost their jobs during the pandemic, and recovery remains uneven. Rural areas, girls and young women, and youth with disabilities face even greater barriers.

## The Rise of Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship offers a double win: it creates jobs and solves problems. These businesses often focus on community needs — clean water, renewable energy, digital education, women's rights — while also creating employment.

Examples:

- **Green Banana Paper** (Micronesia): Youth-run company turning banana waste into eco-friendly wallets.
- **Barefoot College (India)**: Trains rural women as solar engineers to bring electricity to their villages.
- **SPARK (Middle East and Africa)**: Connects young refugees to entrepreneurship training and seed funding.

These initiatives prove that innovation and compassion can coexist in business — and that young people, given the chance, can lead the way.



# Background Information

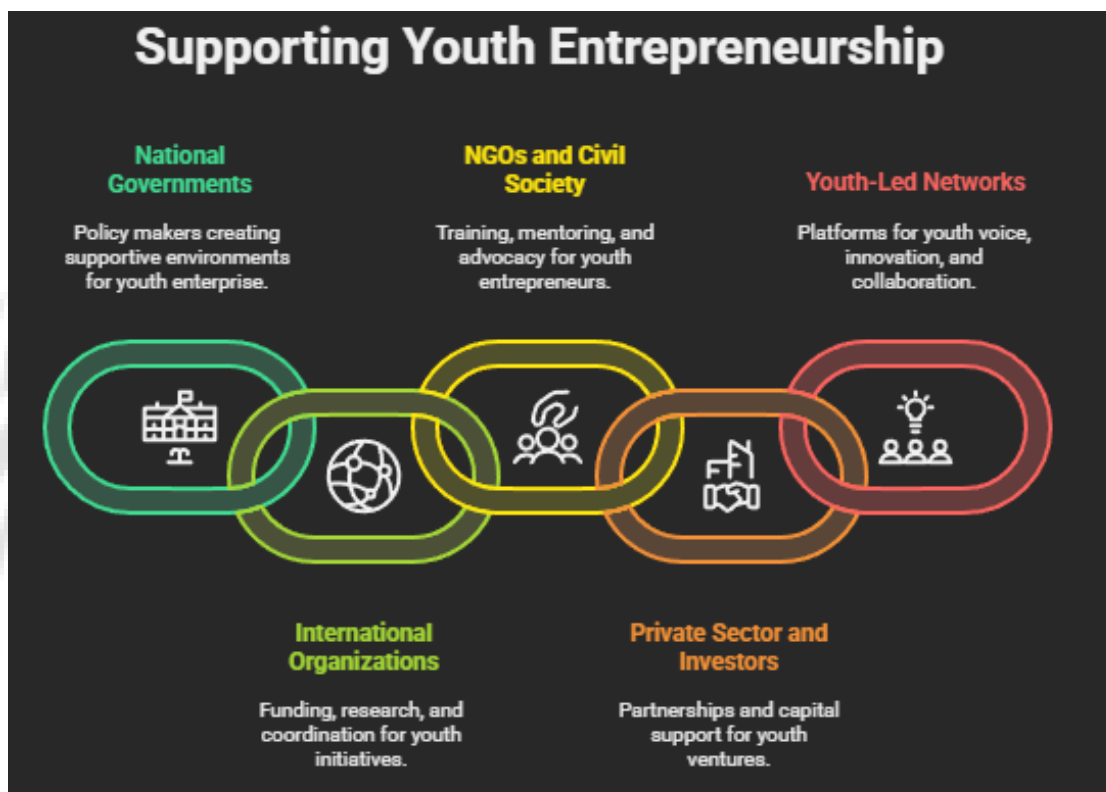
## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- **Funding Gaps:** Most youth-led startups cannot access capital, as traditional banks often require collateral.
- **Education and Skills Mismatch:** School systems often do not teach entrepreneurship, financial literacy, or digital skills.
- **Gender Inequality:** Girls and young women face higher barriers, especially in patriarchal societies.
- **Urban-Rural Divide:** Resources and networks are concentrated in cities; rural youth are often left out.
- **Policy and Bureaucracy:** Overregulation or lack of startup laws makes it harder for new businesses to grow.

## MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

- **National Governments:** Can create policy environments that encourage youth enterprise.
- **International Organizations:** Like ILO, UNDP, and UNICEF, offer funding, research, and coordination.
- **NGOs and Civil Society:** Train, mentor, and advocate for youth entrepreneurs.
- **Private Sector and Investors:** Can form partnerships and provide capital or technical support.
- **Youth-Led Networks:** Such as Youth Co:Lab or Junior Achievement — create platforms for youth voice and innovation.

# Background Information



## PAST INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

- **Youth2030:** UN Youth Strategy (2018): Focuses on empowerment, employment, and participation of youth.
- **Decent Jobs for Youth Initiative:** A UN-led platform that coordinates global action on youth employment.
- **Youth Co:Lab (by UNDP and Citi Foundation):** The largest movement supporting youth-led social innovation in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **ILO's Entrepreneurship Curriculum Toolkit:** Helps schools and training centers teach business-building skills.

# Background Information

## NFOGRAPHIC-READY STATISTICS

- **73** million youth unemployed globally (ILO, 2023)
- **55%** of social entrepreneurs worldwide are under age 35
- **43%** of youth entrepreneurs cite funding as their #1 challenge
- **1 in 3** rural youth lack regular internet access
- Only **17%** of schools globally teach entrepreneurship
- Women-led enterprises are **70%** more likely to hire young women (British Council)
- In India, **75%** of social enterprises offer vocational training to youth

## SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE CHAIR

1. **Youth Innovation Hubs:** Set up local centers for digital learning, startup incubation, and mentorship.
2. **International Youth Enterprise Fund:** A global microfinance program targeted at youth in low-income or conflict-affected regions.
3. **Entrepreneurship in Education:** Mandate entrepreneurial and financial literacy courses from secondary school level.
4. **Simplified Startup Laws:** Encourage governments to adopt youth-friendly regulations and remove bureaucratic hurdles.
5. **Digital Equity Investments:** Expand internet access, especially in rural and underserved areas, to bridge the innovation divide.

# Background Information

## QUESTIONS RESOLUTIONS MUST ANSWER

- **How** can governments make it easier for youth to start social enterprises?
- **What** are the best ways to include marginalized youth — especially girls and rural youth — in entrepreneurship programs?
- **What** role should international donors and private companies play in youth employment?
- **How** can entrepreneurship be better integrated into national education systems?
- **How** do we ensure that social enterprises are impactful and not exploitative?

## POSSIBLE MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS

- Funding Models for Youth Social Enterprises
- Role of Digital Literacy in Youth Employment
- Gender Equity in Social Innovation
- Public-Private Partnerships to Scale Youth Startups
- Policy Reforms for a Youth-Friendly Business Ecosystem

# Citations

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<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/>
- **British Council.** "State of Social Enterprise in India and Africa."
- **World Economic Forum.** "Social Entrepreneurs: Engines of Inclusion and Recovery."
- **Youth Business International:**  
<https://www.youthbusiness.org/>