

Transforming Youth Years: Developing a Youth Venture Program with Ashoka Sahel in Senegal

Introduction

- Field Practicum Location: Dakar, Senegal
- Host Organization: Ashoka, Sahel, and international non-governmental organization and a pioneer in the promotion of social entrepreneurship.
- Ashoka has a vision to transform how children grow up to bring about a social revolution where everyone contributes to change for all - where Everyone is a Changemaker.
- Ashoka's Youth Venture is a Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program based on Empathy, Leadership, Teambuilding, and Changemaking or Entrepreneurship.
- My field practicum consisted of on carrying out a Needs Assessment for the Youth Venture program in Dakar, Senegal.
- This figure is a visual representation of the cross-scale implication of my field practicum.



Background

- Young people between the ages of 10-24 make up close to 2 billion of the world's population and are increasingly being involved in decision-making and development (UNICEF, 2007).
- In Africa, about 60-70% of the population is under the age of 30, which indicates the importance of learning how to tap into the large resources that youth can offer (IYF, 2011).
- Social entrepreneurship presents itself as an opportunity to develop the human capital of African youth.
- Youth Social Entrepreneurship integrates practices of positive youth development with community engagement and social entrepreneurship in order to enable mutual transformation of economies, neighborhoods, and individuals (Kruse, 2015). Youth Social Entrepreneurship is a holistic, change-making approach that can contribute to sustainable development initiatives.
- The Youth Venture Program is a global initiative that encourages and enables young people (12-22) to pursue social entrepreneurship by launching their own community-benefiting clubs, organizations or businesses, also known as ventures.

Project Scope & Methodology

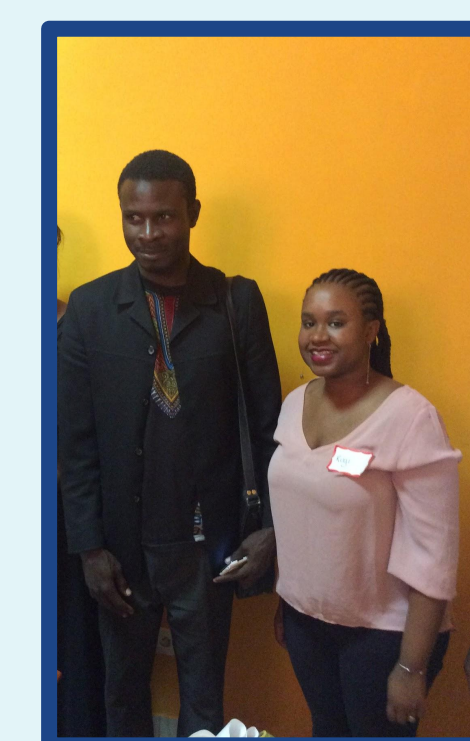
- Overall objective:** contribute to the development of a Youth Social entrepreneurship program in Senegal
 - Identify the needs for social entrepreneurship among youth
 - Understand social entrepreneurship initiatives already occurring among partner organizations
 - Formulate strategies for the implementation of a pilot phase
- Methods used:



The Needs Assessment

Semi-structured Interviews with Representatives:

- To understand how schools and universities are engaging youth in social activities and how a youth social entrepreneurship program might run at each of the specific institutions
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one representative from each partner institution



Focus-group discussionss with student youth:

- To understand how youth appreciate social entrepreneurship, as well as what skills or resources they would need to become social entrepreneurs
- Hour-long focus group discussions were organized with students from each of the partner high schools and universities



Stakeholder Engagements:

- A stakeholder workshop was organized to provide an appropriate forum for various stakeholders to come together and brainstorm ideas on the adaptation and design of the Ashoka Youth Venture Program to the context of Senegal



Analysis/Results

Summary of Interview Findings:

	LPEBD	SABS	ISM	IAM
Social initiatives	Administration-led	Administration-led	Student-led	Student & Administration-led
Social curriculums	Personal Development Course	Social Entrepreneurship Course	Students can choose to launch social ventures	Students are encouraged to launch social ventures
Facilitation	Teachers need training in YSE	Teachers need training in YSE	Expertise of professors and community members	Expertise of professors and community members

Summary of Focus Group Findings:

	LPEBD	SABS	ISM	IAM
Social problems of concern	Orphans Children education	Poverty Street beggars	Social Inequalities International aid	Centralization Food security
Perspectives on social entrepreneurship	A means to contribute to development	Desire to have social impact despite career paths	Minority of students have already started social ventures	General lack of understanding on social entrepreneurship
Skills of resources needed to launch social ventures	Manage difference between generations	Identify a cause they are passionate about & solution	Office space, effective communication and volunteers	Conducting research, government support, financing

Conclusion

- Primary results from the study highlight that there is a need to engage school-aged youth (12-18 years old) in social entrepreneurship as a means to develop youth's potential at an early stage to help address some of Senegal's largest social challenges.
- Another significant finding is that Ashoka partner high schools and universities on their own already engage their students in socially related or social entrepreneurship activities.
- While this is very welcomed, it appears that there is a need for a structured program which provides the appropriate knowledge and skills accompanied by resources which youth should possess to launch successful social ventures.

Recommendations



- Contextualization Recommendations:** All Youth Venture materials should be available in French. Each institution should contextualize the program design to fit its needs.
- Implementation Recommendations:** Multiple stakeholders should be involved in the scaling process. Determine how Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) will be done by each stakeholder.
- Facilitation Recommendations:** The facilitator should receive training on carrying out the Youth Venture program. The facilitators and/or mentors should have a background in basic business concepts.
- Curriculum Recommendations:** Integrate research methods and analysis into the modules and learning objectives. The content, methodology, and language of the curriculum must be reviewed to reflect the changing needs of participants.
- Financing Recommendations:** Determine all the costs associated with running the program, and how they will be covered. Develop co-financing opportunities with stakeholders.
- Student Motivation Recommendations:** Participants should receive a certificate of completion. Develop a post-program tracking system for Alumni participants and funded youth social ventures.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the host organization Ashoka Sahel, the study participants. The MDP program, and my comitte members: Dr. R. Serra (Chair), Dr. G Galloway, Dr. K. Kumaran, Dr. J. Kraft. Fundingprovided by the MacArthur Foundation.