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Youth Co:Lab Launches Social Innovation Challenge 2023 in Japan “Youth-led Innovation: Acceleration and Nurturing”

Tokyo – Youth Co:Lab is now accepting applications to participate in the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2023. It aims to showcase and support the business ideas of young social entrepreneurs to unlock the potential of youth and generate more innovative solutions to social issues.

Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2023, the Social Innovation Challenge will mark its 5th year since its launch in Japan through Youth Co:Lab.

The Social Innovation Challenge 2023 is open to applications from high school students to entrepreneurs under the age of 35 and invites a wide range of business ideas focused on achieving the SDGs.

As this year marks the halfway point to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, even greater change is needed to achieve a world where 'no one is left behind' in the remaining seven years. Reaffirming the importance of the innovation ecosystem, this year's Challenge, under the theme of “Youth-led Innovation: Acceleration and Nurturing”, aims to accelerate innovation and nurture future innovators by shedding a spotlight on the bright visions of young people, looking to 2030 and beyond.

In addition to the Excellence Award and the Audience Award, which will be awarded according to the contest's judging criteria, there will be a *Youth Visionary Award* this year.

Applications will be accepted until 12:00 noon on Monday, September 25, 2023. The final pitch contest will take place online in November 2023.

In 2022, 54 applicants from Japan and abroad participated in the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2022, which was held virtually. Eight teams passed the second screening and presented their business ideas to an audience of 200 and a panel of judges.

Details of the Social Innovation Challenge Japan 2023 are available on the [UNDP Tokyo website](#).

Co-created by UNDP and Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab is the largest youth-led social entrepreneurship movement driving the implementation of the SDGs in 28 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region. Since its inception in 2017, its youth social innovation and entrepreneurship activities have supported more than 15,000 young people and launched or improved over 1,700 youth-led social innovation and entrepreneurship teams. The number of participants in events organized or supported by Youth Co: Lab has reached around 255,000.

Youth Co:Lab has actively engaged with the government, civil society, and the private sector, with the aim of empowering youth to create new solutions to achieve the SDGs and expanding a youth entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports young entrepreneurs who endeavour to find solutions for social and environmental issues.

About Youth Co:Lab:

Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Citi Foundation, Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth, so that they can accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. Learn more at www.youthcolab.org or follow @youthcolab

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UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet.

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About Citi Foundation:

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

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