

# Engaging Youth Led Organizations for Inclusive Service Innovation: Illustrative Case Study

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**Abstract.** Youth are already having an impact on community change. Youth-led non-profit organizations (YLO) empower young citizens to design and implement effective, innovative, and sustainable development initiatives. In this illustrative case study, we highlight the ability of Lebanese youth-led organizations to engage in service innovation and promote the advancement of sustainable development objectives for their society. We present examples of social innovation and sustainable development ecosystems. Finally, we frame our approach with a service-dominant logic as an interpretative framework and provide illustrative cases to draw on our learnings and articulate the role of YLOs in defining the agenda for sustainable development in inclusive service innovation.

## 1 Introduction

Young people are acknowledged as the "torchbearers" of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>. With more than 1.8 billion children between the ages of 10 and 24 living on the planet, it is now the youngest it has ever been. Despite the fact that they will surely be the generation most affected by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, young people are not just waiting around for things to change. In order to progress and oversee the implementation of the SDGs, they are taking matters into their own hands and taking the lead on projects in their local communities, nations, and on a worldwide scale.

Young people see themselves as the most effective advocates for their own health and wellbeing and that of their peers. They are researchers, not just subjects of research and peer educators, passing on information to our peers through support groups, as articulated in a recent publication on Young people and the HIV response [1]. Meaningfully engaging young people is an important component in achieving the targets of the global strategy [2]. For achieving the SDGs and developing sustainable communities, we need youth to be an important part of the solution. For example, they must be involved in setting the global health agenda [3], education [4], environment development [5], or social innovation [6], even in activism, mobilizing for political change [7]. In the words of Mr. Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General (Sep 24, 2018) *"All our hopes for a better world rest on young people. The world is home to the largest generation of young people. Sustainable development,*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Believe-in-Better.pdf>

*human rights, peace and security can only be achieved if we empower these young people as leaders”.*

Young people are already influencing change in their communities. They often start their own programs and groups as a response to or critique of what they observe taking place in their community, they begin with what they perceive to be a significant service deficit in many communities [8]. Youth led organizations have therefore become the main actors in an innovation engine, empowering sustainable development ecosystems. Youth led organizations are turning their attention to addressing sustainable development goals [9] as means to drive the sustainability of their future.

We aim to reveal that the youth have successfully channeled their energy towards alternative spaces of civic engagement, driving the evolution of sustainable development goals for their society. The article also aims to illustrate instances of social innovation through young participation in ecosystems for sustainable development.

## **2 Background**

Service-dominant (S-D) logic is known as a theoretical foundation for understanding value co-creation from a service perspective [10]. In the S-D logic framework, all economic entities are commonly represented as resource integration for a common goal between the actors of a service ecosystem [10]. Developing new services that facilitate reconfiguration of actors, resources to bolster value propositions that engage the underserved drive service innovation [11]. The growing share of services in today’s economies, both in terms of wealth creation and job creation via service activities based on intensive social interactions between actors in the ecosystem, with the co-creation of values of fairness and solidarity, therefore inclusion [12].

On the other hand, social innovation targets the individuals whose well-being it seeks to ensure, the environment of which it needs to ensure the economic development and moderate any adverse effects, and finally the firm or organization, of which it seeks to increase the performance. In the latter case, social innovation refers mainly to new forms of work organization and changing power structures. Our case in point is about youth led organizations [13]. This explains the key relationship between social innovation and service sectors, where social entrepreneurs are the principal actors within a service ecosystem [14].

Further, sustainability and vulnerable populations are increasingly a focus of service research [15]. Tied directly to the objectives of the SDGs, for example, service management research have explicated potential value ecosystems for reducing poverty [16], improving nutrition [17] and reimagining service science in the context of managing pandemics, reducing inequality and dealing climate change [18]. A review of the literature reveals discussions of services targeting vulnerable populations, promoting social sustainability presenting inclusive innovation as a unifying approach for collaborative integration of social issues [19], with emphasis on the role of creating collaborative ecosystems of different entities to drive meaningful outcomes at scale and promote social sustainability [20]. Ecosystems of this breadth and depth are critical to developing sustainable, long-term solutions, enabling access and overcoming barriers [21].

Recent literature on social innovation highlights evidence on the connection between service innovation, social innovation and SDGs, in the perspective of the three sustainability dimensions: economy, society, and environment [22]. Such inquiries are setting the stage for a broader and transformative service research to elevate service science to uplift human well-being [15].

With the emergence of the youth led sector, inevitable changes are seen in nonprofit and social service sector as a whole [8]. It has been noted that the youth advocate for causes such as the preservation of culture, mutually beneficial situations, sustainable local development,

and environmentally friendly lifestyles [23]. Our review found evidence connecting youth led organization and service innovation [24-28]. Recently, illustrative cases have discussed such innovations around the world, while learning about ways to bolster a culture of youth-led organizations in Tanzania [26], and how they leveraged social capital, and suggested novel solutions to tackle social problems and attain sustainability collectively in a bamboo based innovation in Taiwan [28]. The literature also treats obstacles in youth led innovation, for instance, Fisher, and Nasrin [29], recount how a climate youth-led movement was reoriented by adult-led organizations effecting a role in a new climate politics in America, where the effort of the youth has been thwarted by politics.

Nevertheless, the literature review shows that Lebanon is under-represented in the international literature on service innovation and specifically in the context of youth led organizations.

### **3 Approach and Context**

For this paper's approach, we follow an illustrative scenario in conjunction with the theoretical concepts of social innovation and social capital, retracing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The paper starts with a background and a review of the relevant work in sustainability and vulnerable populations, presenting a discussion around the youth-led non-profit organization and their contribution to sustainable development ecosystems. We then set the context in this section around youth engagement as social capital, the potential for youth driven sustainable development and explicate how YLOs could empowering sustainable development ecosystems. Then we consider eight illustrative cases to explore these concepts. Finally, we frame our approach with a service dominant logic as an interpretative framework to draw on our learnings and articulate the role of YLOs in defining the agenda for sustainable development in inclusive service innovation.

#### **3.1 Youth Engagement as Social Capital**

The UN council on SDGs regard Youth as (1) critical thinkers who recognize and question the status quo in existing power structures and hurdles to change and to uncover inconsistencies and biases. They are also (2) change-makers, with the power to act and activate others; (3) innovators, with new perspectives, direct knowledge, and insights into concerns that are differing in scope than their adults community actors. They are (4) communicators, as they promote the outreach of SDGs and the 2030 global agenda and especially (5) leaders who can lead change in their communities when empowered with leadership skills along with knowledge of their rights<sup>3</sup>.

Youth-led non-governmental organizations are those that are fully led, managed and coordinated by young people. In the case of an organization, it means that staff and members are all below a certain age (usually younger than 35), and work on a variety of issues from a youth perspective. Many different forms of youth-led social engagement are under the fields of political, economic, charitable, and voluntary participation, public policy, artistic creation, and innovative research [30].

The potential for youth led social innovation to start societal improvements by collaborating across diverse areas has unquestionably been acknowledged by the United Nations, with numerous initiatives being implemented and integrated in various developed and developing countries as well as in emerging economies<sup>4</sup>. Studies have identified positive

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://digitalsocialinnovation.org/social-innovation-for-sustainable-development/>

elements of collaboration between youth and local organizations: Those include knowledge transfer, capacity building and outreach [31]. Youth voice, empowerment and participation in policy advocacy and capacity building are avenues how young people can pursue their role in the transition to a more equitable space, by promoting new interactions and knowledge integration sphere within their contexts, thus improving the social capital of their ecosystems [32]. In this context, the engagement of social capital is about the significance of social networks and institutional affiliations, linking similar people and bridging between dissimilar people formulating how these people and entities interact with and benefit from each other [33]. By embedding their value network, the youth have an untapped potential in achieving many SDGs [34]. The youth, therefore contribute to increasing social capital and social value though their capability to innovate products and service modes [28], well suited for advancing their needs and interest in progressing sustainable platform for society.

### **3.2 Potential for Youth Driven Sustainable Development**

The literature suggest that entrepreneurs are more likely to find chances for sustainable growth the more they understand about natural and community ecosystems, the more they feel that their environment is in danger, and the more altruistic they are toward others [34].

A unifying framework for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, both now and in the future, is provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was ratified by all United Nations Member States in 2015<sup>5</sup>. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call to action for all nations—developed and developing—in a global partnership (Table 1). They recognize that ending poverty (SDG 1) and other hunger (SDG 2) must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4), reduce inequalities (SDG 5; 10), spur economic growth (SDG 8) and promote sustainable growth and innovation (SDG 9). This includes a focus on providing sustainable clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), with a responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and use of resources (SDG 13; 14; 15). To achieve these goals the forum anticipated the foundation of sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) with the social fabric of peace and justice (SDG 16).

In order to achieve these objectives, young people must take initiative and help one another in finding novel solutions to the problems of sustainable development [36].

Around the world, youth entrepreneurs are faced with the liability of being new, small, with scarce resources making it difficult to access local markets, especially when there are established players<sup>6</sup>. Increasing investment in socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable firms is necessary to achieve the SDGs.<sup>7</sup> Key complementary action-oriented approaches to youth entrepreneurship include policy design, implementation and evaluation for the multilateral agencies, private and voluntary sectors. These are in the form of participation and effective engagement, policies, services and infrastructures that facilitate the efficient running of business ventures and allow entrepreneurial efforts to thrive, such factors that attract youths towards setting up their own business and becoming self-employed [37].

The creation of a youth investment pipeline will need integration into a larger investment strategy that evaluates investment objectives, goals, and assets in addition to other factors. Global corporations and governments must fundamentally support the SDGs in order for them to be achieved. Trillions of dollars must be mobilized to mobilize funding and speed up progress towards the SDGs in order to achieve the ambitious targets. To assist youth-led

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<sup>5</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>6</sup> Report\_on\_SADC-AAP\_Dialogue\_on\_Youth\_Empowerment\_in\_SADC, April 2022

<sup>7</sup> AAP\_Youth\_Report\_FINAL\_DIGITAL\_04.05.2022.pdf

organizations in increasing their value creation at the service of SDGs, leaders from the World Bank, the financial and commercial sectors, the startup community, and academia must be brought together<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 1.** Summarization of the 2030 SDGs (Adapted from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

2030 Sustainable Development Goals	Focus
SDG 1: No Poverty	Eradicate every form of extreme poverty including the lack of food, clean drinking water, and sanitation.
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
SDG 4: Quality Education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensure access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is the most basic human need for health and well-being.
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization
SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	Reducing inequalities by empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities.
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns worldwide
SDG 13: Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
SDG 14: Life Below Water	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
SDG 15: Life on Land	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems
SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

### 3.3 YLOs Empowering Sustainable Development Ecosystems

The United Nations recognizes the importance of supporting the growth of networks of young peace builders who are equipped with the tools to address stereotypes, prejudice, and polarization to build more inclusive and peaceful societies in their communities and globally [38]. In fact, one of the key success indicators of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 – stipulates, “*Young people are taking action for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies*”. To achieve the sustainability objectives of the SDG by 2030, governments, private sector, academia, and civil society must become active agents of change. Based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace, and Security (SCR 2250), youth leaders and activists, civil society and the international community should continue to urge politicians to meaningfully involve young people in decision-making. They must ensure that socio-economic and political peacebuilding programs target young people at an early stage of their development; and address the underlying political, social and economic grievances

<sup>8</sup> <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/259801562965232326-0270022019/original/2030Agenda2019finalweb.pdf>

that often lead to extremism and affect young people's relationships with their communities and states [39].

The social capital of youth led organizations could be regarded as a foundational element of youth entrepreneurial leadership. Their key strength is community-building, flexibility and a sense of ownership [40]. To that, the engagement of the youth, increases social capital by bringing relevant knowledge and experience to an organization (or community). They help drive the innovation cycles of sustainable development projects in the form of integrating new ideas, perspectives, and skills, with an augmented outreach by activating their links to a diverse community, thus increasing the capacity of the local organizations [33]. On the other hand, SDGs involve complex long-term solutions, development policies, and investments along with stakeholder relationships across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. These dimensions of sustainable development are interlinked and rely on technology advancements and data availability [41].

This complex service ecosystem of people, technology, value propositions, and shared information invests the youth social capital and the value network created by their co-creation to connect all service systems through entities of learning [42] aimed at keeping forward momentum and achieving sustainability. By contributing a solid knowledge of the problems faced by the community, YLOs can be useful platforms to address social concerns in a welcoming environment with community leaders and activists, for example. Further, through their natural skills in the use of technology, YLOs may reach a larger audience, increase the effectiveness of their outreach, and have a greater impact on the equity of the services [43]. Youth-led initiatives may also involve educating the community about the proper use of technology, to strengthen the learning and therefore the value co-creation [42]. Technology could include social media spaces, such as Facebook (most common), Twitter, Instagram, Skype, e-mail, blogs, and personalized mapping applications [44]. By driving their own inclusion in the social contract, the Youth led organizations increase a community's capacity to create, enhance, and scale their service systems [45].

In this paper, we aim to highlight examples of social capital for innovation and sustainability via engaging the youth in sustainable development ecosystems and we use the case of a developing country, Lebanon.

## 4 Illustrative Cases in Youth Led Organizations

Lebanon, a country of more than 6.8 million people, where the youth (aged 15-29) make up 24% the total population<sup>9</sup>. Also where, the share of young people (aged 18-34) working in ministries and governmental agencies in charge of youth affairs make up ~38% of the administrative staff (~26% women and ~12% men). This represents about the average OECD share of young people (as percentage of total staff). The Lebanese youth are notably underrepresented in parliament, where the average age of members is 60.4 years old, and just ~4% of members are 40 or younger<sup>10</sup>. Albeit, about 40% of the youth, (aged 15-29) are not interested in politics others participate in the public debate through non-institutionalized channels and contribute to community life, via civil society and volunteering activities, both online and offline.

Youth-led non-profit organization help young people who want to make a difference in the world and to empower them to design and implement effective, innovative, and sustainable development solutions. In table 2, we include examples and illustrative cases of Youth-led organizations.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/en-youth-centre-gov-action.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wfd.org/strategy>

The youth are adept online users and keen to use this technology to interact with their political leaders [46]. They are also social entrepreneurs, encouraged by incubators, which are frequently run by young enthusiasts and support creative solutions to social issues, employment possibilities, sustainable development, and poverty relief [47].

Creating innovative water solutions through circular economy, data science, and artificial intelligence, the youth engage research and development in the context of climate change and mitigation approaches. Case in point is the Water Innovation Lab (WIL); a program, where emerging leaders (18-35 yrs.) strive to implement SDG targets connected to water security, sustainability, and SDG 6 [49]. The youth in this program design high tech solutions such as Internet of Things sensors (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and plan for water, energy, food, and health systems resilience.

We present a few more examples of youth lead organizations with a strong impact on the sustainable agenda, founding their approaches on environment awareness, inclusivity and integration while engaging with technology (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Illustrative Cases in Youth Led Organizations and their Contribution to SDGs.

Youth Led Organizations	How do they contribute to their SDG ecosystem	SDG Alignment
Dawaer <sup>11</sup>	Empowering other youth to become central actors in the social development sphere, and increase their resilience in education, inclusiveness, promoting the social inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities	4; 5; 10
Digital Opportunity Trust <sup>12</sup>	Help young people develop their leadership and innovation skills as well as their ability to implement digital solutions that benefit their regions. Provides digital skills training and start-up practices coaching	4; 8; 9; 17
Empowerment Through Integration (ETI) <sup>13</sup>	Focused on young people with Disabilities. Provides local professionals and families of blind children with specialized online and in-person training through eLearning courses on Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Activities of Daily Living (ADL).	10
Injaz <sup>14</sup>	Educate and prepare the youth to become prosperous business people Innovation Labs developed in collaboration with regional stakeholders as collaboration spaces for young people from various backgrounds.	4; 8; 9
Riyada for social innovation <sup>15</sup>	Youth programming, corporate training, and consulting services to promote social innovation and entrepreneurship in the community Seasonal camps, online courses, and hackathons	8; 9
The Nawaya Network <sup>16</sup>	Assist people from underprivileged backgrounds in enhancing their standard of living through entrepreneurship, employability, and economic development initiatives. Coding boot camp for young people from all socioeconomic levels to improve technical and soft skills.	8; 9; 11; 17
The Water Innovation Lab, known as WIL <sup>17</sup>	Support for emerging leaders (ages 18 to 30) to share quick knowledge and develop innovations that enhance water security while achieving water SDG targets. They interact through live sessions and virtual sessions - Use circular economy, data science, and artificial intelligence (AI) and sensor technologies (IoT).	2; 3; 6; 11; 13
Youth Leadership Programme <sup>18</sup>	Accelerating innovative solutions for sustainable development by empowering young people to design and implement effective, innovative, and sustainable development	5; 8; 9; 11

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dawaerfoundation.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://lebanon.dotrtrust.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.etivision.org/lebanon-board2>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.injaz-lebanon.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://riyadainnovation.com/en/about-us/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://arab.org/directory/the-nawaya-network/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://waterlution.org/wil-lebanon-2021/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://yplebanon.org/>

#### **4.1 Building Opportunities for Economic Growth (SDG 8; 9; 11; 17)**

Social entrepreneurs are problem-solvers who seek to provide fresh (creative) sustainable solutions for societal, economic, and/or environmental problems [49]. YLOs aim to increase employability of the underprivileged fellow youth, by offering in-person and online courses, meeting the significant demand locally and regionally, and developing the country into a hub for tech talent.

For example, the “Nawaya Network” assists people from underprivileged backgrounds in enhancing their standard of living through entrepreneurship, employability, and economic development initiatives (SDG 8). A coding boot camp called SE Factory helps young people in from all socioeconomic levels improve their technical and soft abilities.

Another organization “Riyada for Social Innovation SAL” provides youth programming, corporate training, and consulting services to promote social innovation and entrepreneurship in the community to transform young people into future social innovators and change-makers. They also offer a multifaceted program that includes seasonal camps, online courses, and hackathons, all of which primarily rely on partnerships and collaboration in order to increase awareness of and engagement in social innovation (SDG 11; 17).

#### **4.2 Promoting Education, Sustainable Innovation (SDG 4; 8; 9; 17)**

Youth-led movement of social innovators who are bold and have the resources, expertise, and networks to alter their own communities. They help young people develop their leadership and innovation skills as well as their ability to develop and implement digital solutions that benefit their regions.

Notably, the non-profit “INJAZ Lebanon” seeks to educate and prepare the youth to become prosperous businesspeople and qualified employees who will strengthen their communities and contribute to its economic development. Innovation Labs, developed in collaboration with regional stakeholders, as co-working spaces and gathering places for young people from various backgrounds to network with like-minded individuals, make connections with experienced mentors, and take part in trainings and courses that will help them develop their digital and entrepreneurial abilities.

Lebanon’s youth have managed to extend their influence to the preceding generation, helping teachers gain confidence in establishing technologically advanced learning environments for students. Young leaders in “Digital Opportunity Trust Lebanon’s” #EdTech programs promote digital literacy among teachers, develop tools and solutions that are pertinent to their communities, and make technology available in the classroom. In turn, the #EdTech ecosystem of “Digital Opportunity Trust Lebanon” partners, deliver devices and content that are appropriate for use in the country.

#### **4.3 The Case for Service Innovation through Inclusivity (SDG 5; 10; 11; 16)**

The emphasis on inclusion and equity permeates the majority if not all the sustainable development goals (SDG 4; 8; 9; 10; 11; 16). Inclusivity, i.e. the engagement of stakeholders across all levels of society to efficiently recognize and respond to the needs and interests of all, is one of the one of the key Developmental Opportunity Areas of the SDG Framework.

The youth have created a more inclusive society by empowering young people with disabilities on an individual level and the community scale. One example of inclusivity is the organization “Empowerment through Integration (ETI)” that is dedicated to providing local professionals and families of blind children with specialized online and in-person training. The purpose of ETI’s new eLearning courses on Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Activities of Daily Living (ADL) is to educate professionals and families on how to support

youth with visual impairments in becoming active members of their local communities and gaining independence. Another example, a “Youth Leadership Programme,” funded by the UNDP, seeks to build gender sensitive thinking and implementation abilities, enhance advocacy and presentation skills to support the development of a vibrant network of young innovators and leaders. Another example is Dawaer, a foundation sustainable development for people and nature. Dawaer is an organization led by the youth, empowering other youth to become central actors in the social development sphere, and increase their resilience<sup>19</sup> in education (SDG 4), inclusiveness (SDG5), promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities (SDG 10).

## **5 Reflections**

The youth, face a variety of difficulties, such as a severe long-term economic crisis, political stagnation, high unemployment rates, societal instability, extreme poverty, and poor public infrastructure. The youth are more connected than ever and are reinforcing the stability of their communities by suggesting creative solutions for societal advancement and sustainability. Albeit, they must secure funding for their activities from institutional stakeholders, such as the UNDP, UNICEF, Microsoft, USAID, Google and Local banking and enterprises (In our context).

Youths have pushed for varied social ideals, used social capital, and presented novel solutions via diverse involvement and the formation of new relationships. They establish a dynamic to address social problems and attain sustainability together, thus defining the agenda for sustainable development in inclusive service innovation through their resource integration capabilities, as potential hubs for service exchange collaborating with their community and promoting education and sustainable innovation.

### **5.1 Resource Integrators and Hubs for Service Exchange**

Our examples bare witness that the youth make plans for socially and economically accessible services, establishing an effective social network, where healthy interactions and dialogue are enabled; they bolster social stability, innovative research, political reform, and peace and security.

Youth-led organizations provide safe spaces where youth can be involved in a socially dynamic environment, ensuring the development of their civic engagement through the acquisition of new skills and participation in youth-led and community initiatives. Engaging with an inclusive culture entails communicating through preferred and valued channels, working within the "cultural logic" of those groups, and supporting the definition of one's own solutions, which may be embraced because they complement rather than contradict one's view of the world. These young social entrepreneurs provide young people with employment possibilities where a multi-stakeholder, integrated service system of multidisciplinary knowledge satisfies multiple stakeholder criteria to support sustainable development [52], therefore driving inclusive service innovation.

The YLOs that we examined use social networking platforms, blogs and in person workshops as necessary and they use technology to co-create in their value network. Technology such as e-learning, artificial intelligence, sensors, digital literacy tools, hackathons, for instance. Relying on technical advancements, the youth are building their own version of smart cities where they can promote positive transformation. YLOs possess the technical expertise to contribute to the design of safe, sustainable communities. Therefore, sustainability conveniently lends itself to the characteristics of a service system

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dawaerfoundation.org/about/>

within the framework of service science as an intangible product that necessitates the integration of a broad variety of information, technologies, methodologies, and skills.

By creating these networks, young actors ensure sustainability and participation in social innovation. They must rely on collaboration and partnerships with local and regional stakeholders to help them develop their social, entrepreneurial and digital skills, as they intend to improve education and learning through digital literacy and specific tools that aim to provide technical solutions through the use technology, thus, contributing to the development of a more inclusive society.

## **5.2 Collaborators and Promoters of Education and Sustainable Innovation**

Young actors interact and empower each other to participate in the community, enhancing inclusivity sensitive thinking, and engaging them in decision-making processes and political and economic matters. They take the lead in catalyzing inventions and have the capacity to create and implement numerous digital strategies that can help their communities face challenges such as poverty, social concerns, and unemployment. By enhancing each other's capacities, youth seek to boost their economies and transform their regions to a more technologically advanced and sustainable communities. The ability to balance the requirements of the present without jeopardizing the potential of future generations to satisfy their own needs, thus paving the way for sustainability, a key component of many decision-making processes in designing services, transforming conceptual principles into enduring value through service offerings [50].

Youth-led organizations can be effective in raising awareness and promoting change by offering local community engagement workshops, advocacy campaigns, and technical trainings on the target concerned.

Whether in the form of social enterprises, organizations, NGOs, initiatives, or campaigns, Youth led organizations can participate in sustainable development by building opportunities for decent work, and economic growth. They can be an engine for social innovation through collaborations to promote education, sustainable growth and innovation.

## **5.3 YLOs Drive Service Innovation with a Culture of Inclusion**

With the notion that sustainable development is the provision of dynamic resources to make it possible for future generations to live better [50], there is, therefore, no doubt that a country's youth can be drivers for sustainability and resilience. In order to allow the local youth to manage ecosystems in "their own" landscapes for the benefit of present and future generations, management strategies must be inclusive, negotiated, and adaptable. Although opinions on the value of ecosystem services are evolving, policymakers and other decision-makers must act quickly to address the direct and indirect causes that endanger ecosystems if they are to contribute to the SDGs.

Borrowing from the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) and service science concepts, we can frame an ecosystem of youth led organizations, innovating the social contract and improving the quality-of-life for all society [51]. The youth integrate their resources (social, entrepreneurial, and technological) and engage in service exchange with their fellow youth, collaborating with their stakeholders to form youth led organizations, promote education, and sustainable innovation and define the sustainability agenda of their inclusive ecosystem.

The latter is the outcome of a value co-creation of the ecosystem; Figure 1 depicts this notion of inclusive service innovation for a sustainable development ecosystem. In such ecosystem, the design and development of comprehensive, future-focused, flexible values, methods, and tools applicable to all design, development, management, and implementation

processes are facilitated by establishing sustainability as an essential component of services in service science and defining sustainability as a service in and of itself.

Understanding sustainability from the youth's perspective is possible by thinking of it as an element of service science, whereby, every service must also include and reflect the unique economic, social, and environmental factors that it possesses in the perspective to provide sustainable service [50].



**Fig. 1.** Notion of Value Co-Creation in Youth Led Organizations – Adapted from [10].

## 6 Contribution

In the arguments of our synopsis, the major ways to innovate for the SDGs are through the capacity of youth driven, pro-poor, inclusive, economical, grass-roots, social, and systemic innovation. YLOs may participate in all of the aforementioned types of innovation to help spark young involvement in sustainable development. For developing countries, innovation covers a broader space than pure research for scientific or technological purposes, as it includes new ways of producing, delivering and using goods and services that may already exist elsewhere, and which can accelerate the achievement of SDGs if they can be effectively harnessed in the Lebanese context, our focus.

The use cases of this enquiry have shown that youth-driven civic engagement initiatives and educational initiatives that encourage more environmentally friendly, sustainable communities are effective tools for altering the community's social capital. Our work is an exploratory attempt to highlight to connect the concepts of service innovation to the contributions of youth led organizations in the context of sustainable development. We anticipate that others will be motivated by our examples.

According to our observations, youth-led projects for sustainable development have the potential to link youth and community development in ways that can promote the development of children and young adults as community stewards, and aid in the ongoing creation of just and sustainable communities. We also identify the youth as the social capital in service innovation that drive the sustainable development goals. We hope that through this explorative study, we inspire future works and case studies to discover how youth led organizations can be useful platforms for social innovation through the use of their networks and enabled by technology.

## 6.1 Study Limitations

Our exploration is primarily through descriptive studies. Illustrative case studies are descriptive studies in which one or more conditions of an occurrence are shown in order to explain the situation. This form of case study, according to Hayes, et al [53], is used to "explain a scenario or phenomena, what is occurring with it, and why it is happening" (p. 8). We have tried to introduce the topics in question. While it may be difficult to generalize our findings, these studies have successfully framed our theme of inclusive service innovation in the context of a small developing country to inform the concept sustainability through initiatives of value co-creation in youth led organizations. We have described how the youth are engaging for inclusive service innovation, through the mission of youth led organizations. The study uses concepts of sustainability and inclusion in a resource-constrained setting. Other studies, in other contexts may bring to light different concepts and approaches that may prove complementary. Therefore, we encourage further research on this concept for a deeper discovery.

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