



SOCIAL ECONOMY: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE FOR AFRICA

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CONCEPT NOTE

CONVENED BY:





BACKGROUND

We live in a world characterised by inequality and exclusion due to the current capitalist economic system. The capitalist system will not transform the world for the better but will continue to create problems that we must fix. Traditional economic models have not effectively addressed Africa's complex social and economic challenges, underscoring the need for innovative solutions to fix the gaps. There is a need for a new economic system.

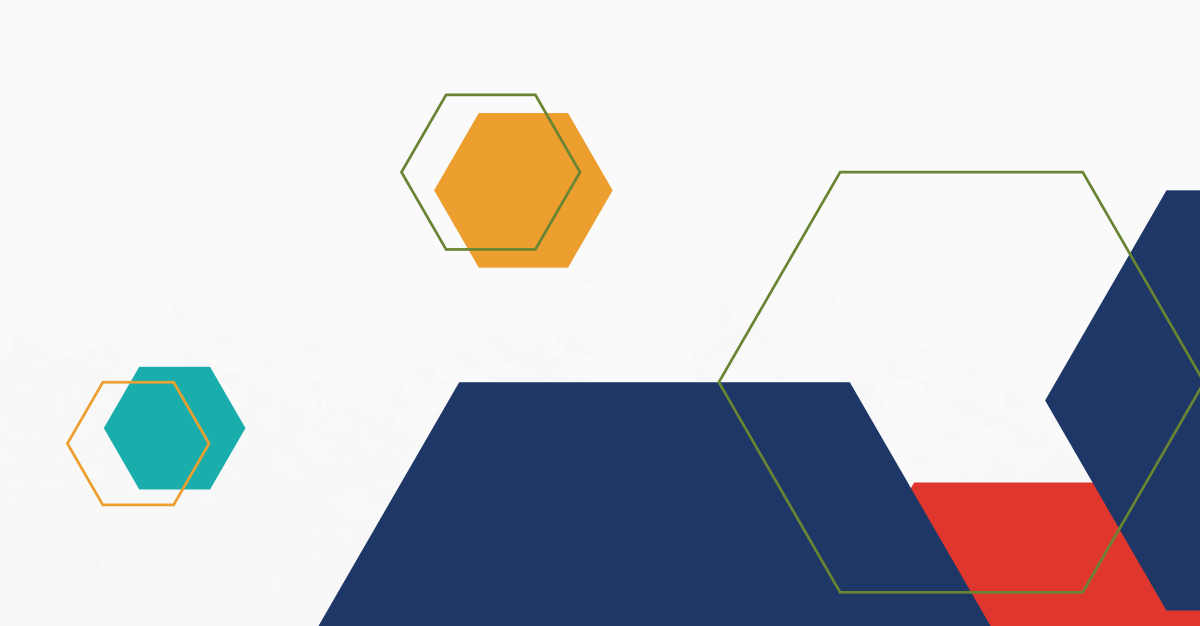
The rise of the social economic model offers an alternative economic model that puts people's social and economic objectives at its centre. Social economy provides an effective solution that reduces social inequality and creates inclusion. It aims to reduce inequality and promote access to opportunities, fostering a society where everyone can improve their lives.


At the heart of the social economy are arrays of organisations such as social enterprises, civil society organisations, foundations, and not-for-profits that play a crucial role in creating and promoting social economic agenda in Africa. Social enterprises are the engine that drives the social economy. Social entrepreneurs strive to pioneer new and transformative social, economic models that seek to have an impact on their communities. Leveraging these organizations can significantly promote Africa's social economy, which holds great hopes for the continent's transformation.

The recent adoption of the Africa Union Ten Year (2023-2032) Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) Strategy for Africa is a significant milestone in recognising the important role of social economy for the development of the Continent. It is, therefore, imperative to create momentum in the social economy in Africa and harness its full potential for the Continent. The 8th Annual Africa Conference on Social Entrepreneurship (AACOSE) will provide a platform for discussing, learning, and planning for Africa's social economy, fostering multisectoral collaboration among governments, private sectors, civil society, and international organisations.

ABOUT THE AACOSE 8

AACOSE, an initiative by Tangaza University's Institute for Social Transformation, has been gathering key players in African social entrepreneurship since 2017 who come together to collaborate in accelerating the growth of social entrepreneurship in Africa. AACOSE is co-organised by Tangaza University - Institute for Social Transformation, in collaboration with other partner organizations supporting social entrepreneurs.





AACOSE is a Pan-African convening that provides opportunities for actors in social entrepreneurship. It provides the space for mutual learning, co-creation, networking, and creating new narratives that can contribute to social transformation in Africa. The conference focuses on solution-driven social entrepreneurship and innovations making a positive impact across Africa. The value of AACOSE is creating new knowledge, shaping the narrative of social entrepreneurship, co-creating new solutions, connecting actors, and building new alliances towards enabling the growth of social enterprises.

The event will provide a platform to discuss the role of organisations in fostering inclusive growth, reducing poverty, and addressing key challenges such as unemployment and environmental sustainability.

The conference will highlight how social entrepreneurship contributes to the Continent's sustainable development and Africa's diverse social and economic landscape.

Objectives

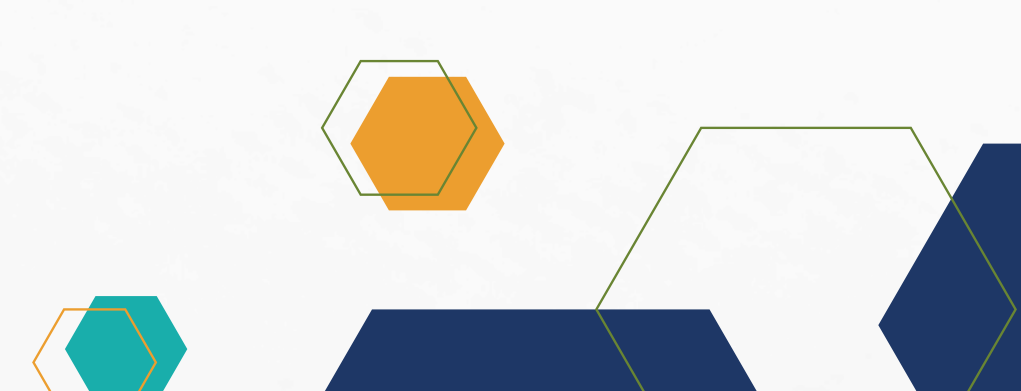
AACOSE 8 aims to:

- 01 Share experiences and best practices from Africa's social economy organisations (SEOs) with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity.
- 02 Strengthen networks and collaborations between public, private, and social sectors to promote sustainable development.
- 03 Share best practices on how African countries can leverage on social economy for sustainable development.

Sub- Themes

Social Procurement: Explore how governments can collaborate with social economy organisations to achieve social policy goals. Social procurement has a growing role in building a sustainable and inclusive economy. The support of the business and government to the social enterprise through social procurement is necessary for sustainability and impact. This theme looks at how the government and other organisations are supporting social procurement and explores the strategy to help organisations embrace social procurement.

Social Finance for Social Economy: Discuss strategies for mobilizing financial resources for social impact organizations and overcoming financial barriers. One major challenge of social enterprises and impact-oriented organisations is securing the right type of financing that aligns with their mission to create social and environmental impact. The discussion will focus on social financing opportunities and provide insights and strategies to overcome financial barriers and attract investors for the social economy sector.



Models of Social Business: Looking at the emerging model of social business, we focus on how to promote social business models through education, capacity building, and access to finance. The session focuses on successful social business organisations gaining insights and lessons and developing strategies to empower social entrepreneurship to social business in Africa. The discussion will highlight the role of educational institutions in building capacity for social business.

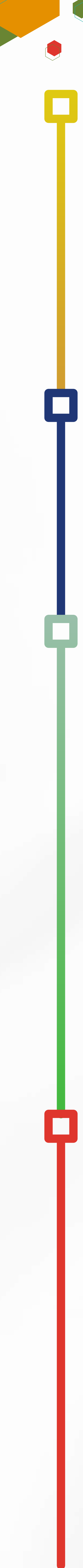
Climate Resilience and Sustainability: This session will highlight how social enterprises contribute to combating climate change, foster renewable energy, and promote sustainable agriculture. It will focus on how social enterprises and other organizations are spearheading innovations that mitigate climate risks and ensure inclusive growth. Further, it will delve into strategies that are effectively combating climate crisis and building the resilience of vulnerable communities for long-term sustainability.

People and Planet First: Social enterprises and other impact-driven organisations put people and the planet first. This has become a unifying factor for organisations that drive social economy. This has led to the creation of the verification of social enterprises to give them more credibility. This session seeks to create more awareness of the certification of social enterprises, highlighting the benefits of social enterprises.

Youth opportunities for Job creation: Focusing on the critical role of youth in driving the social economy. This track will discuss how social enterprises can promote gender equality and create opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Faith, church and social economy: The pope greatly advocates for economic justice and social entrepreneurship as a key driver for a new economic model. The 'Economy of Francesco' idea stems from the effort to create an alternative model to capitalism. An economic model that is centred on human solidarity. The economy of Francesco is a call for "a more inclusive and just future." The discussion will focus on the role of faith-based institutions in advancing an economy focused on human solidarity.

Social entrepreneurship in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) : Technical and Vocational education plays a crucial role in skills development and employability of youth in Africa. As the continent faces complex challenges, social entrepreneurship offers a powerful approach to harnessing the potential of TVET graduates to address these issues. Social entrepreneurship skills are needed to assist the youth coming from technical institutions in developing innovative solutions that solve African challenges. This session focuses on the intersection between technical education and social entrepreneurship. The session will discuss strategies to embed social entrepreneurial skills within TVET curricula, empowering youth to create innovative, sustainable solutions that tackle Africa's unique challenges. The session will highlight successful models, sharing positive experiences from TVET institutions that have embraced social entrepreneurship as part of their curriculum.

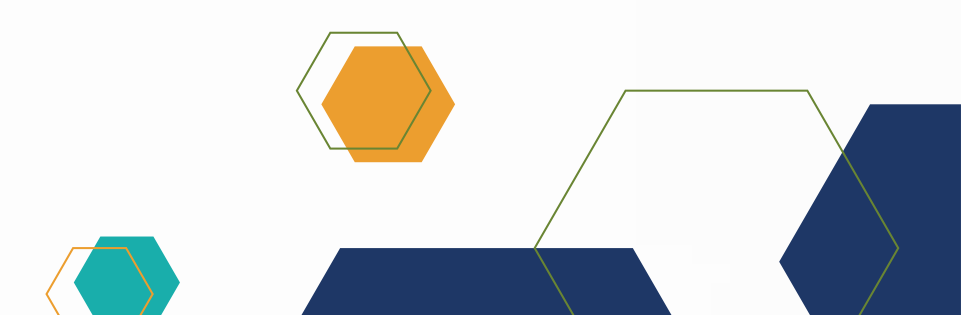



Data, technology for greater social impact: In our complex and fast-changing society, technology and data are critical drivers of social innovation and impact. There is a greater need to harness data to validate and enhance the work of these social impact organizations. We need to leverage on technology and data to provide evidence for the social economy. The session will examine how data and technology drive social innovation and enhance impact, share insights and strategies that will include case studies on how technology and data are shaping the future of social economy.

Innovative Healthcare and insurance for all: Health and Health insurance remain a major challenge for the majority of people on the Continent, particularly the vulnerable communities. Social entrepreneurs and impact-driven organisations are designing new healthcare solutions. The session focuses on how healthcare and insurance innovations contribute to the social economy and impact lives.

Agriculture and Food Sovereignty: Agriculture and food sovereignty are crucial for the development of Africa and a sector of untapped opportunity. Africa is still grappling with food sovereignty, and food safety. The other challenges are policy protect the food production, the farmers, the indigenous seeds. This session explores new and innovative pathways to strengthen Africa's agricultural systems through enhanced access to finance, insurance, policy and sustainable agriculture models. The discussion will examine how social enterprises and financial institutions can collaborate to address critical challenges faced by smallholder farmers, such as securing affordable credit, mitigating risks through tailored insurance solutions, and adopting sustainable and scalable farming practices. This session aims to drive food sovereignty and resilience across the continent by fostering inclusive financial ecosystems and promoting sustainable agricultural innovations.

Circular economy: This session will explore how social entrepreneurs are adopting circular business models to create positive community impact and build a sustainable future. Social entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in driving the adoption and promotion of circular economy practices, which can contribute to both environmental sustainability and economic resilience. It will provide an opportunity to showcase how social entrepreneurs can leverage circular business models to develop scalable solutions that address pressing environmental issues while supporting local economies. It will examine the circular economy practices within the context of social economy and identify key challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurs and businesses embracing these models. In addition, the session will discuss how social enterprises and businesses can collaborate with policymakers and institutions to support circular economy practices in Africa for a more sustainable Continent.





Migration, refugee and sustainable livelihood: Migration is a major social challenge that millions of people face on the continent. Mostly, migrants and refugees face major challenges in terms of integration and sustainable livelihood. For the host countries and communities, this is a complex reality. Local and innovation organisations provide innovative solutions to the provide solutions to the challenge of migration. What are the sustainable approaches to the migration? What are the opportunities that migration presents to the hosts countries? This session looks at the current trends in migration and refugees, the policies, and the innovations that contribute to the integration and sustainable livelihood of the refugees and migrants.

Rural Social Enterprise: This section will explore the unique challenges and opportunities rural social enterprises face in transforming underserved communities. It will highlight the crucial role of social entrepreneurs in navigating obstacles. It will explore strategies for improving access to resources, , connecting rural enterprises with investors, and discuss capacity-building networks. It will showcase the contribution of rural social enterprises to inclusive community well-being, environmental sustainability, inclusive economic growth, and social transformation.

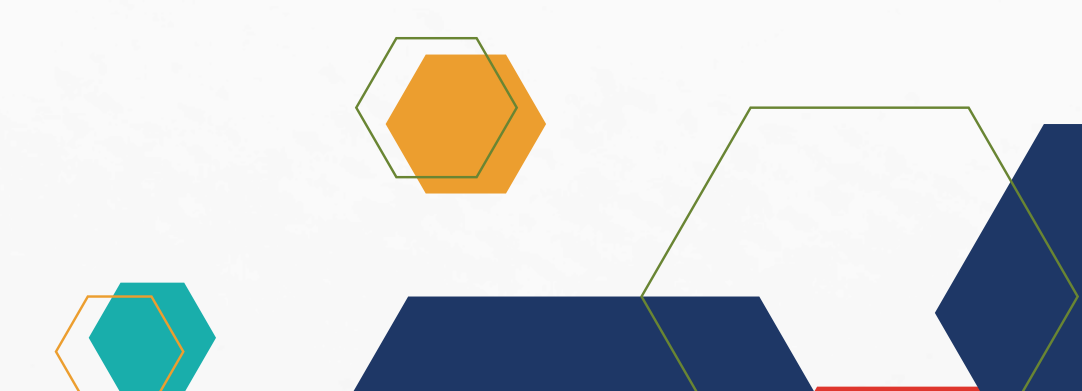
TARGET AUDIENCE

The conference will bring together key stakeholders – Policymakers, government, social entrepreneurs and innovators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academics and researchers, funders, and private sectors – from across Africa and beyond.

STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference will have plenary discussions, breakout panel sessions, and a masterclass. The plenary and breakout sessions will start with a showcase of two innovative solutions that contribute to the social economy.

Each session will focus on an in-depth discussion of the theme, highlighting the practical solutions, lessons, insights, policy implications and new strategies to advance social economy in line with the theme.





Plenary sessions

Breakout Panel Sessions

Masterclass

They are the main sessions of the conference that bring together social entrepreneurs, impact practitioners, policymakers, and field experts to provide perspectives, experience, and strategic orientation on the topics.

They are more focused sessions led by industry leaders and practitioners. They will entail in-depth diving into specific sub-themes or specialized areas. It will give participants more interactive engagement and dialogue opportunities on the themes.

This is a hands-on and interactive training session led by a field expert. It's designed to provide practical lessons, skills, and strategies on the specific topic that the participants can immediately apply to their social enterprise, empowering them with new tools and knowledge.

AACOSE ACADEMIA

Provides a forum for academic research contributions on social economy, bridging the gap between academia and practice. A call for papers is sent to submit the papers. The session emphasizes how research can support and enhance the development of social economy, reinforcing the role of education and research in building sustainable, inclusive communities. This forum fosters knowledge exchange and collaboration among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, providing a unique opportunity for attendees to engage with the latest academic insights and empirical studies. This session will attract scholars, PhD students, and practitioners to deepen their understanding of African social entrepreneurship.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 01 Increased awareness of social economy's role in addressing Africa's challenges.
 - 02 Knowledge-sharing on the current state of Africa's social economy and make recommendations for scaling successful models.
 - 03 Make recommendations for fostering the growth of social economy.
 - 04 A strengthened network of practitioners, policymakers, and academicians committed to advancing Africa's social economy.
 - 05 Development of strategic recommendations to promote social economic growth across Africa.
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