



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada supports social enterprises led by young people
WE Charity will help next generation build their own community-minded enterprises

August 21, 2019

Toronto, Ontario

Employment and Social Development Canada

Canada's young people work hard, and are committed to driving social change and building a better country. To support these efforts, the Government of Canada is investing in young people and their ideas — helping to find new and meaningful ways to address pressing social needs like equality for women, success of newcomers and the fight against climate change.

Today, the Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, on behalf the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, announced a \$3 million investment in WE Charity's WE Social Entrepreneurs initiative.

The investment will help more, young, skilled entrepreneurs to create and grow their own social enterprises. Specifically, the investment will help WE support the creation of approximately 200 youth-led enterprises dedicated to addressing current and relevant social issues at a community level, and will allow 30 already established social enterprises to become investment-ready.

Social enterprises differ from traditional business models because their purpose is to advance a social goal and reinvest their profits back into their communities. Social enterprises are a way to bring together private, public and non-profit interests in order to drive positive social change for the short and long-term.

Today's announcement is part of the Government of Canada's broader commitment to help Canadian organizations to find innovative solutions to some of our most pressing social, economic and environmental issues.

Quotes

"The Government of Canada is proud to support WE Charity in their WE Social Entrepreneurs Initiative, which will help to increase the skills of some of our most vulnerable youth, while also stimulating growth of social enterprises in Canada. When we create more opportunities for tomorrow's change makers, we are enabling them to further strengthen our society and the well-being of all Canadians."

– The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

"In every community across Canada, there are young people full of ideas on how to build a better country – and a better world. With today's investment, our government, along with WE Charity, will be able to help turn more of those ideas into realities. Through skills building, mentorship and financial support, the enterprises that spring from this initiative will move our country forward on some of today's most pressing challenges — thanks to the ideas, energy and commitment of today's young leaders."

– The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance

"We are grateful to the Government of Canada for the support of youth-led social enterprise solutions. As Imagine Canada studies have shown, fewer Canadians as a percentage of the population are donating to charity, and there is a need to adopt social enterprise models to meet social needs. As one of Canada's largest youth organizations, nearing its 25th anniversary, and engaging annually 2+ million youth, we know that young people are full of innovative solutions to help solve today's most pressing social issues."

– Craig Kielburger, Co-Founder, WE

Quick Facts

- The WE Social Entrepreneurs Initiative is accessible to all Canadians under 35 years old, including



thousands of educational institutions, and hundreds of thousands of young people.

- WE Social Entrepreneurs will come to life through two WE programs: WE Incubate and WE Scale Up. WE Incubate will focus on youth under 25-years of age, and will encourage social innovation as a viable career path by equipping young Canadians with much needed skills, knowledge and resources to create their own social enterprises. WE Scale Up will focus on youth under 35-years of age, and it is an immersive accelerator program that will help scale and graduate investor-ready youth-led social enterprises and transform them into the next generation of industry leaders across Canada.
- WE Social Entrepreneurs programs will engage over 2 million young people who are annually engaged in WE programs, with a priority placed on new Canadians, women-led enterprises, and Indigenous peoples.
- The program will be delivered through virtual and in-person programs including curricular resources, virtual expert classrooms, virtual one-on-one youth enterprise coaching, regional training sessions, pitch competition, micro-grants, assistance in VC fundraising and more.
- The program will be available in English and French, with virtual access across the country, and in-person resources will be delivered in cities across Canada.
- The Government of Canada has committed to developing a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy and supporting social purpose organizations through partnerships, including the Investment Readiness program that will invest \$50 million over two years to help social purpose organizations become investment-ready.

Associated Links

[Social Development Partnership Program](#)
[Social Innovation and Social Finance](#)

- 30 -

For media enquiries, please contact:

Media Relations Office
Employment and Social Development Canada
819-994-5559
media@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

[Follow us on Twitter](#) 

Valérie Glazer
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
819-654-5546