

GSEF2018 - YOUTH DECLARATION

3 October 2018 – Bilbao

Youth vision

We believe that decent work is a powerful tool for transformation from extractive and exploitative work realities, as a result tackling multiple crises we are facing. We are citizens, students, community builders, curious explorers, parents, activists, cooperators, change makers, entrepreneurs - you name it! But we come together around values and principles of equality; meaningful and impactful work; being appreciated and having economic security; equal pay; being able to express ourselves and use our skills for the benefit of society; collaboration rather than competition; equal ownership; democratic rights and cultures of participation to influence our work and living conditions.

Business as usual has failed us. But we have each other and the wider solidarity movement to together explore, re-imagine and build a meaningful, inclusive and critical movement to demand change and create visions of the future together. We need to tap into the power of solidarity to have real systemic impact. We want to use social ventures as a vehicle for social impact and to sustain and care for our environment - not to destroy it. We need opportunities to self-empower; share our stories, knowledge and resources. We need spaces to come together and ensure the continuation of this movement to dig deeper and aim higher.

Recommendations

We believe youth spaces and participation must not be built in parallel to the spaces of the movement. As a key stakeholder of the future of SSE, “youth” is not an issue that is to be treated on its own – it is a generation that has projects, opinions and visions for most if not all the themes touched in the programming. Significantly less young people attended GSEF 2018 than we expected. The SSE will directly benefit from greater youth participation in its structures, as they and the GSEF become more inclusive and attractive to young persons.

As such, we believe that SSE structures and the GSEF association should formulate **goals of higher participation of youth** both as speakers, spokespersons and event attendees. Data should be collected on participant ages and a numerical target – we suggest 35% - should be set for participants under 35 and supported with funding. A goal should also be set to foster participation of those under 25, the often forgotten “younger youth”.

Furthermore, we believe this integration of youth in the global movement must come with a **voice within**. If a significant participation of young SSE leaders from around the globe is achieved for GSEF 2020, the program should include a plenary of youth to foster collaboration. We hope an international network of youth leaders can emerge from this meeting that will contribute to the work of the GSEF association before and between events. We also hope national and local SSE structures can make space for, and give power to, their own youth.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the majority of youth who stand to benefit from the SSE and who are using it to change their livelihoods are in the **Global South**, and that they are particularly under-represented in our movement. In the face of significant barriers to access to international events for this major constituency, specific efforts and resources should be affected to encourage and support participation of youth from the Global South in future editions of GSEF and in the global networks of the SSE.