



24 MAY 2023

SEWF

POLICY FORUM

EVENT REPORT



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On 24 May, hundreds of policymakers, social entrepreneurs and social enterprise supporters gathered virtually at the SEWF Policy Forum. Participants had the opportunity to engage in 13 sessions with 25 expert speakers. They discussed the growing political and public recognition of social enterprises as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with developing and scaling the impact of strong social enterprise ecosystems.

SEWF Policy Forum in numbers



550+ registrations



70+ countries



25 speakers



13 sessions



With the changes we make today at a policy level, what do we want that effect to be for our children, essentially? What I would really like to see is that there is trust in the system. That there is trust between people and governments, that we've focused our attention on creating helpful environments where people don't feel isolated and alone. As long as we can coordinate our actions and keep talking through platforms like this, as long as we stay connected and network with each other and keep trying to find those invisible people who are on the fringes of our work I really do believe that we can achieve that.

- Kerryn Krige, Policy Forum Speaker, London School of Economics (UK)

Top countries by registration:

Australia



Netherlands



United Kingdom



Canada



USA



SEWF Policy Forum in words

Key takeaways



Creating platforms for engagement:

Strengthened platforms for policy discussions will build trust among stakeholders. SEWF will continue these conversations beyond the annual Policy Forum.



Amplifying practitioner voices:

Policy conversations and negotiations all too often take place in isolation without drawing on the expertise of communities these policies are intended to support.



Bridging gaps between policy and community implementation:

Policymakers need to consistently be asking how the increase of supportive social enterprise policy will translate locally to grassroots social enterprises.



Unlocking the power of data:

We need better data and metrics that support the impact of social enterprise organisations and raise awareness about their work in our communities.



Mobilising cross-sector partnerships for systems change:

Systems will not shift through public sector policy alone. Engagement across sectors will accelerate change and drive more support for social enterprises.



Uniting around values-driven advocacy:

Terminology has the potential to hold the social enterprise and social economy movement back. Uniting around values will effectively advance policy supporting a new economy.

As global recognition for social enterprise and the social economy grows, international agencies are drafting resolutions to support the sector, but proper implementation and local input are still needed.

[Read more](#) →

SEWF Policy Forum: What's next?

The state of policy development

In 2017, SEWF held its first Policy Forum in Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand. Five years ago the Policy Forum discussions focused on increasing the awareness of the social enterprise sector and leveraging opportunities to lobby for supportive social enterprise policy. Fast forward to 2023: new influential policies that recognise the importance of social enterprise have been put in place at all levels of government. We must now ensure we sustain this global momentum and elevate the voices of social enterprises in ongoing policy design, delivery and evaluation processes.

UN Resolution on the Social and Solidarity Economy

"Encourages Member States to promote and implement national, local and regional strategies, policies and programmes for supporting and enhancing the social and solidarity economy as a possible model for sustainable economic and social development... and encourages the participation of social and solidarity economy actors in the policymaking process"

Why promote and implement policies and strategies?

At all levels of government, social enterprises have proven to be valuable allies and partners for public sector entities and agencies when it comes to addressing complex social challenges, as well as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Policy Forum example: Portland, Oregon, USA

In Portland people care a lot about livability in their community. Social enterprises focus on community livability in very tangible ways, improving lives through, for example, programmes dramatically reducing local recidivism rates. In this way, local social enterprises support government policy objectives while reducing taxpayer burden.

Policy resources

Looking for materials? Visit SEWF's Resource Library for inspiration.

[Explore](#) →





Join SEWF23

Join SEWF23 (11-12 October) to access world-class content, connect with thousands of other purpose-driven people and be part of the world's largest social enterprise conversation in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and online.

[Book now](#)

Let's keep the conversation going

We look forward to continuing the conversation and learning together. You can follow us online:



"Thank you it was great and also awesome to reconnect with new friends and champions of social enterprise" - Andy, Participant (Aotearoa New Zealand)

Thanks to the support of our 2023 Co-hosts

