Enabling Social Innovation in Saint Kitts and Nevis

Country Snapshot

Government Council for Social Innovation
Advancing Social Impact
POWERED BY 1Family Foundation

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." [1]

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Saint Kitts and Nevis' social innovation ecosystem.

✓ Direct focus on social innovation 🔗 Connected but indirect focus on social innovation ✗ No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Official Definition of Social Innovation 🔗

There is **no legal or working government definition** of social innovation in Saint Kitts and Nevis. [1]

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

There **is no dedicated agency** for social innovation. The concept is supported indirectly through ministries such as **Social Development** and **Entrepreneurship.** [2]

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

There is **no standalone strategy** for social innovation. However, the **2023 Sustainable Island State Agenda (SISA)** includes relevant goals such as **inclusion, resilience, and financial empowerment** [3] [1].

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓

- The **Social Protection Act (2018)** sets the framework for a comprehensive social safety net [4].
- The **Cooperative Societies Act (2011)** provides the legal basis for cooperatives and credit unions [5].
- The **Small Business Development Act (2009)** offers incentives for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) [6].
- The **Special Sustainability Zones Bill (2025)** introduces social safeguards for large projects [3].
- There is no dedicated *social enterprise* or CSR law; however, registered NGOs benefit from tax exemptions and corporate donation deductibility under the Non-Governmental Organisations Act (2017).

Official statistics 🔗

The government does **not collect statistics** on social innovation. Only **four cooperatives** were registered as of 2017 [5].

Government Programs

- The **LIFT program** combines conditional cash transfers with skills training for low-income families and began in **2023** [7].
- **ASPIRE**, launched in 2023, provides **EC$1,000 investments** and financial literacy training for children [8].
- The **Youth Entrepreneurial Advancement Scheme (YEAS)** offers youth startup training and **seed grants** since 2023 [9].
- The **Women's Employment, Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion Project (WEEFIP)** provides skills and entrepreneurship support for women since 2021 [10].

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

- **Civil society actors** include NGOs such as **Girls Illuminated** and **Positively Inclined** [11].
- **Credit unions and cooperatives** form a small but significant network, with some youth-focused initiatives [5].
- **Support organisations** include the **Small Business Development Center (SBDC) St. Kitts**, which offers MSME training, and the **Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB)**, which supports financial literacy [12].

There are **no dedicated social innovation think tanks or incubators** in the country.

Support initiatives

- **The Building Bankable Businesses** initiative provides a **six-week financial readiness program** for aspiring entrepreneurs [13].
- The **SBDC** regularly conducts training in **basic entrepreneurship** and **marketing skills** [12].

Collaboration

- **Ministries collaborate with financial institutions** such as the **National Bank** and **ECCB**, as well as the **Taiwan Mission**, for program implementation [10] [13].
- Few national events are focused on social innovation. A notable past example includes the **2015 UNDP-supported spoken word contest** addressing crime prevention [11].

FINANCE

Financing Schemes

- **Government programs** are the main source of funding. **LIFT** is estimated to spend over **EC$25 million annually**, and **ASPIRE** invested **EC$4 million** in youth accounts [7] [8].
- **Loans** are available through the **Development Bank** and **National Bank**, and **credit unions** remain active in providing financial access [14].
- **Donor support** includes the **Taiwan Mission** for WEEFIP and contributions from **UN agencies** to youth and social protection programs [10] [11].

Inclusiveness of Financing

Government and donor programs explicitly target **women** (WEEFIP), **youth** (YEAS, ASPIRE), **rural households** (LIFT), and **financially excluded entrepreneurs** [7] [8] [9].

SOCIETY

Public Awareness of social innovation

The public has **limited familiarity** with the term "social innovation." However, government programs such as **ASPIRE** are widely promoted as **transformational policies**, which helps increase indirect awareness [8].

Research

There are no **dedicated research centers** for social innovation. Evaluation of initiatives is primarily conducted through **donor or government reporting**, such as **UNICEF studies** [7].

Education & Human Capital

- The **Junior Achievement program** introduces entrepreneurship concepts in **secondary schools** [10].
- Institutions such as **AVEC** and **CFBC** provide **vocational** and **tertiary-level entrepreneurship training** [12].
- **ASPIRE** includes **educator training sessions** that support national financial literacy curricula [8].

Entrepreneurship

139th / 190 countries

EIU Business Environment Ranking

Saint Kitts and Nevis ranked 139th out of 190 in the 2020 **World Bank Doing Business** report. [15]

--th / -- countries

Innovation Capacity

The country was not ranked in the 2022 **Global Innovation Index**. [16]

Social entrepreneurship prevalence

There is **no available GEM data**, though **youth social entrepreneurship** appears to be increasing anecdotally.

Social & Environmental Consciousness

Solidarity

There is **no World Values Survey data** available.

Political participation

Political participation remains strong, with voter turnout around 68%. [18]

The Charities Aid Foundation reports about 45% participation in charitable activities. [19]

-.-% population

Volunteering

Informal community support and church-based volunteerism are common. [17]

--th / 180 countries

Sustainability

This snapshot was developed, with the use of AI, for the Government Council for Social Innovation by One Family Foundation, and was not reviewed by a representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis' government. Updated December 2025.
Learn more about the Global State of Social Innovation here: https://governmentcouncil.org/