

Enabling Social Innovation in Senegal



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Country Snapshot

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

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Senegal's 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 🔗



Senegal does **not** have a formal legal definition of social innovation. Public authorities more commonly use adjacent concepts such as **social entrepreneurship, inclusive development, and community-driven innovation**, particularly in national development and employment strategies.

Government Body for Social Innovation ✓



There is **no single dedicated government body** for social innovation. Relevant mandates are distributed across ministries, notably:

- **Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation** – coordination of national development strategies
- **Ministry of Microfinance and Social and Solidarity Economy** – support to cooperatives, mutuals, and community enterprises

Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓



Senegal does not have a standalone social innovation strategy. However, **Plan Sénégal Émergent (PSE)** integrates inclusive growth, employment, and social protection objectives that indirectly support social innovation (launched 2014; Phase II updated 2019).

Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗



Frameworks indirectly enabling social innovation include:

- **Law on the Social and Solidarity Economy (2021)** – establishes legal recognition for cooperatives, mutuals, and associations, improving the operating environment for community-based innovations.
- **National Employment and Youth Policies** – promote entrepreneurship, self-employment, and local solutions to social challenge.

There are **no known social-innovation-specific regulatory instruments** (e.g. impact bonds legislation).

Official Statistics 🔗



Senegal does not publish official statistics on social innovation. The **National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD)** collects data on employment, poverty, cooperatives, and informal enterprises, which partially capture social-innovation-relevant activity.



Government Programs

Key programs indirectly supporting social innovation include:

- **DER/FJ – Delegation for Rapid Entrepreneurship for Women and Youth** (2018–): grants and concessional finance for youth- and women-led enterprises, including socially oriented businesses.
- **PRODAC** (Programme des Domaines Agricoles Communautaires): supports collective agricultural enterprises and rural livelihoods through community models.

ECOSYSTEM



Stakeholders

Non-governmental and hybrid actors include:

- **Jokkolabs** (founded 2010): regional innovation hub supporting social and digital entrepreneurship across West Africa.
- **Impact Hub Dakar**: incubation, acceleration, and community space for impact-driven enterprises.
- **Ashoka West Africa**: identifies and supports leading social entrepreneurs operating in Senegal.

Sectoral networks indirectly supporting social innovation:

- **National platforms of cooperatives and mutuals** under the social and solidarity economy framework.
- **Civil-society** coalitions working on education, health, gender equality, and youth employment.



Support Initiatives

Non-financial support is primarily delivered through:

- **Incubation and acceleration programs** (Jokkolabs, Impact Hub Dakar) focused on digital inclusion, employment, and climate resilience.
- **NGO-led capacity building** for community-based organisations, often funded by international partners.



Collaboration

- **Public–civil society partnerships** are common in service delivery (health, education, local development), though not formally framed as social-innovation partnerships.
- **Key events** include regional entrepreneurship and innovation forums hosted by hubs and development partners.
- **No nationally recognised social innovation awards** were identified.

FINANCE



Financing Schemes

There is **no official estimate** of total annual financing dedicated specifically to social innovation.

Key financing sources include:

- **Public funds**: DER/FJ grants and concessional loans for youth and women entrepreneurs.
- **International donors and development banks** (World Bank, AfDB, EU) financing social sectors and inclusive entrepreneurship.
- **Microfinance institutions** supporting small-scale social and community enterprises.



Financing Inclusivity

Financing is **explicitly targeted** at:

- **Women and youth**
- **Rural communities**
- **Informal and micro-entrepreneurs**

However, access remains uneven, particularly outside urban centres.



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

The term “social innovation” is **not widely used in public discourse**. Media and policy discussions focus instead on **entrepreneurship, youth employment, digital innovation, and community development**.



Research

Academic research on social innovation is **limited**. Relevant work is embedded within broader studies on:

- Development economics
- Social entrepreneurship
- Local governance and community development

Research is primarily produced by universities and international organisations.



Education & Human Capital

There are **no formal degree programs** dedicated specifically to social innovation. Social entrepreneurship and innovation topics are integrated into:

- Business and management programs
- NGO- and donor-supported training initiatives for youth entrepreneurs

No data exist on the proportion of graduates receiving social-innovation-related credentials.



Entrepreneurship



Business Environment

Senegal ranked in the lower-middle tier globally, reflecting regulatory and infrastructure constraints.



Innovation Capacity

Senegal ranked ~100th globally, with strengths in human capital but weak innovation outputs.



Social entrepreneurship

High levels of necessity-driven and community-oriented entrepreneurship (GEM).



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

High importance of family and community support structures (World Values Survey).



Political participation

Moderate levels of electoral participation relative to regional peers.



Volunteering

Informal volunteering is common; formal volunteering rates are moderate (CAFWorld Giving Index).

CAFWorld Giving Index 2024



Sustainability

Senegal ranks in the lower half globally on the Environmental Performance Index, with climate vulnerability a major concern.

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024