

15 Sep 2025 -10:05

Young people speak out on the future of 'development cooperation'

On 19 September 2025, BeGlobal (Enabel's youth programme) and Je m'engage pour l'Afrique (JMA) are organising a youth debate on the future of 'development cooperation'. Young professionals, changemakers, experts and prominent speakers enter into the debate with, among others, climate activist Adelaïde Charlier, former prime minister Alexander De Croo, former EU top official Stefano Manservigi. Writer and historian David Van Reybrouck takes care of the evening's conclusions.

ENABEL, 147 RUE HAUTE, 1000 BRUSSELS

Program :

OPENING STATEMENT

- Jean VAN WETTER**
CEO of Enabel
- Ileana SANTOS**
Je m'engage pour l'Afrique Co-founder
- Stefano MANSERVIGI**
Chair of the Governing Board GCERF
- Alexander De Croo**
Former prime minister of Belgium

CONVERSATION 1
ODA- A reality distant from citizens. Is it worth supporting?

- Kalvin SOIRESE NJALL**
Member of Parliament, Brussels-Capital Region
- Holy RANAIVOZANANY**
Deputy Executive Director of the Africa Europe Foundation
- Ousmane SORO**
Former Reciprocity Volunteer, France Volontaires
- Adelaïde HIRWE**
Secretary General AU Youth Initiative
- Felipe BOSCH**
Executive Director Intergenerational Center for Global Action

CONVERSATION 2
International cooperation in crisis - Shifting resources or shifting paradigms?

- Zunera RANA**
Researcher
- Mouctar BAH**
President of Brussels
- Alice HUBENS**
Sustainable Procurement
- Emily WIGENS**
EU Director
- Sara KINSBERGEN**
Professor of Anthropology

The world is changing at a rapid pace. The geopolitical context and the balance of power are shifting. Crises follow in quick succession and traditional 'development cooperation' is increasingly put into question. Several countries have announced deep budget cuts (Belgium -25%, France -35%, UK -60%, Netherlands -66%) and USAID has been dismantled). These upheavals raise uncomfortable questions: Is 'development aid' still of our time? Can we pretend to 'develop' a country with our well-meaning projects? And what do young people think of this? How do they see the future of international cooperation and solidarity?

Two debate topics:

1. International cooperation: not my cup of tea?

What does international cooperation mean today? How did 'development aid' come about? Why in particular does it evoke scepticism from many? This discussion unravels myths and provides historical and political context.

2. International cooperation in crisis: adapt or reinvent?

What does the international cooperation of the future look like? What are the alternatives? This session explores new pathways for a credible international cooperation.

- Speakers: Jean Van Wetter, Ileana Santos, Alexander De Croo, Adelaïde Charlier, Balázs Németh, David Van Reybrouck
- Panelists: Calvin Soiresse Njall, Holy Ranaivozanany, Ousmane Soro, Adelaide Hirwe, Zunera Rana, Mouctar Bah, Alice Hubens,
- Moderators: Felipe Bosch, Sara Kinsbergen

The debate will take place at Enabel's in Brussels; it can be followed online too.

- When? - Friday 19 September 2025, from 5 pm to 9 pm
- Where? - Enabel, Rue Haute 147, 1000 Brussels, or online
- Languages: English and French (with simultaneous translation)

The full programme and the registration button can be found on this website:

<https://beglobal.enabel.be/2025/07/17/conversations-for-a-credible-future-rethinking-official-development-assistance/?lang=en>

For whom?

This event is open to all, but particularly targets young people. Students, young professionals, activists, entrepreneurs or curious citizens – everyone is welcome to join this important debate.

Organisation

Je m'engage pour l'Afrique (JMA - <https://www.jmafrique.org/>) is a non-political association that supports engaged citizens, project coordinators, association representatives and entrepreneurs to share their experiences, formulating policy proposals and actively participate in the public debate.

Practitioners' Network

This event is hosted by Enabel under the framework of the [Practitioners' Network](#) presidency, which Enabel shares with SIDA. The Practitioners' Network is the platform of European agencies for international cooperation.

BeGlobal – Enabel

BeGlobal is [Enabel's](#) youth programme: Through global citizenship education the programme fosters youth engagement for a more just and sustainable world.

For media information and press enquiries: Noémie Marquet - Communication officer BeGlobal (noemie.marquet@enabel.be)

Enabel
Rue Haute 147
1000 Brussels
Belgium
<https://www.enabel.be>

Guido Couck
Head of Communications
+32 486 35 00 75
+32 2 505 37 00
guido.couck@enabel.be