

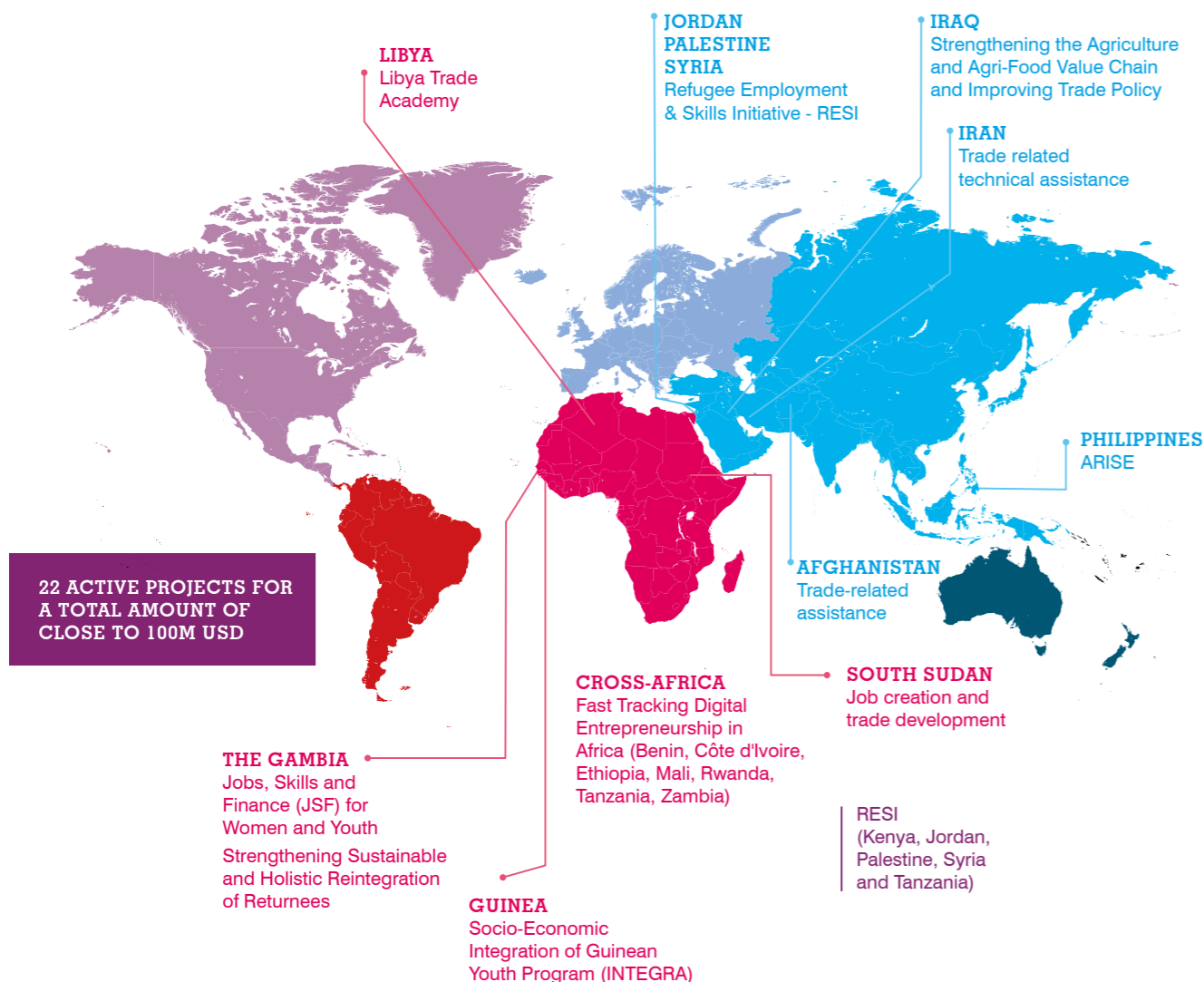
YOUTH AND TRADE PROGRAMME

Creating a competitive force for the future



“Helping young entrepreneurs internationalize and tap into the digital economy is key to robust growth. ITC is committed to connecting young entrepreneurs to sustainable trade.”

- Dorothy Tembo, Acting Executive Director, International Trade Centre



Ye! Chapters are led by youth entrepreneurs and aim to drive impact on the ground. We have 16 active Ye! Chapters worldwide.

Youth & Trade

In line with the joint mandate from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), ITC focuses on trade-related technical assistance, assisting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in developing economies to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development.

SMEs are at the nexus between youth and trade. With SMEs accounting for most jobs in developing countries, they are well placed to hire local youth and provide on-the-job training. In addition, MSMEs are often the product of youth taking the initiative to start their own business.

ITC's Youth and Trade Programme supports young people and youth-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The programme takes a strategic, market-led approach to building youth entrepreneurship and employability. The pillars of the Youth and Trade programme help youth voices to be heard, connect and train young people, and deliver results with country-based projects and an enhanced mainstreaming approach. The strategic objective for 2021 is to equip 100,000 young people with market-relevant skills.

Creating a competitive force for the future

Young people are central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both as beneficiaries and drivers. The Youth and Trade Programme contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education, by ensuring that more young people are equipped with the skills needed in today's market. In parallel, the programme contributes to SDG 8 on Decent Work and Inclusive Growth by engaging young people in trade and promoting youth entrepreneurship, generating quality jobs in decent work conditions, and increasing income. The mandate of ITC positions the programme as a connecting force between these two goals.



To support the achievement of these goals, ITC works with a wide range of partners, such as policy makers, technical and vocational training institutions (TVET), business support organizations, local employers and multinational players.



ITC's Youth Projects Toolkit

A holistic approach at three intervention levels

For Policy Makers

1. Developing youth-inclusive national strategies

Youth and Trade Roadmap

A Youth and Trade Roadmap provides policymakers an opportunity to identify rapidly growing sectors where youth can contribute positively. As part of ITC's range of trade strategy solutions, these specific roadmaps create a strategic framework that allows countries to attract young people to existing value chains and to identify emerging sectors with high potential for youth participation.

Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment (YES) Forum

In collaboration with other UN actors, the Youth and Trade Programme has hosted two editions of the YES Forum in 2018 (Dakar, Senegal) and 2019 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia). At the 2019 edition of the YES Forum, the YES Declaration for Africa was adopted. Acknowledged by the African Union and the AU Youth Envoy, the Declaration calls for full and productive employment and decent work for all in Africa. It recognizes young people as active agents of change and entrepreneurs as drivers of job creation. It also promotes international trade and investment for economic growth through the African Continental Free Trade Area.

2. Strengthening BSOs and entrepreneurship ecosystems

Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Report

The Youth Entrepreneurship Programme captures interactions among actors in a country's entrepreneurship ecosystem and identifies gaps or overlaps in support to young entrepreneurs. It captures the types and density of connections between actors, identifies gaps in services, and provides an action plan for recommendations for strengthening the ecosystem as a whole.

Benchmarking tool for TVETs, incubators, accelerators, tech hubs and innovation labs

ITC's Benchmarking Tool is a practical tool to quantify, measure and assess the efficiency, effectiveness, cost and risk of institutional practices and processes. The model uses a structured and result-oriented approach to help identify strengths and weaknesses as a first step towards improvement. This tool initially used for Trade promotion organizations has been adapted to TVETs, incubators, accelerators, tech hubs and innovation labs.

Ye! Boost Programme

The Ye! boost programme supports youth-owned MSMEs in partnership with a local BSO, with tailored services specific to their needs and presence on international markets. This programme is also delivered by trainers, advisers and coaches and is connected to the Ye! community platform (see on page 6).

Training for youth-led institutions

The Youth and Trade programme offers training for youth-led institutions that introduce strategic thinking for the alignment of institutional strategy, unique value proposition and services provision. Training participants are equipped with the tools to adapt their service portfolio to their strategic goals, adding or re-designing services to offer a more coherent set of services to young entrepreneurs. These trainings are targeted to managers from incubators, accelerators, tech hubs and innovation labs.

For Business Support Organisations – BSOs

Self-employed Youth and Young Entrepreneurs

3. Upskilling youth to create more and better businesses

Skills for Youth Employment (SkYE) Fund

The Skills for Youth Employment Fund is a results-based competitive funding approach that aims to ease the transition from skills training programmes to the world of work. To obtain support through the fund, training programmes must target identified skill shortages that lead to work or to the establishment of small viable businesses.

Access to Finance Solutions

ITC offers tailored access to finance solutions to youth-owned MSMEs at different growth stages. The Mini-Grant Scheme offers in-kind contributions, coupled with financial literacy trainings, to support the growth of micro entrepreneurs. The Mini-Loan Scheme unlocks private sector funds at better-than-market rates by de-risking loans to young entrepreneurs. To connect more advanced businesses with investors, ITC supports angels investors networks to grow and professionalize their operations. This phased approach allows entrepreneurs to grow their business and and prepare to seek commercial financial products.

Entrepreneurship Trainings

The e-learning course package for young entrepreneurs available through ITC SME Trade Academy introduces a range of international business concepts and builds their capacity to trade. The knowledge gained will assist young entrepreneurs to consider, assess, and plan the expansion of their business across borders.

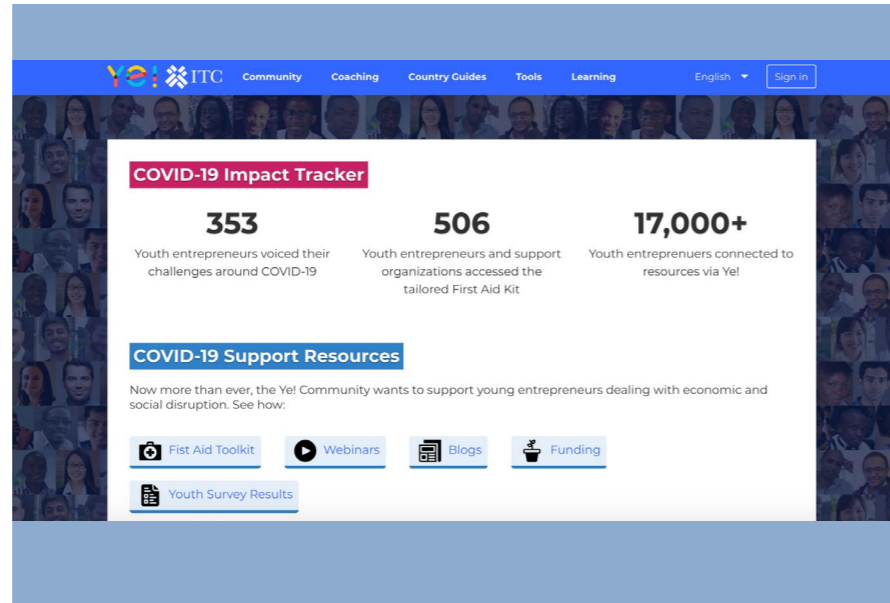
Guide on Mainstreaming Sustainable and Inclusive Trade

The guide offers a one-stop approach for project managers to consistently embed youth, gender, green growth and social responsibility aspects at the heart of all ITC projects. By mainstreaming youth participation and engagement, ITC projects can help to develop skills and foster entrepreneurship to create more and better jobs for youth.



The Ye! Community

The Ye! Community is an online community of more than 17,000 young entrepreneurs between 15 and 35 years old. Ye! connects young entrepreneurs around the world and links them to various tools, resources and opportunities to support the growth of their startups. The Ye! Community was initiated by Child and Youth Finance International, is now powered by ITC and was endorsed by the G20 Global Partnership for Inclusion (GPFI). It includes coaching, country guides, and events to support youth enterprises. Ye! aims to promote and support youth entrepreneurship and self-employment in order to stimulate job creation, enhance the employability of youth, and systemically reduce youth unemployment.



Partnership Highlights

Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth

Decent Jobs for Youth is a global initiative to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This initiative brings together the resources and expertise of diverse partners, including governments, social partners, the UN System, youth and civil society, and the private sector to maximize the positive impact of investments into youth employment. ITC's Youth and Trade Programme is the focal point for the Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment thematic area under the initiative.

Accelerate2030

Accelerate2030 is an Impact Hub initiative to scale the impact of entrepreneurs internationally to achieve social and environmental change that contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. ITC's Youth and Trade Programme has been an active supporter of Accelerate2030 since the launch of the programme in 2016. One of the highlights of the partnership is the members' participation in ITC's World Export Development Forum (WEDF) Young Entrepreneurs Pitching Competition. In 2019, the Youth and Trade Programme trained Accelerate2030 national finalists to support their internationalization.

Ye! offers 6 pillars of direct support:



ENTREPRENEUR COMMUNITY

Connecting young entrepreneurs online to peer support, knowledge exchange, mentors, e-learning tools, technical assistance and networks.



COACHING COMMUNITY

Linking young entrepreneurs with experienced professionals for one-on-one support. Access to coaches is available to all Ye! community members. Coaches have experience spanning a multitude of sectors and professional experiences.



CAPACITY BUILDING EVENTS

Providing an opportunity for networking, funding, and education, through trainings, and pitch events.



LOCAL CHAPTERS

Providing localized support systems promoting Ye!, by tailoring it to the needs of entrepreneurs locally. Chapters are led by a local ambassador, a Ye! Community member who is active in the local entrepreneurship ecosystem.



COUNTRY GUIDES/TOOLS

Offering practical, step-by-step guides for young entrepreneurs, including information on legal and accounting matters. Tools include useful software accessible to SME owners.



ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

Working with national authorities and business support organizations to build a strong institutional framework. This includes building roadmaps for youth employment and entrepreneurship and building youth friendly business environments.

Fonds Pierre Castel

This partnership is focusing on supporting young entrepreneurs from the Pierre Castel Prize by exposing them to ITC's online training materials but also by offering them access to the content from the YE! community. It is also envisaged to establish linkages between the young beneficiaries of ITC projects and subsidiaries of the Castel group, whether for coaching or support to scale their business.

UEFA Foundation - Kick for Trade

This football for development project embraces sport as a means to boost youth employability and to build transferable skills. In collaboration with the UEFA Foundation for Children the Kick for Trade partnership focuses on country-based approaches in Guinea and The Gambia in collaboration with local incubators, youth associations and youth centers. As part of the partnership, the Kick For Trade Life-Skills Curriculum is an interactive guide for coaches that uses the power of football to support youth in developing key life-skills.



ITC Youth-related Projects

Socio-Economic Integration of Guinean Youth Program (INTEGRA)

The INTEGRA Program creates 15,000 sustainable economic opportunities for the growth of businesses and entrepreneurship for Guinean youth. The program aims to prevent and limit irregular migration and support socio-economic reintegration of returning migrants, building youth skills for employment and innovation in rural areas.

Libya Trade Academy

The Libyan Trade Academy (LIBUS) benefits 5000 youth by providing 100 hours of business education to make a tangible difference in the ability of a young entrepreneur to establish a business and to operate it successfully. It improves access to finance for young entrepreneurs and strengthens the Libyan business environment through national interventions.

Afghanistan: Trade-related assistance

This project facilitates the integration of 300 youth in economic activities through entrepreneurship, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan. It builds the institutional capacity of the Start-ups and Emerging Entrepreneurs Network in support of young agripreneurship in the saffron sector.

Refugee Employment & Skills Initiative (RESI)

RESI deploys innovative ways to address sustainable livelihoods development. The initiative promotes the development of commercially valuable skills and market-linkages for refugees and host communities, with a special emphasis on youth, while supporting MSMEs to grow and create value. RESI operates in Kenya, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Tanzania and aims to increase income generation and job creation opportunities for refugees and their hosts, contributing to self-reliance and resilience.

Youth Empowerment Project (YEP)

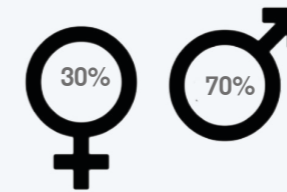
YEP aims to contribute to the economic development of The Gambia by improving the employability of youth, especially that of returning migrants. The project takes a market-led approach to create employment opportunities and upskilling, with a focus on vocational training and the creation and internationalization of micro and small-sized enterprises. Moreover, the project coordinates the raising awareness campaign "Tekki Fii - Make it in The Gambia" that aims to inform youth about ongoing opportunities in the country.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS DURING COVID-19

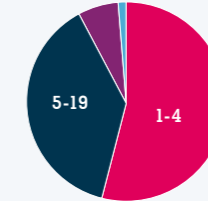
A survey from April to June 2020

RESPONDENTS YOUTH BUSINESS PROFILE

GENDER OF FOUNDER/OWNER



NUMBER OF FULL TIME EMPLOYEES



TOP 3 SECTORS

- Agriculture
- Information Technology
- Agri-processing

HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR BUSINESS?

- Decline in sales to consumers and businesses
- Temporary shutdown
- Employee absences

WHICH COPING STRATEGIES DID YOU ADOPT?

- Temporarily reduced employment for all or some employees
- Telework
- Increased comms and marketing
- Online Sales

WHICH TYPE OF SUPPORT HAS BEEN THE MOST HELPFUL?

- Access to finance
- Market information
- Training
- Information about government support

Transport restrictions and quarantine measures impede access to inputs needed by our businesses (i.e. interruptions to fertiliser production).

Social distancing requirements and absenteeism are increasing costs and reducing production capacity, even as consumer demand increases. On the field, our workers are assigned tasks in smaller groups and some shift work has been introduced.

Andre Serge Mousseni
CEO & Founder, Etablissements PSM Cameroon



Running a business during COVID is very challenging in general. But the most challenging part was ensuring that the staff was getting paid monthly, even when we were not able to work due to school closures.

The strategy we adopted in response was going online. This was especially inspired by the increase in technology usage for both work and education during the pandemic. We are now in the process of delivering our classes online.

Maresha Beniam
Founder, OmniTech Ethiopia



Siyabuddy from South Africa is announced as the winner of WEDF 2019 Young Social Entrepreneurs pitching competition

“With the help of the YEP project, ITC and our mentors, I can now call myself a certified internet marketer and an expert who can work globally online. My journey with my freelancing career is a fulfilled dream as I was always striving to be self-employed.”

Waka Sagne
Freelancer in Digital Marketing,
The Gambia



“I believe that being a Ye! Ambassador and working with ITC opens doors for me to become involved in policy advocacy for entrepreneurship in Botswana and in Africa. My ambition is to advise the government and private sector on entrepreneurship and agro-business policies, and I believe the experience with Ye and ITC will assist in my pursuit for these career ambitions.”

Neo Mosimane
Co-Founder, Romantic Coffee, Botswana & Ye! Ambassador
Botswana



For more information,
please contact:

Youth and Trade Programme
International Trade Centre
T: + 41 22 730 0111
E: youthandtrade@intracen.org
<http://www.intracen.org/youth/>

Division of Enterprises and Institutions
Street Address:
International Trade Centre
54-56, rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal Address:
International Trade Centre
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

© International Trade Centre 2019

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of
the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

