In this second edition of the Youth and Trade newsletter, we are sharing with you updates on the pilot trade accelerator project in Morocco, details on the methodology to integrate youth into ITC’s trade strategies initiatives, and we are providing you with highlights from our recent partnerships efforts. We are also sharing with you an update on our fundraising efforts and presenting the new flyers designed to support our communication on the Youth and Trade Programme.

We are also pleased to report that the Youth and Trade programme together with ITC’s Innovation Lab team will be taking on board the runners-up of the Tech Challenge from the Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum 2015, to benefit from a customized trade acceleration process.

We would also like to report on the introduction of a new “B2I” component to the Youth and Trade programme as it rolls out in Morocco with our first batch of entrepreneurs: the B2I events (Business to Investors), or “Pitch to Impact Investors” events will become an integral part of the programme, focused on facilitating access to finance for young entrepreneurs.

Finally, a major highlight in our work on partnerships is ITC’s membership to the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth which aims to support the efforts in achieving the Global Goals in the area of youth employment through joint programming and implementation.

Bonne lecture!

David Cordobés, Youth and Trade Programme Manager

Project updates

Trade Accelerator in Morocco is accepting and processing applications from young entrepreneurs

The Trade Accelerator for young entrepreneurs is an innovative and sustainable model to foster the integration of youth-owned SMEs into international markets. The pilot phase of the Trade Accelerator is currently initiated in Morocco in partnership with the local host institution Association Marocaine des Exportateurs (ASMEX).

A local manager is now on board to undertake the promotional campaign, facilitate the selection of applicants and the daily operation of the accelerator.

Young entrepreneurs in Morocco interested in connecting to international markets are applying to participate in the Trade Accelerator and the selection process is underway with interviews conducted by the DBIS/EC team in charge of this project.

The launch of activities is set for the week of 7-11 December and will prepare participating enterprises to work in tandem with acceleration coaches. Following the workshop, participants will be asked to prepare and defend their export business project idea as the final level of selection.
Integrating Youth in Trade Strategies

ITC provides customizable strategy solutions for integrating trade into national development frameworks. In light of the urgent need to find solutions to growing youth unemployment around the world, ITC facilitates **Youth and Trade Roadmaps** to rapidly identify mechanisms with which to address the main constraints to trade competitiveness while also focusing on integrating youth into sectors and value chains that best leverage national comparative advantages. Roadmaps are typically developed in three months and assist policymakers, sector institutions and enterprises in determining the steps required to integrate youth as they build more competitive value chains both domestically and internationally.

The Export Strategy Section in ITC is currently evaluating potential pilot countries and developing project proposals towards the implementation of its range of strategy solutions focusing on Youth and Trade.

Accelerating the EmpowerIT team

The EmpowerIT team from Brazil, runners-up of the 2015 WVEF Tech Challenge, is offered a customized trade acceleration service by the Youth and Trade Programme and Innovation Lab.

The EmpowerIT team developed a digital platform to facilitate the buying and selling of products or services between businesswomen. The app includes features for direct chats, videos and profiles, and set out to use technology to reach entrepreneurs in rural areas.

They will be invited to take part in the E-Learning courses of the Youth and Trade programme starting in late October. Upon completing the online training, coaching services from a Brazil-based consultant will be offered to guide their business operations. They are also invited to take part in the next “Pitch to Impact Investors” event to be announced in early 2016, and will join the ITC delegation at the MC10 event in Kenya.

Introducing the “Pitch to Impact Investors” Event

The “Pitch to Impact Investors” is a new component of the Youth and Trade Programme to contribute to facilitating access to finance for young entrepreneurs. The pitching event is a dynamic platform for the selected young entrepreneurs to channel their energy, enthusiasm and innovative ideas into a business pitch and get feedback from impact investors and other stakeholders.

Connecting young entrepreneurs with impact investors through a pitching event during flagship events organized by either ITC or a relevant partner will ensure that young entrepreneurs benefiting from our programme are accompanied all the way to present their ideas to potential financial partners. These B2I (Business to Investors) events, could potentially become a new feature of ITC’s flagship initiatives, such as the World TPO or WEDF events.

Past Events

**DMD Breakfast Meeting on Youth**

At our last DMD Breakfast Meeting, the Youth and Trade Programme provided an update on recent activities and gathered perspectives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Child and Youth Finance International and Impact Hub Geneva in responding to the global youth employment challenge. The meeting also served as a platform to build networks and possibilities for future
partnership particularly with ILO and Child Youth Finance International with regard to joint fundraising activities and content development.

ITC celebrated the International Youth Day 2015 on August 12th

International Youth Day annually observed on 12 August brings youth issues to the attention of the international community. The theme for this year’s International Youth Day – civic engagement by young people – paid tribute to the role that youth play in social change.

ITC Youth and Trade Programme celebrated the International Youth Day 2015 through a twitter campaign showcasing the achievements and inspiring stories of young entrepreneurs from Thailand, Kenya, Qatar and Uruguay.

Read more on investing in youth in the Op-ed on Huffington Post from Arancha González, Executive Director of ITC

Partnerships and Fundraising

ITC joins the Task Team of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth

In October 2014, the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) highlighted decent jobs for youth as an issue deserving the Committee’s priority attention. The HLCP supported the establishment of a time-bound Inter-Agency Task Team, to develop and launch a Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. The Task Team is chaired by the ILO and its core members are: ITC (of course!), FAO, ITU, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNRWA, UN-WOMEN, UNWTO, WIPO, the World Bank Group and (ex officio) the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

The draft strategy of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth developed by the Task Team was endorsed by the HLCP and will be submitted to the next Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) meeting. The input provided by ITC Youth and Trade has been well received and integrated into the strategy document. The “linkages to global markets and investments to improve opportunities for young entrepreneurs” is identified as one of the potential thematic areas to be implemented with specific reference to the Youth and Trade Initiative.

Youth and Trade proposal to ILO Fund for Evaluation in Employment 2015 has been shortlisted

A proposal to develop a monitoring and evaluation methodology for the Trade Accelerator was submitted to ILO’s Fund for Evaluation in Employment 2015 and has been shortlisted for review. Colleagues from the Monitoring and Evaluation team represented ITC at an impact evaluation training in Cairo end October. The Youth and Trade team is now invited to take part in a training course on the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) Standard in ILO Turin campus.

The Fund for Evaluation in Employment is an initiative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) aimed at improving the effectiveness of employment and enterprise development interventions in the Middle East and North Africa. Through this call for proposals in 2015, the Fund offers technical assistance and seed funding up to US$650,000 for evaluation of youth employment programmes.

Exploring potential funding opportunity with World Bank Group's Umbrella Trust Fund for Jobs

ITC Youth and Trade will be applying to the upcoming second round of Call for Proposals of the Umbrella Trust Fund for Jobs together with the World Bank MENA Region office. The Fund aims to generate global knowledge and innovative solutions to help promote job creation, improve the
productivity and quality of jobs, and connect people to jobs. A specific funding window will be allocated to interventions on youth employment and entrepreneurship.

**Proposed Trade Accelerator for young Mauritian entrepreneurs**

As part of the “Strengthening Export Competitiveness for Good” project in Mauritius, the Youth and Trade programme was approached to implement the Trade Accelerator model with market and sector specificities to better target the opportunities in the EU market by young Mauritian entrepreneurs.

**Scaling up the Trade Accelerator in Morocco**

Expansion plans are in the pipeline for the Trade Accelerator in Morocco. In this scaling up stage, the Trade Accelerator objective would be to target 500 youth-owned SMEs as part of Morocco’s Plan national pour le Développement des Échanges Commerciaux (PDEC).

**Upcoming Events**

**Global Entrepreneurship Week 2015, November 16-22, 2015**

Global Entrepreneurship Week is the world’s largest entrepreneurship campaign inspiring people to explore their entrepreneurial ideas. Each year during one week in November, Global Entrepreneurship Week introduces people everywhere to the benefits of entrepreneurship through local, national and global activities and motivates them to unleash their talents and turn ideas into reality.

ITC Youth and Trade Programme is planning several activities to celebrate the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Week from launching the E-Learning course on “Taking the Entrepreneurship Route” to formalizing the partnership with Child and Youth Finance International.

**Resources (Special thanks to the Library team!)**

- Africa’s Young Entrepreneurs: Unlocking the Potential for a Brighter Future, 2015, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
- Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015: Scaling up investments in decent jobs for youth, International Labour Office
- Toward Solutions for Youth Employment: A 2015 Baseline Report
- Solutions for Youth Employment Strategic Plan 2015-2020, World Bank
- World Bank Group Youth Summit 2015: Crowd-Sourcing Solutions for Climate Change, November 16-17, 2015, IFC Auditorium, Washington, DC
- Youth at Work: Building Economic Opportunities for Young People in Africa, July 2015, The MasterCard Foundation
- Youth Statistics, The Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth

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