

# Information and Innovation Lab

## Curbing the African Migration Crisis through Job Creation

### CONTEXT

**The rate of formal job creation is by far insufficient to absorb the young and growing working age population.** By 2040, Africa will house the world's largest workforce, surpassing India and China. African labor markets create an average of 3 million wage-earning jobs annually, a number that falls significantly short of the 10 to 12 million youth entering the labor force each year.

**With few jobs and dim prospects for Africa's youth, thousands risk migrating across the Mediterranean daily** in search of better lives. In 2015, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for about 58% of total Mediterranean refugees to Italy alone. Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, Senegal, The Gambia, Sudan, and Eritrea account for the majority of refugees in Europe.

**Migration to Europe comes at a huge cost to the African Continent, the host countries and the migrants themselves.** While Africa loses valuable youth – an important asset for its future prosperity and economic transformation. The migrants have spent up to an estimated Euros 16 billion to reach Europe over the past decades, in hope for better future- an investment that can be channeled into building sustainable enterprises in their home countries.

**Hence, it is imperative to adopt a range of measures within Africa that will create productive employment and support entrepreneurship as a means to mitigate the “willingness” to migrate outside the continent.**

### CHALLENGE

The lack of an enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem and environment in much of Africa, and the consequential high youth unemployment, are the result of various interlinked causes.

On the demand side, an insufficient infrastructure, lack of supportive policies and lack of entrepreneurship support impede the creation of new enterprises and jobs. On the supply side, youth often do not have the skills sought by employers, despite increased access to education.

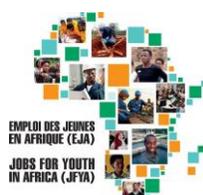
### OPPORTUNITIES

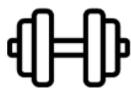
**Economic migrants can be an important asset to their home countries. They are often missed entrepreneurs,** who have made veritable investment decision (by borrowing and/or using some seed capital) to embark into often perilous journey while expecting a high return. Offering opportunities targeted at this demography, will cultivate their entrepreneurship potentials and help them make better investment decisions in their own country.

**Also, channeling diaspora investments to support entrepreneurship, is another area of opportunity.** Once settled, migrants often look at their home countries as potential investment destination. However, they often lack the appropriate conduit to invest in their countries. Hence providing targeted support and necessary guidance to these group, can enable them contribute positively to their country's entrepreneurship ecosystem. This presents an effective strategy in the current context.

### OUR PROPOSAL - INNOVATION LAB

"The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab will directly address youth unemployment and support entrepreneurship to tackle one of the root causes of migration"



**S**

### Strengthen Capacity

- Cultivate entrepreneurial skills development in youth.
- Provide access to entrepreneurship training, workshops, and conferences

**K**

### Knowledge Sharing

- Facilitate access to: peer to peer learning, mentorships, best practice sharing workshops and conferences
- Research work

**I**

### Innovation & Incubation

- Incubate innovative businesses and accelerate their growth
- Host Private Sector Challenge
- Provide Innovation grants

**L**

### Linkage Creation

- Create connection across stakeholders. These includes: first time fund managers, accelerators, incubators and innovative SME's

**L**

### Leverage Partnerships

- Build partnerships with global and local organizations, youth groups, Angel networks, etc. to support entrepreneurship ecosystem

## LAB OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Lab is to support the youth employment and entrepreneurship ecosystems by incubating and piloting promising new entrepreneurship models and supporting entrepreneurs as well as their local entrepreneurship ecosystems. The Lab will also provide knowledge resources to enhance the skills of youth, address mismatches between employees and employers, and provide resources to employers that should allow them to grow their businesses.

Specifically, the Lab looks to:

1. Enhance the knowledge base on effective youth employment and entrepreneurship interventions across the continent.
2. Incubate new interventions and provide financial and technical assistance to emerging innovations that expand youth employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Support innovative enterprises through business development services, and facilitate access to networks, linkages and partners that will enhance their success and allow them to grow their businesses in their home markets and/or in other African & European markets.
4. Strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem that is a prerequisite for the success of entrepreneur.
5. Facilitate and support local tools and mechanisms that address employer-employee skill mismatches (e.g. supporting student traineeship mechanisms, supporting entrepreneurship education in vocational training schools, etc.)

## LAB APPROACH

Using an approach called "SKILL", the lab will deliver strategic interventions, as follows:

- **Strengthen Capacity:** The Lab will strengthen entrepreneurship capacity and promote innovation across youth, Angel investors, incubators and accelerators. Map and strengthen local entrepreneurship ecosystems and networks.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The Lab will facilitate peer to peer learning, and best practices sharing on entrepreneurship and skills development. It will host and share focused training materials and best practices including: policy approaches.
- **Incubate Innovative Business Ideas:** The Lab will identify, support and accelerate market-based solutions related to employment and entrepreneurship, such as mentorship and traineeship approaches
- **Linkage Creation and Leveraging Partnerships:** The Lab will leverage both internal and external partnerships to deliver programmatic interventions that will connect SME's to technical and financial assistance. Specifically, it will link innovative/ high

"Across all these dimensions, the lab would attempt at engaging as much as possible the African diaspora as part of the solution, ranging from the promotion of linkages with diaspora organizations, knowledge sharing and facilitate investment and return of African diaspora to be an active player of the future of the continent"

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