



Amplifying Youth Voices in Policy Processes.

Identifying Best Practices and Structures for African Youth
Business Associations.

Applied Research Project by:

Adwoa Aboah, Marco Cereghetti, Youqing Lin



Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported and contributed to the successful completion of this project in partnership with the International Trade Centre as a part of the Applied Research Project at the Graduate Institute of Geneva. Without your invaluable input, guidance, as well as encouragement, this endeavour would not have been possible.

First and foremost, we would like to express great thanks to our partner organisation, the International Trade Centre, for providing us with the opportunity to work on this important and frontier topic and project. We are immensely thankful to Ms. Julia Zietemann and Ms. Milena Niehaus whose expertise, unwavering support and input have been vital throughout the project. We are also greatly thankful to all experts from the ITC team who have devoted their time as well as unique insights in our interviews and feedback on our drafts. Moreover, we are grateful for their references to other interviewees which have been crucial and supportive to the successful completion of this project.

We would also like to express our highest gratitude to our interviewees, all youth business associations and their members who have devoted years to elevating their voices in policymaking. Although we are not able to address their names due to anonymity, we would like to acknowledge that what we have seen in your vision, work, and advocacy are not only crucial and valuable to the project but also to the future of all youth.

Finally, we would like to extend our great thanks to the Graduate Institute of Geneva for creating the opportunity to collaborate with ITC and to engage with experts, youth business associations, and all people involved in the project. We would especially like to give thanks to our supervisor Dr. Valerio Simoni, and teaching assistant, Ms. Idil Yildiz, who have actively provided us with feedback, advice, and encouragement throughout this process.

To everyone who has played a role, no matter how big or small, in the completion of this project, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude. Your contributions have been important as part of this rewarding journey.

Abstract

Meaningful inclusion of youth in economic and policy domains can act as a driving force for inclusive and sustainable development. However, their voices are all often marginalised and disregarded in policy processes. In light of the recently enacted African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which promises to bring considerable economic and social benefits, the inclusion of youth becomes even more crucial as they represent the continent's future.

This study explores effective strategies for elevating the voices of young African people in trade-related policy processes, focusing specifically on youth business associations (YBAs), organisations that play a vital role in supporting and representing the interests of young professionals and entrepreneurs. By mapping 41 YBAs across Africa and employing surveys and interviews, this study identifies the barriers that prevent their integration into policy processes, as well as the practices and structures that facilitate it. The identified barriers are economic, social, and institutional in nature, including bureaucratic systems which limit access to policymakers, limited resources, lack of coordination across youth constituencies, and lack of technical know-how to the general societal disregard for youth voices in policy-making institutions.

The research reveals and recommends best practices and strategies in the domains of effective organisational structures, social media practices, networking, collaboration, and specific tactics to aid African YBAs in effectively engaging in policy processes. The best organisational structures include having a focal point, a clear division of labour, and a division of regional and continental structures. Social media is identified as one of the most effective, accessible, and cost-friendly ways for YBAs to raise their online presence and improve their advocacy work. To enhance the capacity of engaging with policymakers, strategies should be utilised in whom, when, and how to engage throughout the advocacy and lobbying process. Lastly, the study illustrates the importance of personal networks and ways to expand them, as well as the necessity of collaboration among YBA.

By utilising the AfCFTA as a case study and a motivating factor, this report contributes to the ongoing discourse on youth empowerment, ultimately providing recommendations to YBAs, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the AfCFTA Secretariat, drawing upon insights from the identified barriers and best practices. By doing so, this study seeks to pave the way for a more inclusive and youth-centred approach to trade-related policy making in Africa.

Table of Contents

- List of Figures..... 5
- List of Tables 5
- List of Acronyms and Abbreviations 5
- 1. Introduction 6
- 2. Methodology..... 7
- 3. Youth in Policy Making..... 10
- 4. The AfCFTA..... 12
 - 4.1 Background 13
 - 4.2 The Agreement 14
 - 4.3 Expected Impact..... 15
 - 4.4 African Youth and the AfCFTA..... 16
- 5. Theoretical Framework:..... 18
 - 5.1 Organisational structure. 18
 - 5.2 Advocacy and lobbying practices 20
- 6. Mapping of Youth Business Associations..... 21
- 7. Barriers for African Youth in Policy Making 26
- 8. Analysis: Best Practices, Structures, and Strategies 28
 - 8.1 Structure 28
 - 8.2 Social Media 30
 - 8.3 Engagement of Policy makers 31
 - 8.4 Network 33
 - 8.5 Collaboration..... 34
- 9. Recommendations..... 35
- 10. Conclusion 41
- Bibliography 43
- Appendix..... 47
 - Appendix 1 - Selected Economic Indicators 47
 - Appendix 2 - Selected Youth Indicators 48
 - Appendix 3 - Interview Questions YBA 48
 - Appendix 4 - Interview Questions Experts..... 51
 - Appendix 5 - Survey 55
 - Appendix 6 - Survey flyer 60

List of Figures

Figure 1: Ladder of Participation.....11
Figure 2: Geographical Scope of Associations..... 25

List of Tables

Table 1: Labour Division19
Table 2: Mapping of African Youth Business Association 22
Appendix 1: Selected Economic Indicators 47
Appendix 2: Selected Youth Indicators 48

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
ITC	International Trade Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
REC	Regional Economic Community
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WB	World Bank
YBA	Youth Business Association

1. Introduction

Throughout history, young people have played a pivotal role in driving societal change. With their dynamic perspectives, innovative thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit, they possess a unique ability to identify solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. However, despite their potential, the voices of young people are often marginalised and overlooked in policy discussions. For policy makers, the aim should be to design and implement policies that enhance outcomes for all members of society. This necessitates recognizing the importance of considering the diverse needs and perspectives of different groups, including the active inclusion and meaningful participation of youth in economic and policy domains. By integrating youth perspectives, policy makers can foster more inclusive and prosperous policies that benefit societies as a whole (Brown, 2022).

This research focuses specifically on youth participation in trade policy processes through the lens of youth business associations (YBAs). These organisations play a crucial role in supporting and representing the interests of young professionals and entrepreneurs. This study aims to answer the question: What are effective youth association structures and their specific characteristics for elevating youth voices and positioning them at the policy table? Youth associations, in particular, advance the political, social, cultural, or economic goals of their members (Council of Europe, 2018). As a

result, integrating youth business associations into policy making at all levels becomes essential to address the challenges faced by young people in business and develop policies that genuinely benefit the youth population of society.

While the United Nations defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years, this study will focus on business associations and entrepreneurship managed by young adults, using the ITC's definition which refers to youth entrepreneurship, hence covering people below 35 years of age (ITC, 2021). Subsequently, this report provides an analysis of best practices, structures, and platforms youth business associations can adopt to better engage in trade-related policy making and enhance their advocacy and lobbying efforts. The research objective is threefold: Firstly, to map African youth business associations elevating the needs of young entrepreneurs; Secondly, to identify existing barriers to youth inclusion in trade policy making; and thirdly to identify the optimal organisational structures, best practices, and platforms enabling effective engagement in the policy domain.

The study will use the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a case study, a newly formed agreement aiming to create one of the largest free trade areas in the world. The heart of this agreement's aims is to create inclusive, sustainable growth and development and social stability across the

continent. However, these aims cannot be fully realised without the active participation in trade governance policies of the largest population on the continent – the youth. By exploring the ongoing AfCFTA policy processes, the study identifies avenues in which African youth business associations can be further included and shape trade-related policies which contribute to economic growth and development.

Ultimately, this research project seeks to provide recommendations to youth business associations on how to strengthen association structures and improve advocacy and lobbying tactics to effectively participate in policy processes. Moreover, it also aims to recommend best practices to the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the AfCFTA Secretariat on how to support and amplify the voices of youth organisations within the AfCFTA’s policy discussions and implementations, ensuring meaningful youth inclusion.

The following chapter details the methodology used in this study as well as explores limitations of the research design. Chapter 3 will provide a general overview of youth in policy making, exploring why youth are not meaningfully included in policy making and trade policy discussions. Chapter 4 presents our case study, starting with a review of the economic situation African countries and youth face, followed by the AfCFTA’s objectives, current implementation stage as well as the expected impact of the agreement. This section

will also discuss the current efforts of youth inclusion in the implementation of the AfCFTA. Chapter 5 lays out our theoretical framework, reviewing literature on organisational structures as well as best practices for advocacy and lobbying. Chapter 6 provides a mapping of the YBAs identified for this study while Chapter 7 explores the barriers preventing meaningful engagement in policy processes identified from interviews with a sample of the mapped out African YBAs. Chapter 8 presents the study’s findings, exploring the key characteristics enabling YBAs to effectively advocate for their interests in trade policy processes. Then, in chapter 9 we provide recommendations to YBAs on how to effectively strengthen and support their associations structures as well as adequately advocate and lobby for youth interests in trade policy. This chapter also details recommendations to ITC and the AfCFTA secretariat on how to effectively include youth in trade policy processes. Chapter 10 reflects on the research and provides concluding thoughts.

2. Methodology

This study combines desk research, interviews, and surveys to map African youth business associations, identify barriers, and uncover best practices and structures that facilitate their integration into trade-related policy processes.

Desk Review: The desk research for this study draws from academic and grey literature, including reports, working papers, and policy papers. Academic papers offer valuable insights into organisational and political theory, as well as empirical economics. The grey literature, which consists of policy reports from intergovernmental and international organisations, provides practical and firsthand perspectives. Furthermore, the study incorporates data from the World Bank and UN organisations to enrich the analysis and present key topics using relevant economic indicators for African countries and youth. The information gathered through the desk research process later laid the basis for design of the interview and survey questions.

To identify and map the stakeholder and research subjects of this study, the desk review also included the compilation of a list with 41 African and 10 international youth business associations (YBA) (see chapter 6). A YBA is an organisation or a group that specifically focuses on representing and supporting the interests and needs of young entrepreneurs and business owners by providing resources and knowledge as well as through advocacy and community-building. Associations were included in this research based on four criteria. First, the associations should be non-profit and non-governmental. Second, the association is membership-based, and third is youth-led. Fourth, associations are only included when their work is aimed to

benefit youth which are active in business and young entrepreneurs.

The list was generated by a combination of purposive sampling through a conventional online search and snowball sampling (or referral chain). In-depth online research has been conducted by combining different keywords such as “youth business associations” or “young entrepreneur association” with location-indicating names such as (East-/West-/North-/ South-/Central-) Africa as well as all individual African country names. This process has been conducted in both English and French, to cover more linguistically distinct areas and expand our sample size. Additional associations have been found in the purposive sampling process by combing through youth association websites and social media posting history to find associations they have interacted and collaborated with in the past. Lastly, some associations have been added through the snowball sampling method, where interviewees were asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects.

Interviews: Over the course of four months (March to June), this study conducted 13 interviews where participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. The sample, which has been anonymized, includes respondents who can be classified into two groups. Firstly, five “policy makers”, experts on the inclusion of women and youth in trade and in the aims and implementation of the AfCFTA,

were interviewed. Secondly, eight more interviews with young entrepreneurs and representatives of youth business associations were held (seven African & one international). While most experts were selected through personal references, the entrepreneurs and associations were purposefully chosen from the generated list, based on their number of members and volunteers, the depth and relevance of partnerships as well as their online presence. The interviews were semi-structured with a blend of open-ended and closed-ended questions, generally starting with an introductory question, followed by 4-6 main questions. The main questions were thematically structured and open-ended, allowing for higher flexibility. If certain points identified in the theoretical framework were not addressed by the respondents, researchers would follow up with yes/no questions, enhancing the generalisability and validity of the information. Interview questions are attached in Appendix 3 & 4.

Survey: In addition to interviews, the study administered a survey to all 41 identified associations in our list. It consists of 46 questions which took approximately 8 minutes to complete (see Appendix 5). The survey intended to provide more general and quantifiable data to complement information obtained from interviews. Survey questions focused on mapping out YBAs which have participated in policy processes geographically; what type of policy processes they have been

involved in and their current organisational structures and practices. Surveys were sent along with an informational flyer (Appendix 6) to associations via their official email addresses as well as through social media outlets. After one month of administering the survey, only one association responded which rendered a quantitative analysis impossible. However, the sole respondent was later personally interviewed to enhance the overall quality of the analysis.

Limitations: Despite the thorough research process and the efforts to create a representative sample, the study has concerns over sampling bias which limits the validity of the research design. Although these biases are present in most qualitative research and are difficult to circumvent, it is important to address them.

Firstly, self-selection bias is almost impossible to avoid when interviews and surveys are conducted based on the willingness of YBAs. Associations who respond to survey and interview requests might share recognised and unrecognised characteristics, hence statistically differ from the non-responding group.

Secondly, as the sampling strategy in this study heavily relies on online research, only associations with at least one type of online presence, such as a website or social media have been contacted. This approach tends to underestimate YBAs which might have great impact on the ground and connect with policy processes personally, but do not have an

active online presence. However, online presence is a key aspect in advocacy, determining the level of involvement in policy processes, and is a best practice for associations (more in chapter 7 & 8). Hence, we suspect that the most effective associations, in terms of advocacy, will have an online presence and were therefore successfully identified in our online research.

Lastly, while the overall sample of interviews with YBA is geographically rather diverse, there is still a lack of representation with regard to languages and locations. Due to language barriers, countries with official languages, besides English and French, are underrepresented. For example, associations from Northern Africa, where Arabic is spoken predominantly, are only mapped if they have an English online presence. As none of the contracted North African associations responded to interview and survey requests, they have been omitted from the analysis. Thus the study's findings should be geographically generalised with care as not all African regions, linguistic and cultural spheres are featured equally.

3. Youth in Policy Making

Youth participation in policy-making processes is an action-oriented process involving young people in institutions, initiatives, and decisions, affording them control over resources that affect their lives

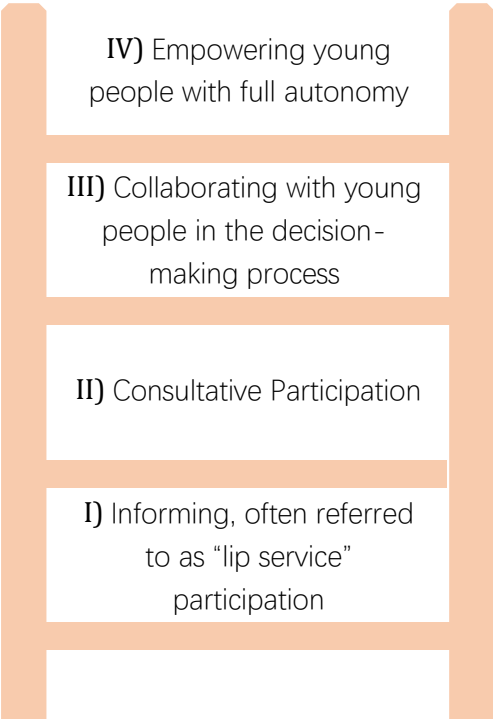
(OECD, 2017). Legally, the right of young people to express their views in matters affecting them is a fundamental right in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified international treaty in history. The Convention refers to participation as young people's i) right to freely express their views (Article 12); ii) freedom to seek, receive and impart information (Article 13); iii) freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (Article 14); and iv) freedom of association and peaceful assembly, (Article 15) (OHCHR, 1989). Furthermore, participation increases the ownership of end-product policies and initiatives for youth, which is an important factor for their successful implementation (OECD, 2011).

Participation is a process that occurs in different forms and at different levels. The "ladder of participation" classifies different intensities of youth participation and has strongly influenced scholars (Hart, 1992). This ladder identifies four levels of participation, as seen in Figure 1.

The lowest level of participation is "lip service" participation where young people are objectively informed of policies decided by adults after the decisions have been made which is often what we find within our societies when it comes to youth inclusion (United Nations, 2023). However, it is essential to further engage young people with full autonomy in each step of the policy cycle which consists of i) analysis of the situation; ii) policy

design and planning; iii) implementation; and iv) monitoring and evaluation (OECD, 2017).

Figure 1 – Ladder of Participation



Research suggests that young people learn about participation by actively doing it (Crowley & Moxon, 2017). However, young people face multiple barriers which are social, economic, and institutional in nature that prevent them from participating in the policy process. Firstly, prevailing societal attitudes and norms towards young people, particularly in the geographical context of this study, are often that they are troubled and troubling, which gives justification to "act upon them without their agreement" (Checkoway, 2011). These attitudes and norms deem the voices of young people as not valuable thus making institutions lack the will or knowledge to create mechanisms, rules and procedures which can effectively include young people in policy

processes (UNDP, 2015). International trade specifically, has stringent power dynamics and business networks based on age, gender, ethnicity and social class which then excludes youth at various levels of participation (Chidede & Bore, 2020). Secondly, economic bottlenecks, such as income inequality and financial constraints, can also be further limitations hindering participation and preventing youth from exercising their voices in policy discussions (OECD, 2017). Lastly, there can be conflicts with the formality of organisational cultures and their policy processes and procedures such as complex administrative and regulatory frameworks, which may not be apt for young people to engage with effectively and comfortably (OECD, 2017).

Successful youth participation also depends on the youth themselves and their capacities, purpose, resources, and expectations. Shortfalls in these areas add further challenges for youth to engage in decision-making processes such as barriers to coordination across youth constituencies, limited access to market and trade policy information in a timely manner, insufficient guidance and training opportunities and difficulties in navigating fragmented and complex decision-making systems (United Nations, 2023). Participation in policy making processes requires various levels of training in order to analyse situations effectively, design, plan and implement solutions as well as monitor and evaluate their outcomes. Trade

policy in particular, contains many technical information and jargon which requires expertise in order to understand and engage with efficiently. Thus, meaningful youth participation requires institutional support for both greater capacity development of youth associations' internal structures and the breakdown in the complexities of policy frameworks to create an enabling environment for diverse and meaningful youth participation.

Due to the above-mentioned constraints, youth have often not been represented in formal policy processes and implementation but have over the years participated, contributed, and even catalysed important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics and economic opportunities through civic participation (UNDP, 2016). This has been no different in trade policy processes despite the fact that youth are 1.6 times more likely to start a business than those above 35 years old (Brathwaite, 2021). Thus, in order to recognize and enforce the basic human rights of young people and longevity of trade policy impact, there needs to be meaningful structures and practices put in place to overcome the barriers youth face in participation in policy processes. In the context of trade negotiations, this can be achieved by including youth business associations with full autonomy across the policy cycle. To maximise this inclusion, youth associations need the adequate capacities, resources and structures in both their organisational structures and advocacy initiatives and strategies to

effectively lobby for youth interests. This research aims to analyse such association structures, best practices and initiatives being implemented by youth business associations. As the research will use the AfCFTA policy processes as a case study, we provide recommendations on how to strengthen the internal capacities and advocacy strategies of African youth business associations for effective participation in trade-related policy processes. We further provide recommendations to the AfCFTA on how to create an enabling institutional and operational framework which allows for the effective inclusion of youth within its policy processes, and to the ITC on how to aid African youth business associations in these endeavours.

4. The AfCFTA

On March 28th, 2018, the heads of 44 African States came together in Kigali, Rwanda, to sign a treaty, making the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) a reality. The newly formed AfCFTA creates one of the largest free trade areas in the world, spanning over 55 countries and connecting 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP of USD 3.4 trillion (World Bank, 2020), a milestone in intra-African cooperation. The hopes and expectations for this project are high, as it could provide a unique opportunity for the continent, fostering prosperity, reducing poverty, and sparking

economic development through regional trade. Especially for the growing number of youths, who continue to endure marginalisation and unemployment, could the AfCFTA unlock significant social and economic opportunities.

4.1 Background

Although being one of the largest markets in the world and home to 15% of the world's population, cross-border trade only plays a minor role in Africa so far. The continent accounts for a mere 2.3% of global exports and only 14% of all African exports are being made to other African countries (ITC, 2022). Reasons for this are, amongst other things, the widespread presence of tariffs and especially non-tariff barriers, which includes regulations, quotas, lengthy customs clearances as well as inadequate transportation infrastructure (Cadot & Gourdon, 2014).

Despite the presence of current regional trade agreements attempting to tackle these concerns, they are limited to specific regions and have created a convoluted system with different terms and rules. Today, the African Union recognises eight of these regional economic communities (REC), who although they represent distinct African regions, overlap each other, exacerbating the complexity of cross-border trade (Byiers et al., 2019). This “spaghetti bowl” effect only further warrants the need for a comprehensive, pan-African agreement.

Moreover, Africa's trade basket is highly undiversified, with 83% of African countries focusing on the export of primary goods. This sector is overall less productive, has a lower value-addition and creates fewer employment opportunities (UNCTAD, 2022; Hausmann et al., 2007; Anyanwu, 2013). Such an overreliance on commodities exports and the lack of sectoral diversification of African economies not only leaves them vulnerable to shocks but also poses a considerable drag on growth (Acemoglu & Zilibotti, 1997; Berg et al. 2012; McMillan et al., 2014). Under the current trade paradigm, primary goods are being exported to other continents where a majority of the intermediary and final production steps occur, skipping African value-addition in the process. This is exemplified by the African cocoa trade: while the continent accounts for around 75% of cocoa production however Africa is a net importer of chocolate (Obeng-Odoom, 2020). An overview of relevant economic indicators for African countries can be found in Appendix I.

With over 65% of the population below the age of 35, Africa is also the youngest continent in the world (YouLead, 2021). By 2030, it is furthermore expected that 40% of the global youth will be living in Africa (African Union, 2019). While this young labour force could provide a significant opportunity to yield substantial future economic and social gains, the demographic dividend needs yet to be reaped.

Young people are currently among the most economically marginalised groups, suffering from high unemployment rates, lack of decent jobs and access to quality education (ITC, 2021). Despite significant advancements in primary education over the past few decades, secondary school enrolment rates continue to remain low across Africa (Evans & Acosta, 2021). Additionally, the persistently low rates of youth literacy serve as an indicator of inadequate quality of education. This suggests that although access to learning has improved, the overall quality has not kept pace (Adeniran et al., 2020).

Unemployment is another daunting problem being faced by African youth across the continent. Several African countries have high youth unemployment rates - Eswatini at 50%, Botswana at 38%, Namibia at 41% and South Africa at 50% (World Bank, 2021). Currently, only 3 million formal jobs are created annually which does not absorb the 10 million to 12 million young people entering the workforce each year (ITC, 2021). As a result, Africa's youth are making large strides in entrepreneurship through the founding of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), however predominantly in the unregulated, informal sector. Effective policies are hence crucial for African countries to achieve sustainable economic and social development, and many believe the AfCFTA could play a substantial role in tackling these challenges. An overview of key figures concerning African youth can be found in Appendix 2.

4.2 The Agreement

The AfCFTA resulted from years of negotiation between African States, starting back in 2012 when the first agreement was conceived by the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of States and Government. In 2015, the first phase of negotiations was launched, focusing on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and a Protocol on Dispute Settlement (UNECA, 2023). Eventually, Phase I culminated in 2018 with the signing of the agreement in Kigali, making the AfCFTA a reality. Under the Agreement, state parties would have to progressively eliminate tariffs on 97% of tariff lines over an agreed period of time, depending on the country's level of economic development (UNECA, 2023). As of January 2023, 46 Member states have submitted their tariff offers while 36 have been technically verified.

The treaty set the institutional framework for the new free trade area, consisting of the AU assembly, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Senior Trade Officials, and the AfCFTA Secretariat. Within this framework, the AU assembly which consists of heads of States and Government acts as the highest decision-making organ, with the Council of Ministers below, being responsible for several mandates, such as the promotion of the agreement as well as ensuring the implementation and enforcement. The Committee of Senior Trade Officials reports to the Council of Ministers and is

tasked, among other things, with developing programs and action plans. Lastly, the AfCFTA Secretariat is the administrative body, coordinating the implementation and assisting the member states. Alongside this framework, eight general objectives have been defined by the assembly (African Union, 2018):

1. To create a single market for goods and services.
2. To liberalise tariffs in goods and services markets.
3. To support the movement of capital and persons whilst facilitating investments that build on State Parties and REC initiatives.
4. To lay the foundation for a Continental Customs Union.
5. To promote sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development considering gender equality and structural transformation.
6. To increase the competitiveness of State Parties both intra-continentially and globally.
7. To promote industrialization and diversification, regional value chain development, agricultural development, and food security.
8. To resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships of countries in RECs and expedite the regional and continental integration processes.

. As participating African states not only differ economically but also in prior policies and regulations, full implementation will take time and resources, as state parties need to translate the specified rules and obligations into domestic laws, regulations, institutions, and administrative practices (UNECA, 2023).

Furthermore, The AfCFTA Agreement is currently concluding its second phase of negotiations. It recently adopted protocols on Intellectual Property Rights, Investment, Competition Policy, and soon protocols on E-commerce as well as on Women and Youth in trade (ITC, 2021; IISD, 2023). Although the Agreement officially entered into force in 2019, trading under the AfCFTA did not immediately commence, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and still ongoing negotiations. Nevertheless, in October 2022, the AfCFTA Council of Ministers launched the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative (UNECA, 2023), a pilot project involving eight selected countries – Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia – which aims at facilitating commercially meaningful trade among state parties that have met the minimum requirements for trading under the Agreement.

4.3 Expected Impact

The AfCFTA aims to stimulate growth through trade liberalisation, diversify the continental value chains as well as provide ample employment, absorbing youth in the

labour force and harnessing the demographic dividend (Lungu, 2019). Through the removal of tariffs and other barriers, the private sector stands to unlock significant business opportunities, by tapping into bigger markets and reducing costs. The International Trade Centre (2022) estimates that intra-regional trade could increase the traded volume by more than €17 billion.

Furthermore, as intra-African trade is also focused more on trade in manufacturing and services, the AfCFTA could help countries move away from the current trade paradigm which is characterised by an over-reliance on primary goods export (Abrego et al. 2019; Obeng-Odoom, 2020). By diversifying the trade basket, Africa could shift towards more productive, value-adding sectors, reducing the dependence on commodity exports and promoting industrialization. The structural change resulting from a reallocation of factors towards high-productivity sectors, such as manufacturing, can then in turn lead to sustained economic growth and development (McMillan et al., 2014; de Vries et al. 2015; Busse et al., 2019).

In terms of employment, the increase in trade, economic growth and the shift towards more value-adding sectors could promise significant formal job creation in Africa, especially for youth (Anyawu, 2013; Baah-Boateng, 2016). In total, the World Bank (2020) estimates that, if implemented correctly, the AfCFTA has the potential to increase the

continent's income by 7 percent, as well as lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. They further expect an increase in employment in the manufacturing sector as well as an increase in wages, especially for unskilled workers and women.

Besides the expected economic impact, the AfCFTA will also hold considerable political ramifications. The agreement will form the most comprehensive framework to date, and not only represents a significant step towards more intra-African cooperation but will allow the continent to unify politically, making their voice louder and stronger on the global stage. While expected outcomes sound promising, for the agreement to succeed and create sustainable and inclusive prosperity, the needs and voices of different stakeholders must be taken into account. International trade not only generates winners but can also have adverse impacts on lives and livelihoods, hence the need for effective policies and protocols which meaningfully includes critical stakeholders, such as youth.

4.4 African Youth and the AfCFTA

Despite the potentially significant impacts the AfCFTA could have, awareness is generally low even though governments were conducting consultations on the different AfCFTA protocols for their national implementation strategies. A continental scoping study conducted in 2021 by YouLead revealed that of the 2,282 respondents, 69% of

youth had not heard about the AfCFTA (YouLead, 2021). Knowledge of the AfCFTA largely depended on leadership levels, economic interests, and sectors of work. This study also showed that, whereas African youth might have heard about the AfCFTA, they are not fully aware of how it functions and how they can take full advantage of the Agreement. The findings of the study also show an overwhelmingly large number of youths have not participated in AfCFTA-related processes so far even at the national level. Further inclusion of relevant representatives from youth associations in the committees negotiating on the different protocols could have had a larger impact in the sensitization of the goals of the AfCFTA to African youth through their membership base. Thus, it is the responsibility of policymakers to create space for the youth in negotiations in order to generate successful and long-lasting trade policy outcomes which are familiar and accessible to future generations.

Taking into consideration the findings from this study as well as civic organisation from various associations to promote the needs of women and youth into the AfCFTA, discussions from the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in February 2022, formulated the inclusion of a Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade in the AfCFTA Agreement (Trade Law Centre, 2022). This Protocol will form an integral part of the Agreement upon adoption and will be essential to address the constraints

and barriers women and youth face when trading across borders. It will pay attention to how these marginalised groups can enhance their access to broader markets, competitiveness in the domestic and international markets, and participation in regional value chains. Currently, negotiations of the Protocol have concluded, and the draft protocol will be considered by the Council of Ministers at their next meeting (AfCFTA Liaison Advisor and Trade Expert at ITC, personal communication 6th July, 2023).

Significant preparatory work has been conducted by the Secretariat, in collaboration with various development partners to develop the Protocol. This includes, among others, 26 National Consultations on Women in Trade, Regional Stakeholder Consultations for Women and Youth in Trade, and the Inaugural AfCFTA Women and Youth in Trade Conference held in Tanzania in September 2022 (Trade Law Centre, 2022). This preparatory work sought the inputs of various stakeholders on the issues the Protocol should address to enhance the participation and benefits of women and youth traders. Although this is a beneficial step for the successful implementation of the AfCFTA, further deliberate efforts at continental, regional and national levels need to be initiated to further engage the youth. This needs to go past the consultative stage and towards actively engaging youth business associations at the policy table. However, youth associations also need strong effective internal

structures and advocacy practices in order to meaningfully engage in these policy processes to ultimately benefit the African youth.

5. Theoretical framework:

The study investigates what theories suggest are the best characteristics, practices and platforms for YBAs to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy and lobbying in trade-related policies. A YBA is defined as effective, when they are able to engage policy makers on a national or international level, promoting the interests of their members through advocacy and lobbying. It is important to note that effectiveness in this research paper does not include how well associations provided other services besides advocacy to their members. Such omitted services include, for example, training and other capacity building efforts aimed at increasing the entrepreneurial skills of members.

However, the available literature focuses on an analysis of general non-profit and non-governmental organisational structures, rather than YBAs. The literature involves two major aspects, organisational structures and tactics. Firstly, which organisational structures can organisations establish to improve the functioning of their associations and to raise their capacity of engaging in policy processes and lobbying? Here, organisational structures refer to the design of the structure inside the association

which guarantees the achievement of organisational goals. Secondly, given the structures, what tactics and strategies can organisations adopt to promote policy advocacy? It is worth noting that since the literature does not focus on YBAs but organisations in general, it only provides a benchmark for YBAs to improve their organisational structures. In reality, the best-fit structure varies with the association's size, its focus of work, leadership and organisational culture, and the political and cultural context of the region.

5.1 Organisational structure.

Organisational structures are key elements in determining how an association interacts and engages with complex external environments including the political space (Child & Rodrigues, 2012). Non-profit and non-governmental organisations including youth business associations can establish the following structures to raise their general effectiveness to achieve their organisational goals. Effectiveness here is identified as the ability to participate in policy processes and advocate or lobby for specific aims and objectives within trade policy. It does not refer to the capacity of project designing and delivery or any other operations of the organisation.

Board of Directors. A board of directors can raise the effectiveness in policy advocacy by improving strategic planning, legal,

ethical, and financing oversight, evaluating, guiding, and supporting the leader, monitoring performance, fundraising, building community relations and outreach, as well as recruiting board members (Buse et al., 2016).

Leadership. Leadership styles, such as volunteerism and authoritarian leadership style or military-like culture, can bring an entirely different organisational climate (Metin, 2016). The leadership style can largely affect the division of labour and the approach that the organisation utilises to engage in policy advocacy considering innovation, risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome- or people- and team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability (Robbins et al., 2010). The soft side of structure construction might vary from association to association and whether and how they contribute to policy advocacy and lobbying for youth in trade policies requires interviews.

Advisory board. An advisory board is separate from the board of directors and has a specific function of providing advice and insights. It has no governing power or fiduciary responsibility (Nonprofit Advisory Boards, 2023). By recruiting politically connected

persons and appointing them as advisors, organisations can gain access to key decision-makers and policy processes (Barley, 2010).

General Assembly. The general assembly serves to formalise consultative arrangements by developing a committee structure based on a careful selection process. Reaching out to partners might be easier for youth business associations with committee members who have high reputations and titles in the fields (Smith & Shen, 1996).

Volunteers and Staff. Each association might have different combinations of volunteers and regular staff based on its size, field, and culture (Kushner et al., 1996). The choices of how volunteers or staff are utilised affect decision-making and influence distribution, and how an organisation interacts with its environment (Kushner et al., 1996). Two factors should be considered in the division of labour: firstly, whether the decisions are made centrally or locally; and secondly, whether the influence of the association is clustered or widely distributed. The two criteria categorise four types of organisations:

Table 1 – Labour Division

	Influence	
	Widely Distributed	Clustered
Volunteers	Grassroots	Institutional
Staff at Headquarters	Coordinating	Directorial

5.2 Advocacy and lobbying practices

The following are the suggested practices for associations to enhance their capacity in the process of policy advocacy and lobbying.

Research. Literature suggests that to prepare for effective lobbying, the key people in policy processes should be researched, identifying their interests, affiliations, and positions of power, in order for the networking to be more targeted (Institute for Governance, 2020). Research on the policy cycle is also crucial to identify windows of opportunities when policies are more likely to change (Institute for Governance, 2020). Furthermore, maintaining focus on one or a limited field of expertise is more realistic for organisations with limited resources (Kimberlin, 2010). Throughout the process of researching, a lobbying and advocacy action plan with concrete methodology, division of labour, and resource allocation can be drafted (Sloot, Gaanderse & Gehrels, 2010).

Networking. Networking plays a vital role in policy advocacy and lobbying in terms of getting access to key external decision-makers, allowing an organisation to become part of the policy conversation (Child & Rodrigues, 2012). Full support to the people holding the duty of network from either the staff, focal group in the association or the organisational leader can facilitate the networking to a great extent,

especially when financial and personnel resources are available (Kimberlin, 2010).

Focal point. An advocacy working group, or a focal point can be established within the association (Whiting, 2016). Its members hold the responsibility of reaching out and forming partnerships to participate in policy processes at national, regional and international levels. It is a key organisational staffing tool to make associations have a consistent and continuous effort in policy advocacy and lobbying.

Coalition. If individual associations lack negotiation power, an advocacy coalition, as first established by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1990), could be a solution. In an advocacy coalition, a group of organisations who share a common goal work together to create a larger pool of resources and through this, lessen the burden on individual organisations (Weible et al., 2011).

Participating in diverse lobbying-related activities. Both formal negotiations and participation in non-formal policy processes are useful to raise regional representation and thus expand policy advocacy and lobbying opportunities. It is recommended that advocacy and lobbying be conducted through face-to-face meetings rather than online interactions (Schipporeit, 2021). Moreover, associations can constantly improve their legitimacy, capacity, and networks by participating in such non-formal

platforms, bootcamps, conferences and workshops.

Maintaining momentum and evaluation. After a formal meeting, maintaining momentum with key persons in the partnership through private meetings, working visits or following up will strengthen partner relationships and increase chances of uplifting the youth agenda (Schipporeit, 2021). Monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up of advocacy and lobbying activities post-events are also necessary. The organisation holds the duty of keeping track of the results and impacts of lobbying and advocacy efforts and allowing those strategies to be readjusted according to changes in the internal and external environment (Sloot, Gaanderse & Gehrels, 2010).

6. Mapping of Youth Business Associations

Using purposive and snowball sampling strategies, this study has successfully identified 41 youth business associations across Africa. Among these associations, 12 have a pan-African or continental scope, engaging in activities that span across multiple African countries. It is important to note that while some of these pan-African associations aim to represent youth across countries, their presence and influence in each country vary significantly. Certain associations have a physical presence, such as an office or a

representative, while others coordinate their activities from a centralised location.

The remaining 29 associations are focused on a single country and are distributed across all five geographical regions of Africa, with a slight majority being located in West Africa. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the geographical scope of the associations, while a comprehensive overview of all identified YBAs, including their description, can be found in Table 1.

All the listed organisations have been contacted and requested to complete the survey, and approximately half of them have been approached for an interview. **Ultimately 7 African and one non-African association** have been interviewed. The findings collected through these research methods will be presented in the following two chapters, shedding light on the barriers, best practices, and strategies identified during this study.

Table 2 - Mapping of African Youth Business Association

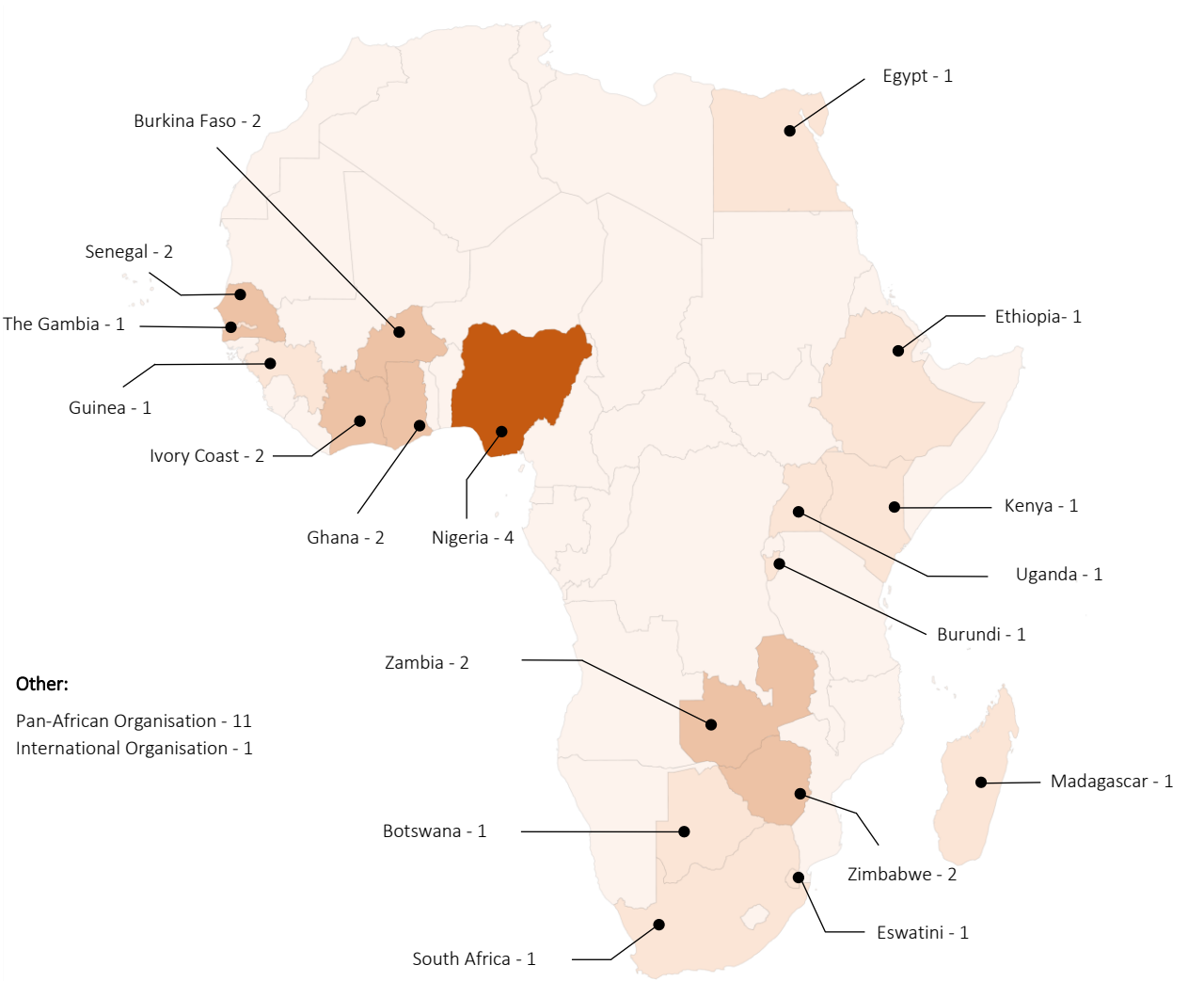
Association	Scope	Description
AfCFTA Young Entrepreneurs Federation	Pan-African	AfYEF is a league of youth entrepreneurship organizations from across the African continent that serves as a representative voice for young entrepreneurs on AfCFTA.
Africa Youth Farmers Association	Ghana	Africa Youth Farmers Association is a non-profit Organization gathering youthful farmers in Africa under one umbrella, focusing on training, funding & research.
Africa's Young Entrepreneurs Organization (AYE)	Pan-African	AYE is committed to empowering young entrepreneurs across Africa by creating platforms that facilitate intra-trade on the continent.
Afrikan Youth Business Council (AfYBC)	Pan-African	A continental apex body for youth-led private sector entities, institutions & associations in Africa advocating for a youth friendly business policy environment in general and making AfCFTA Promises to African youth a reality.
Association des Jeunes Engagés pour le Développement de Point Rond (AJEDP)	Senegal	Association of young people committed to the sustainable development of their community and land
Association des Jeunes Entrepreneurs au Burkina en Agribusiness	Burkina Faso	An association that brings together young people from all professions and sectors with a particular interest in creating, maintaining, and promoting the agribusiness value chain in Burkina Faso.
Association des Jeunes Entrepreneurs de Côte d'Ivoire (AJECI)	Côte d'Ivoire	AJECI aims to support all young entrepreneurs and project leaders in achieving their goals. In partnership with an incubator, AJECI'Incub aims to incubate innovative projects by young entrepreneurs.
Association des Jeunes Entrepreneurs Sénégalais JES	Senegal	JES is an association of young Senegalese entrepreneurs.
Association of African Entrepreneurs	Pan-African	AAE is a business organization in the African region, aimed at providing a strong united entity for entrepreneurs to address challenges.
Association Professionnelle des Jeunes Entrepreneurs du Faso - APJEF	Burkina Faso	Association aiming to defend the interests of young entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso and promote entrepreneurship.
BANA MBOKA BUSINESS CLUB	Congo, Dem. Rep.	An association with the mission to identify, bring together and connect young local entrepreneurs and to train the aspiring entrepreneurs.
The Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE)	African Commonwealth	CAYE works to link, engage and support young entrepreneurs to build sustainable and competitive businesses by driving trade, advocating for reforms, improving the business ecosystem, and enhancing the entrepreneurship culture in Commonwealth Africa.
Club Des Jeunes Entrepreneurs Africains (CAJE)	Pan-African	CAJE is an organisation whose main mission is to train, raise awareness, mentor, support, equip, inspire and guide young Africans towards entrepreneurship so that they can become financially independent and, at the same time, make Africa a better place through innovative projects.

Club Entrepreneurs Etudiants du Rendez-vous des Entrepreneurs (CEERE)	Madagascar	CEERE is an association of young entrepreneurs, project leaders and students who want to promote entrepreneurship in Madagascar in order to contribute to the country's economic development.
COYACA AfCFTA Youth Council	Pan-African	COYACA is a youth-led body initiated by young people from the continent of Africa, under guidance and stewardship of YouLead Africa, the MSTCDC and GIZ African Union Office with a mission to mobilize & empower young people to participate in Intra-African Trade.
Egyptian Junior Business Association (EJB)	Egypt	EJB was established in 1999 with the mission to be the leading business association enhancing business environment and positively impacting the Egyptian society towards sustainable development.
Ethiopian Youth Entrepreneurs Association (EYE-A)	Ethiopia	EYE-A was founded to address the challenges facing young Ethiopian entrepreneurs in the areas of skills gaps, financial constraints, policy advocacy, networking, information sharing, and bureaucratic bottlenecks, with the goal to enhance the role of youth entrepreneur association in the development of private sectors Ethiopia by 2030.
Federation of Young Entrepreneurs-Uganda	Uganda	The Federation of Young Entrepreneurs-Uganda was founded with the mission to create an environment where young entrepreneurs can thrive in Uganda; through effective advocacy and the delivery of high-value business development services.
Ghana Chamber of Young Entrepreneurs (GCYE)	Ghana	GCYE is the national association of young business owners from all private enterprise sectors, with the mission to unite, engage, and promote the businesses and innovations of young entrepreneurs in Ghana
Great Minds Empire Africa	Pan-African	Great Minds Empire Africa aims at empowering African women and youth for socio-economic transformation in order to have an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens.
IYEPA	Kenya	IYEPA aims to provide an “affordable” ecosystem that offers affordable business development services, affordable financial services and affordable marketing services to youth-led micro and small enterprises for economic growth and job creation
Jeunes Solidaires	Guinea	Jeunes Solidaires brings together youth associations and young entrepreneurs, providing a framework for capacity building, networking, promoting youth entrepreneurship and exchanging experiences between young association leaders and young entrepreneurs.
Nigeria Young Farmer Network (NYFN)	Nigeria	NYFN is an agricultural and agribusiness driven organization aiming to bring together everyone in order to provide socio-economic services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and to advance wealth creation and sustainable development in Nigeria through agriculture.
Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurs Forum (NYEF)	Nigeria	NYPF is composed of young professionals from different fields of human endeavours, coming together to achieve major objectives towards Nigeria’s development
Parc des Jeunes Entrepreneurs (PARJE)	Burundi	PARJE is an organization that works for the empowerment of young people and women through entrepreneurship, through capacity building and the establishment of provincial platform structures, where young entrepreneurs can meet for mutual support.

Reseaux Solidaire des Jeunes Entrepreneurs du Congo	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Reseaux Solidaire des Jeunes Entrepreneurs du Congo is an association of young Congolese entrepreneurs with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship among young people.
The Africa Youth Chamber of Commerce and Investment (AYCCI)	Pan-African	AYCCI is a youth entrepreneurs' membership organisation for youth enterprise policy advocacy, information exchange, knowledge sharing, capacity building, young business leadership development and networking.
Ye! Community	International	The Ye! Community is the global platform, powered by the International Trade Centre (ITC), supporting young entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs to build impactful businesses and enhance economic development.
Young Entrepreneurs of Nigeria (YEN)	Nigeria	YEN was founded as the umbrella body and voice for Nigerian young entrepreneurs; the organization seeks to empower youth entrepreneurs with finance, capacity building, network, business tools and also champion the cause of young entrepreneurs at local, regional and national level.
Youth Entrepreneurship Network	Botswana	The Youth Entrepreneurship Network at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources aims to expose students to the business sector and to produce young, motivated entrepreneurs who will grow and diversify the economy of Botswana
Young Entrepreneurs Association Gambia	Gambia, the	The Young Entrepreneurs Association aims to help small and medium sized Gambian companies gain investor, become market-ready, and develop their ideas.
Young Farmers Association of Nigeria - YFAN	Nigeria	YFAN is an association of Nigerian Farmers.
Young Graduate Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria	Nigeria	Young Graduate Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria aims at inspiring unemployed graduates to seek employment through skill acquisition and entrepreneurship.
Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA)	Pan-African	YALDA provides a forum for youth on the African continent and those abroad with a commitment to the welfare of Africa. By networking with professionals, mentors and each other, members will increase their capacity to take on positive leadership roles in their universities, countries and on the continent.
Youth Chamber of Commerce & Industries - Eswatini	Eswatini	The YCCIE sets out to represent, lobby and engage with stakeholders to influence policy for a conducive business environment for youth entrepreneurship in Eswatini and further promote and ensure professionalism from youth in business in Eswatini.
Youth Economic Alliance	South Africa	The YEA aims to ensure broader economic participation of youth entrepreneurs into the mainstream economy of both South Africa and the world and enabling their access to markets both existing and new, as well as innovative funding mechanisms.
Youth Entrepreneurs Network of Zambia	Zambia	An entrepreneur support network promoting and facilitating sustainable youth enterprise development in Zambia.
Youth Entrepreneurship Association of Zambia	Zambia	YEAZ is a national wide, autonomous association offering entrepreneurship skills and training as a way of promoting youth entrepreneurship and contributing to employment creation among youths in Zambia.
Youths in Trade and Business Association	Pan-African	Youths in Trade and Business Association aims at empowering youth and women in Africa to leverage on trade-exports for employment and economic empowerment.

Zimbabwe Institute of African Integration (ZIAI)	Zimbabwe	ZIAI advocates for youth and women inclusion in regional economic communities in Africa such as the AFCFTA, COMESA, and SADC through awareness raising campaigns
Zimbabwe Young Entrepreneurs' Association (ZYE)	Zimbabwe	ZYE is a community of young entrepreneurs keen to invest in networking, collaboration, and fun to as they start and grow their businesses in Zimbabwe

Figure 2 – Geographical Scope of Associations



7. Barriers for African youth in Policy Making

Data obtained from interviews conducted with youth business associations confirmed the **social, economic, and institutional barriers** derived from literature that prevent youth from participating in policy processes. When asked what the key barrier to their participation in trade policy processes in their respective countries, regions, and continental instruments, all the African YBAs interviewed expressed that **the main barrier they face is the bureaucratic nature of policy systems** which stifle access to policy makers and policy negotiations. Such institutional and social barriers indicate a lack of readiness to include young people in high level decision-making. The youth associations recounted that in their countries, access to public officials was very difficult and consisted of numerous administrative and non-administrative processes. Additionally, it seemed talking to lower-level staff was even futile as even “simple” decisions were only made by high level authorities. Navigating these fragmented and complex decision-making systems is often very difficult for the youth. The associations noted that access to policy makers and public officials largely depended on your personal network. One youth leader is quoted saying **“if you're not directly connected with the people**

who end up signing the decisions, you can forget that your input will go anywhere”.

Another simply stated “C'est surtout ça, trouver les bonnes connexions qui vont nous permettre de pouvoir nous exprimer”¹. Thus, no matter how brilliant youth’s suggestions are, they lack access to the tables and people who truly have the power to influence change. These bureaucratic barriers are also accompanied by **societal norms** which deem youth as “not serious” and subsequently do not value their voices and input. Youth associations noted that even when youth are included via consultative means or through informal participation, their needs are simply just “put on paper” and not in practice. Current policy makers fail to “see youth problems or future problems” and often focus on the present.

Another key barrier highlighted by the youth associations was **limited resources**. This is particularly relevant for continental agreements such as the AfCFTA which has its headquarters in Accra, Ghana but holds consultative processes in various African countries. In order to participate physically, youth associations need to gather the adequate funds for travel and subsistence. With rising costs of travel and visa challenges on the continent, this is an expensive task for associations who are also facing financial challenges in their programmatic work. Thus, these funding limitations make policy

¹ English translation: “It's all about finding the right connections to allow us to express ourselves”.

processes constrained to wealthier people and organisations or through “nepotism” where the youth included are related to policy makers - the use of personal networks for access. This funding barrier has also led to increased **competition** among youth associations. As funding is “**very limited, often unstable and short term**”, youth associations compete extensively for it across the continent. This creates a divide among associations who should ideally be working together and taking advantage of each other's strengths across regions to expand their impact.

Difficulty in coordination across youth constituencies was also revealed as a key barrier. The African YBAs highlighted that **cultural differences** across countries can obstruct effective inclusion as when the youth meet policy makers from a different country, there can be language barriers or accepted cultural practices when engaging with older or influential people that they may not be familiar with. As noted in our desk research, a lot of African youth simply do not know about the AfCFTA and have limited access to its information in a timely manner, let alone its policy processes. One youth association who tried to engage with the Secretariat stated that **“to get more information beyond what was available on the (AfCFTA) website was very difficult. They weren't responding to phone calls”**. This limited access to information about the AfCFTA for youth, hinder their chance to stay up to date with this highly important agreement which can provide a lot of

opportunities for youth entrepreneurs. It also hinders access to information about key people in the organisation that youth and youth business associations can effectively lobby with.

From the perspectives of trade experts currently working with the AfCFTA Secretariat who were interviewed for our research, a key barrier to including youth at the policy table is their **lack of technical know-how and experience in the domain**. It was noted that the language in the AfCFTA documents can be very technical, and a lot of youth and YBAs do not have a focal person trained in trade policy advocacy who can navigate the fragmented and complex decision-making system. Furthermore, it was noted that unlike women's associations, youth associations are often “disjointed” and lack a “collective voice”. With clear cut goals backed by strength in numbers across the continent, youth business associations can have a more significant impact in accessing and influencing policy processes. However, it is important to note that ultimately inclusion largely depends on the willingness of institutions to include youth.

8. Analysis: Best practices, Structures, and Strategies

The Interviews with experts and youth association representatives further revealed best practices, characteristics, and strategies that YBAs in Africa can adopt to enhance their capacity for lobbying and advocacy in trade-

related policies. Overall, this chapter will first discuss the best organisational structures for lobbying and policy advocacy including the importance of a focal point, division of labour, and division of regional and continental structures. It will then discuss the role of online presence as well as best practices for YBAs in who, when, and how to engage with policymakers. Lastly, it will explore the importance of personal networks and collaboration among associations.

8.1 Structure

Empirical evidence generated from interviews with YBAs in Africa demonstrates that their structures vary with their scales. The organisational structures such as the board of directors, advisory board, and general assembly are more applicable to YBAs with larger membership bases. By contrast, smaller YBAs only adopt some structures from the whole framework. One of the interviewees mentions that having a board of trustees with senior professionals raises their success rate when they reach out for partnerships. Other associations, organisations and the country's government consider it a more reliable association backed by a senior trustee with a high reputation. One interviewed association with a very large membership base addresses the importance of establishing a comprehensive organisational structure with a board of directors as the highest decision-making body with an advisory board in assistance. This governance structure ensures

national coordination teams in around 30 African countries and their national committee members work consistently.

Throughout all interviews, the study found the following structures are addressed by the majority of YBAs as a key way to raise their capacity in policy advocacy:

Focal point/section. A focal point could be a section in the association trained in trade-related policies is the most significant organisational structure for YBAs to directly institutionalise their policy advocacy work, which is also the most feasible one regardless of the scale and capital of the association. It connects with and puts continuous efforts into building partnerships with diverse players including other YBAs, non-government organisations, country governments, private sectors, international organisations, academia and AfCFTA structures as well. Under many circumstances, the leader of the association tends to be the focal point for advocacy or lobbying. Some of the interviewed leaders state that their personal connections as entrepreneurs and experiences in business sectors or trade-related public sectors make them the most suitable people in the association to work as the focal point. One of the interviewed YBAs builds the focal point to represent its association on the regional level and get a direct connection to the local youth minister so that its focal point could influence local decision-making. For larger associations with resources for multiple offices, having a

focal point for each country or region can be an advantage to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers. As stated by one of the interviewed experts, the focal point allows for representing local voices which can be different concerns of youth in different regions of Africa. More on this however in chapter 3.

Division of labour. Another structure that YBAs widely recognise, regardless of their field and size, as their key to success is a clear division of labour in organisational structure. There are three types of division: **areas of focus, functions, and geography** which are not exclusive to one another. In terms of areas of focus, youth business associations that have a wide scope establish departments based on areas of focus such as departments or groups of education, health, and agriculture, with potentially a commission, president, or subgroup leader for each. Sometimes, a national office can be built in every country with its director. This allows specialisation on a topic where all professionals are recruited and placed together for more impact. Their deeper understanding of the field can lead to better actions on the ground to support only entrepreneurs in their best-known fields. Then, each department would be able to, citing one of our interlocutors, *“pouvoir proposer des solutions qu'ils font remonter au niveau du président. Et quand on valide pour pouvoir vraiment exécuter les différentes actions parce*

*qu'on a compris que si on était dispersé”*². A regular report mechanism compiled for the president, or the leader of the association should be included in the division of labour.

YBAs can also divide their labours based on functioning. One association with relatively small groups of people addresses “each other’s strengths by assigning one specific role to each person”. For example, one member who is good at networking works as a focal point, and another who is good at social media works as media and communication. Furthermore, the division of labours in the association can be based on geography. Some country governments could be more approachable to people from their own country or at least speak the same language. In this case, YBAs should consider putting professionals in certain countries based on their origins or nationalities. This can also pertain to advocacy work on a sub-national level. One association which is only active on a national level revealed that they have regional offices in order to engage local politics with their local representatives of the association.

Divisions of regional and continental structure. The division of internal structures of the association into regional, national, and continental layers is adopted by YBAs with missions in multiple countries. This structure helps them to establish a hierarchical order

² English translation: “to be able to propose solutions that they escalate to the level of the president. And when we validate to be able to

really execute the different actions because we understood that if we were dispersed”.

that connects different layers of management, enabling a smooth streamline from local to national and continental. According to one of the experts from ITC, continental-level associations need regional representatives or national representatives on the ground to "spread their wings and maximise their impact and reach". It is impossible for any continental-level YBAs to coordinate everything from headquarters where most of the missions are in the field thousands of miles from there. In the case of the AfCFTA, the national level structure is crucial since the implementation of projects is happening at the country level. At the same time, establishing regional bases is also beneficial to raise regional networks which could be utilised for policy advocacy. When local networking and partnerships have been built up, the smooth mechanism from regional, and national to the continental can feed information up and down the chain. In this path, all local networks can be transferred to and concentrated at the headquarters. During policy advocacy, all ideas from local points will become a strong bundle to raise negotiation power. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, national offices help them to access various national governments and reach a large number of young entrepreneurs.

Volunteers also play a crucial role in the daily work of YBAs, however, the practice of including volunteers itself does not seem to contribute significantly to policy advocacy. Some interviewed associations rely heavily on voluntary work to implement their projects.

International volunteer teams are recruited and transferred across borders. However, this volunteer-based structure serves more towards the delivery of projects rather than forming partnerships, lobbying, and advocating policies.

8.2 Social Media

Almost all YBAs in this study acknowledged that activities on social media and online presence play a noticeable role in building networks and being included in both formal and informal policy advocacy processes. Platforms that YBAs usually utilise include Facebook, Zoom, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Interviewees agree that social media can help them to reach out to organisations or key people in policymaking which serves as a starting point to engage in policy advocacy. One of the YBAs describes a process of how their online presence brings them opportunities:

"You can showcase what you are doing. Even if you reach out and you don't hear from them, you are still on their radar and you can get invited to events and increase your network, reach the people and offices. Without social media, we would not have been able to go to the events we are invited to and make the networks we have made. When you apply for something, they often ask for your social media information, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook...."

Upon meeting a Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade at a local event, a youth leader expressed the difficulty they were experiencing with trying to get a meeting with the Minister's office and the Minister said, "We see you online and you have been doing great things...". Although the starting point of building a networking circle might be difficult, the interviewees show that "social media platforms allow us to reach the people or the offices that we thought we could not reach out...to access the ministers and whoever is responsible for the negotiations of the AfCFTA." YBAs express that if actions on the ground have been promoted with an online presence, they often get approached for policy consultations by the country's government and by international organisations through the contact information listed online. One of the interviewees published more than 10 reports on AfCFTA on social media which turn its social media into an exchange channel and knowledge pool. Young entrepreneurs and policymakers have visited their websites and read their research and would be more likely to contact the association afterwards. On the other hand, the good work on the ground might be overlooked by potential partners if the association is not active online and the contact information provided is hard to reach out.

However, it is also worth mentioning that being active on social media is not a must for all YBAs to form partnerships and join in policy advocacy. One can decide based on their

best-fit strategy whether to focus on social media to expand their network. One of the interviewees, rather than building connections through social media, **relies on intentional physical connection and referral** among government departments and engages in the Africa Union successfully. Furthermore, being active on social media does not guarantee successful policy advocacy. Online presence is only part of the process of approaching the policymaking table through getting connected with the key people. Even when young entrepreneurs can share their ideas, viewpoints, and insights into trade-related policies with the associations online, social media in this case, helps mostly in the coordination of people and information. To what extent this information can be transferred to the policymaking table requires other advocacy tactics which will be discussed in another section.

8.3 Engagement of Policy makers

In the chapter before we have discussed how organisational structures can influence advocacy and lobbying, as well as the role of social media and an association's online presence. In this section we present some advocacy strategies and practices associations use to effectively engage policymakers. There are three crucial aspects that have to be taken into account: 1) Who to engage, 2) When to engage, as well as 3) How to engage.

Who: Firstly, our research has shown that identifying the 'right people' is critical for

an association's success in lobbying and advocacy. When identifying the 'right people' information is key. Associations need to research which people are the top-decision makers and who is most likely to be "supportive in the youth space". The importance of "hitting people at the top" is especially true, as some of our interviewees stated that their ideas and proposals were not considered due to the key decision-makers not being reached.

"There is a specific circle in an organisation, or a bubble, and like things only happen in that specific bubble but they (proposals) don't usually get out. If you want them to get them out (...) then you have to make sure that you're connected with the right people who are in charge".

Similarly, engaging people who are susceptible to concerns and inputs of the youth is crucial, as many interviewees felt that there is a general disregard of youth voices and a lack of willingness to include young people in the policy process across Africa. Hence, by identifying not only the most influential people but also the ones who are most likely to advocate for youth issues, an association stands the best chances to advocate and lobby for their interest successfully.

Of course, being able to access key decision makers is a privilege few associations have, especially considering that 'access' is one of the main barriers preventing youth advocates from expressing their voice. This

only further goes to show how important having an influential network is and how important it is to intentionally build it (see next section).

When: Secondly, the timing of engaging policy makers is important for effectively voicing your interest and concerns. As identified in the literature, during the design phase of new policies and regulations, national governments and international organisations might be consulting stakeholders and therefore be more susceptible to incorporate outside inputs. In the case of the AfCFTA for example, the secretariat hosted conferences and bootcamps during the drafting of the protocol on women and youth, allowing various interest groups to make their voices heard.

"One way in which they can engage, of course, is making sure that they participate in all these platforms the Secretariat creates, such as conferences, workshops, trainings, etc. And that's what actually allows them to, you know, voice out what are some of the key issues or some of the key elements they would like to see included in the protocol".

Some of our interviewed association representatives were more aware of this and were able to proactively insert themselves into the consultation process. Hence it was essential for YBAs to stay informed about the ongoing policy-processes and be able to identify potential windows of opportunities.

How: Lastly, associations need to consider how to engage with people in the policy process. Our interviews revealed different strategies and methods that have been employed effectively to connect and interact with stakeholders in the policy process. Here again, information is key, as engagement methods change depending on the government, organisation, and the person in charge. One association representative noted: “The way you engage in Uganda is so different from the way you engage in Tanzania, and the way you engage with ITC is so different from the way you engage with UNDP”.

On the one hand, cultural and linguistic differences across countries and organisations have to be taken into account. As mentioned in the previous chapter, national governments like to be approached more by their own citizens in their own language, hence, the geographic division of labour to avoid the language and culture barrier. However, while this strategy might not be feasible for smaller organisations with less funding, it does imply that any focal person for advocacy needs to be mindful of cultural and linguistic differences. One association representative for example consults a specialist in international communication before meeting high-ranking people from other countries in order to be more culturally sensitive.

On the other hand, the engagement needs to be tailored and framed to the person and the institution they represent, as stated by

one association representative: “If I'm pushing for anything, I don't focus on the benefits to the general public, I focus on the benefits to them, as an institution”. Based on the insights shared by this interviewee, it seems especially important to focus on the potential monetary and financial benefits the organisation or institution could have, showing how important it is to appropriately frame the interests and policies organisations want to lobby for.

Furthermore, while today's technology was also identified as a chance to engage policy makers remotely all over the world, in person meetings seem to be more effective and the preferred method of engagement for our better-connected interviewees. These findings confirm the academic literature which stresses the importance of face-to-face interactions for advocacy and networking. Due to a lack of resources however, this strategy might not be feasible for many associations, as air travel and Visa costs prevent many youth organisation representatives from physically attending meetings and consultations.

8.4 Network

While the reviewed literature initially did not put a large emphasis on personal networks, this research quickly revealed its importance for policy advocacy in Africa. “In Africa the network determines how far you go. (...) We are not a meritocracy but a ‘networkcracy’”. Many stress that it is often near to impossible to meet influential people in policy making: “Engagement in Africa is

nepotistic!”. As this missing access to key decision-makers is one of the main barriers preventing many youth associations from exercising their voice, an extensive personal network proved to be a decisive advantage for some of our interviewee’s success in advocacy. While some of the interviewed representatives only had access to certain, youth-designated government representatives, interviewees with a large personal network could often directly engage top-decision makers, getting their ideas outside of the ‘organisational bubbles’ mentioned in the previous section. Their personal network allowed them to talk to government officials, ambassadors, representatives of international organisations and even prime ministers. In formal and informal settings, they were able to directly present their policy propositions and voice their concerns.

Through our interviews, we have identified two different strategies for association to gain a large personal network. Firstly, people can build up a network over the years, strategically engaging certain people, attending events, and connecting with influential people on social media. “You don't just wake up and get the network, you have to be intentional about building the network”. While this method is more tedious, it is feasible for most organisations, however requiring a lot of strategic planning, effort and patience. “It cost me a lot, but I was working towards having access to go to the people who are in charge of the policies on the continent. And I did that.”

As a second strategy to gain access to a large personal network, one of the associations in our sample managed to recruit an outside individual who already possessed influential political and corporate connections due to his personal background. The interview with said individual revealed that the political connections stemmed from their family’s position in the country, with one family member being some of the family friends holding high political offices. Furthermore, through their previous ventures in the private sector, the individual was also well connected among influential businesspeople across Africa. Overall, this allowed the association to engage high-ranking decision makers across the continent and hence, advocate more successfully. The strategy to recruit individuals with influence into the organisation was also identified in our reviewed literature as a way for organisations to cope with environmental complexities and could be emulated by other associations seeking to overcome the hurdles of access.

8.5 Collaboration

The importance of collaboration among association and interest groups for more successful advocacy and lobbying has been stressed by many of our interviewees, both by association representatives and policy making experts alike. The collaboration can take the form of an exchange of ideas, information, and expertise, but also to unify the advocacy efforts under one umbrella. “You

know, it is very easy to break one stick, but it is difficult to break a bundle of sticks". This strategy, known as 'advocacy coalition', has also been documented in academic literature as an effective way for civil society to engage policy makers. Especially for smaller and weaker associations the establishment of a coalition could help them enhance their negotiation power.

From our interviews with "policy making" experts, we found that, especially on a pan-African stage, the advocacy efforts of YBAs are perceived as rather weak and disorganised. This can be illustrated by the engagement in the AfCFTA consultations: "It seems that their (YBAs) efforts are disjointed, and so that affects their strength and their numbers". "We have noticed that you will have a myriad of youth associations that want to engage the Secretariat from different points. (...) this diminishes the quality of the engagement that is being made". While the youth movement seems to lack coordination, women's business associations appear to be collaborating more amongst each other: "Women on the other hand are much more organised, they are in bigger structures and when they approach the AfCFTA Secretariat, their voice is stronger".

Similarly, the lack of coordinated advocacy and lobbying for the interests of youth in business was also emphasised by many of our interviewed representatives. One interviewee also expressed their discontent for the current ways of engagement, stating that

there was too much competition amongst youth associations instead of collaboration. Accordingly, we find that most of the more effective associations we have been in contact with, preferred to collaborate. "Each and every one of us will bring his or her area of expertise and strengths. You put that together and you become a formidable force". Many even mention this was one of the keys to their success, stating that collaboration increases legitimacy in the policy spaces and allows association to speak with an unified voice, bolstering their advocacy activities.

9. Recommendations

Taking into consideration the reviewed literature and the findings of the realities experienced by youth in policy making, the report makes the following recommendations on how YBAs can not only access but be effective in trade policy processes in the context of our geographical area of study. The recommendations provided here will be two-fold; firstly recommendations will be made to YBAs on effective structural mechanisms to be incorporated in their organisation as well as tactics and strategies they can adopt to increase their capacity and ability to engage in trade policy processes and advocate for their interests. Secondly, recommendations will be made to the ITC and AfCFTA Secretariat on how they can aid YBAs and meaningfully include them into the ongoing AfCFTA policy negotiations.

Youth Business Associations should:

1) Have a trained focal point for their advocacy and lobbying strategies.

A focal point who is trained in advocacy is ideal to represent the association in policy processes and build on its partnerships. For YBAs, this focal point should specifically be trained and knowledgeable in economic market conditions, trade processes and jargon which will aid the contact to effectively lobby for youth business and entrepreneurial interests in trade policy.

2) Divide labour in terms of focus, function, and geography.

A clear division of labour streamlines the different aims of the organisation and allows for each person to be effective in their work towards the advancement of the association and ultimate benefit of its members. As the AfCFTA is a continental agreement which is nationally implemented, multiple staff in different parts of the continent also cuts down travel and visa costs to meetings and aids in bridging cultural barriers faced by youth in policy processes.

3) Create a strong and active online presence.

This is a very important tool derived from the research as an active online presence is a key tool in breaking barriers of access to institutions. Different social media platforms particularly LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter as well as a well-designed, active website allow YBAs to reach out to and also be contacted by key stakeholders for various opportunities that impact policy. It is also effective in framing the organisation's aims and current activities and expanding its membership base.



4) Inform themselves on who to engage, when to engage and how to engage.

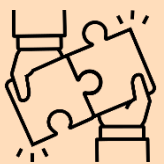
YBAs wanting to engage in trade policy processes need to be adequately informed on the relevant decision makers at each level of the policy process. It is also beneficial to stay informed on when and in what capacity of the policy cycle to engage with key policy makers, as well as how to effectively frame your engagement. YBA need to take into account the policy maker's interests, their own capacity constraints, and cultural or linguistic barriers.

5) Build an influential network.

This recommendation proved to be the most valuable from our research. Access and impact in policy processes in the geographical area of this study largely depends on your network. Thus, it is essential for YBAs to be intentional about building a network of influential stakeholders within the field of the policy process they are aiming to participate in. There are multiple ways this can be done as discussed above through the experiences of the YBAs interviewed, however a key way YBAs can build their network is by recruiting influential and well-connected individuals as members of the YBAs advisory board or board of trustees/directors. These individuals can not only provide guidance in the functioning processes of the organisation but also connect its youth leaders to networks of influential people who can incorporate them into policy processes where they can effectively lobby and advocate for youth interests.

6) Collaborate with other associations to unify their advocacy efforts.

Finally, as the popular African proverb states: "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together". It is important for African YBAs to work together and collaborate in various capacities, pulling together their collective efforts and unifying their voices in order to truly create long lasting impact that benefits their members.



AfCFTA Secretariat could:

1) Improve on avenues of information dissemination.

The AfCFTA Secretariat can provide more transparent ways for youth and YBAs to access information about the agreement as well as access to information on key stakeholders in its ongoing policy processes. This can be facilitated through regular conferences, bootcamps and workshops with YBAs to provide this information. Moreover, there should be concerted efforts to enhance the inclusion of YBAs throughout the continent by ensuring they have the necessary resources, especially financial support, to undertake extensive awareness campaigns among their regional or national members. These initiatives should focus on educating YBA members about their participation in the AfCFTA, providing access to up-to-date information regarding the agreement, and guiding them on how to engage with relevant stakeholders in their respective jurisdictions regarding AfCFTA-related matters.

2) Create positions which enable representatives from youth business associations to partake in policy processes.

As the AfCFTA is already far along in its policy processes and implementation is currently at the national level, The Secretariat can enforce through the Women and Youth Protocol that National AfCFTA Coordination Committees should include Youth Sounding boards with representative of YBAs to advise on how commissioners can empower youth in trade processes. Sounding boards, such as the EU Sounding board, of which a leading member was interviewed for this research, have been a successful model for countries that want to work directly with youth. They are designed for youth to have direct contact and influence with top decision-makers and avoid the barrier of access many YBAs face. The EU Sounding Board for example, feeds proposition directly into EU commissions through a team diverse in expertise, gender, class, race, ethnicity and location. It is important to note that different regions of the



world have different dynamics as such it must be important to implement these sounding boards based on the context of each African country's needs and demographic. However, it is very important in the African context for more meritorious inclusionary practices as opposed to the use of nepotism or elitism when creating these positions.

3) Re-orient the AfCFTA structure towards the willingness to include youth.

An organisation which aims to include youth, needs to invest in its process designs to facilitate this. The AfCFTA Secretariat negotiated numerous protocols formally with member states without the direct participation of youth as this is not how the organisation designed its implementation processes. To facilitate the effective and meaningful inclusion of young people into its policy processes, future protocols negotiated must begin with youth inclusion from its inception to its implementation. This can be done by eliminating the formality of organisational cultures and procedures established which hinder young people's access to these processes. This reorientation of formal decision-making spaces can be a step towards reshaping societal attitudes and norms towards young people which often do not view their voices as valuable and "act upon them without their agreement" (Checkoway, 2011).

ITC could:

1) Aid with the education of focal points on trade policy processes.

ITC can aid YBAs through training and education particularly with focal points, on trade policy processes and market information in order for them to be adequately informed and to effectively advocate for youth led businesses and entrepreneurs.



2) Aid with the funding of associations.

The ITC can aid YBAs eliminate the funding barriers and constraints that prevent them from adequately participating in policy processes by providing seed funding as well as aiding them on processes to mobilise funds through different sources available to them. Funding constraints are a major barrier faced by young people, limiting the effective functioning of their associations and subsequently their participation in policy processes. Without adequate funding, access and engagement with policy makers in the various ways recommended such as in-person meetings and access to influential policy makers become almost impossible. Thus, by addressing this key social inequality YBAs can be more effective in policy processes and provide more beneficial outcomes for their members.

3) Bring YBAs together to collaborate and work together.

Through their network of youth associations, ITC can create communities for YBAs to partner and work together. This enhanced coordination can improve advocacy and lobbying efforts, increasing the overall say of YBA in the AfCFTA processes and in other trade-related policy making.



10. Conclusions

This report has explored the inclusion of youth voices into trade policy processes, seeking to pave the way for a more inclusive approach to policy making. Using the AfCFTA policy processes as a case study, the research acknowledges the importance of including African youth business associations in its ongoing policy processes to create more impactful and long-lasting policy outcomes, contributing to inclusive and sustainable development.

Through interviews, surveys and in-depth desk research, this study mapped 'active' YBAs across Africa and identified barriers hindering their meaningful inclusion into policy processes at large and trade-policy processes in particular. These barriers are social, economic and institutional in nature and include bureaucratic systems which limit young people's access to policymakers and policy making roles, limited resources of YBAs, lack of coordination across youth constituencies, lack of technical know-how of trade policy information and processes, and the general societal disregard for youth voices in decision making processes.

The research also derived information on best practices and advocacy strategies in the domains of effective organisational structures, social media practices, networking and collaborative efforts used by African YBAs to effectively engage in policy processes. Based

on these findings, the study recommends structural mechanisms and advocacy tactics and strategies to YBAs to enable them to engage effectively in trade policy processes. This includes incorporating into their organisation; a focal point trained with trade knowledge and in trade policy processes; a clear division of labour within the organisation in terms of focus, function and geography; the creation of an active online presence through social media platforms and a website; importance of information on key policy makers and when and how to effectively engage with them within the policy cycle; enhanced collaborative efforts with other YBAs, and most importantly, building an influential network which pave way to access into policy processes.

The report further makes recommendations to the AfCFTA Secretariat and ITC on ways they can incorporate or aid youth into and in policy processes. This includes improving avenues of information dissemination about the ongoing processes of the AfCFTA; creating positions such as youth sounding boards to directly include youth at the policy table; re-orient the organisational structure of the institutions away from formal processes which effective youth participation; aid the education of youth of trade information and policy processes; aid with funding constraints faced by YBAs; and bringing associations together to collaborate for greater impact.

This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on youth inclusion and empowerment in policy making processes specific to the African continent. The recommendations made in this study have the potential to significantly enhance the organisation of youth business associations, enabling them to actively participate in trade-related policy processes and advocate for youth interests. However, it is crucial to recognize that advocacy is just one component of a broader range of tactics influencing policies, such as media communications, campaigning, and public engagement. Thus, this research does not assume that youth inclusion into policy processes will work in isolation to change societal perceptions about youth or consequently improve the lives and work of all young entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, policy implementation entails its own complexities, including financial constraints, capacity limitations, and, ultimately, the presence of political will and institutional support. The deeply entrenched bureaucratic nature of policy processes in

Africa cannot be expected to change overnight. While advocacy efforts within policy processes can contribute as a valuable tool among other tactics, achieving inclusive and long-lasting change necessitates a comprehensive approach, which could be further explored in future research.

In conclusion, this research rests on the premise that diversity in policy making processes brings forth a more accurate perception of a population's realities. The inclusion of youth voices, as well as the voices of other marginalised groups, in policy spaces is imperative for an inclusive and prosperous society. The call to action is for all stakeholders, including youth business associations, policy makers, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the ITC, to collaborate and take concerted actions to create an enabling environment that amplifies youth voices, enhances youth inclusion in trade policy processes, and ultimately fosters inclusive and sustainable development across Africa.

Bibliography

- Abrego, M. L., Amado, M. A., Gursoy, T., Nicholls, G. P., & Perez-Saiz, H. (2019). The African Continental Free Trade Agreement: welfare gains estimates from a general equilibrium model. *International Monetary Fund*.
- Adeniran, A., Ishaku, J., & Akanni, L. O. (2020). Is Nigeria experiencing a learning crisis: Evidence from curriculum-matched learning assessment. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 77, 102199.
- Acemoglu, D., & Zilibotti, F. (1997). Was Prometheus unbound by chance? Risk, diversification, and growth. *Journal of political economy*, 105(4), 709-751.
- Anyanwu, J. C. (2013). Characteristics and macroeconomic determinants of youth employment in Africa. *African Development Review*, 25(2), 107-129.
- African Union. (2018). Agreement establishing the AfCFTA.
- African Union (2019). State of the African Youth Report.
- Barley, S. R. (2010). Building an institutional field to corral a government: A case to set an agenda for organisation studies. *Organisation studies*, 31(6), 777-805.
- Berg, A., Ostry, J. D., & Zettelmeyer, J. (2012). What makes growth sustained?. *Journal of Development Economics*, 98(2), 149-166.
- Baah-Boateng, W. (2016). The youth unemployment challenge in Africa: What are the drivers?. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27(4), 413-431.
- Brown, S. (2022, September 22). Public Policy Design. Retrieved from <https://publicpolicydesign.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/22/making-policy-inclusive/>
- Byiers, B., Woolfrey, S., Medinilla, A., & Vanheukelom, J. (2019). The political economy of Africa's regional 'spaghetti bowl'. *Synthesis Report, ECDPM*, 2(4), 567-570.
- Busse, M., Erdogan, C., & Mühlen, H. (2019). Structural transformation and its relevance for economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Review of Development Economics*, 23(1), 33-53.
- Buse, Bernstein, R. S., & Bilimoria, D. (2016). The Influence of Board Diversity, Board Diversity Policies and Practices, and Board Inclusion Behaviours on Nonprofit Governance Practices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 133(1), 179–191.
- Boulouta, I. (2013). Hidden connections: The link between board gender diversity and corporate social performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113, 185-197
- Brathwaite, C. (2021, April 27). *Unleashing the Potential of Youth in International Trade*. Retrieved from Shridath Ramphal Centre: <https://shridathramphalcentre.com/unleashing-the-potential-of-youth-in-international-trade/>
- Cadot, O., & Gourdon, J. (2014). Assessing the price-raising effect of non-tariff measures in Africa. *Journal of African Economies*, 23(4), 425-463.
- Chidede, T., & Bore, O. (2020, July 3). *Youth in trade and trade governance in Africa*. Retrieved from Tralac: <https://www.tralac.org/blog/article/14727-youth-in-trade-and-trade-governance-in-africa.html>
- Child, J., & Rodrigues, S. B. (2012). How organisations engage with external complexity: A political action perspective. *Understanding Organizations in Complex, Emergent and Uncertain Environments*, 13-44.

- Checkoway, B. (2011), "What is Youth Participation?", *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 33/2, Elsevier Ltd., Amsterdam, pp. 340-345.
- Council of Europe. (2018, December). Youth organisations and youth programmes. Retrieved from Council of Europe of the European Union: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-organisations-and-youth-programmes>
- Crowley, A., & Moxon, D. (2017). New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes. Council of Europe.
- De Vries, G., Timmer, M., & De Vries, K. (2015). Structural transformation in Africa: Static gains, dynamic losses. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 51(6), 674-688.
- Evans, D. K., & Mendez Acosta, A. (2021). Education in Africa: What are we learning?. *Journal of African Economies*, 30(1), 13-54.
- Guidelines on lobby and Advocacy - La Strada International. (2010, June). https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/guidelines_on_lobby_and_advocacy.pdf
- Hausmann, R., Hwang, J., & Rodrik, D. (2007). What you export matters. *Journal of economic growth*, 12, 1-25.
- Hart, R. (1992), "Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship", *Innocenti Essays*, No. 4, International Child Development Centre, Florence.
- Hafsi, T., & Turgut, G. (2013). Boardroom diversity and its effect of social performance: Conceptualization and empirical evidence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112(3), 463-479
- Herman, R. D., Renz, D. O., & Heimovics, R. D. (1997). Board practices and board effectiveness in local nonprofit organisations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 7(4), 373-385.
- H. Metin, and A. Coskun. (2016). The effect of leadership and organisational culture on effectiveness of NGOs: an empirical study. *Nile Journal of Business and Economics*, vol. 2, 3-16.
- International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2023, April 2). AfCFTA Protocol on Investment finalised. <https://www.iisd.org/itn/en/2023/04/02/afcfta-protocol-on-investment-finalized-and-adopted/>
- International Trade Centre. (2021). Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship: Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area. Geneva: International Trade Centre.
- International Trade Center. (2022). Made by Africa. Creating Value Through Integration.
- Institute for Government. (2020). How to engage with policy makers - Institute for Government. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ahrc-how-engage-policy-makers.pdf>
- Kimberlin, Sara. (2010). Advocacy by Nonprofits: Roles and Practices of Core Advocacy Organizations and Direct Service Agencies. *Journal of Policy Practice*. 9. 164-182. 10.1080/15588742.2010.487249.
- Kushner, R. J., & Poole, P. P. (1996). Exploring structure-effectiveness relationships in nonprofit arts organisations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 7(2), 119-136.
- Larson, E. (2017, September 21). Hacking Diversity with Inclusive Decision-Making. Retrieved from https://2095545.fs1.hubspotusercontentna1.net/hubfs/2095545/Whitepapers/Cloverpop_Hacking_Diversity_Inclusive_Decision_Making_White_Paper.pdf
- Lungu, I. (2019). A Fresh Chance for Africa's Youth: Labour Market Effects of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). GIZ-AU Briefing Paper.

- McMillan, M., Rodrik, D., & Verduzco-Gallo, Í. (2014). Globalisation, structural change, and productivity growth, with an update on Africa. *World development*, 63, 11-32.
- Nonprofit Advisory Boards: What they are & why they matter. Boardable. (2023, April 12). <https://boardable.com/resources/advisory-boards/>
- Obeng-Odoom, F. (2020). The African continental free trade area. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 79(1), 167-197.
- OECD (2011), *How's Life? Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264121164-en>.
- OECD (2017), "Measuring deficits in youth well-being (Module 1)", in *Evidence-based Policy Making for Youth Well-being: A Toolkit*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264283923-5-en>.
- OHCHR. (1989). CORE INSTRUMENT: Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.
- Schipporeit, B. (n.d.). Best practices and tips for advocacy and lobbying - national low income ... https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2021/02-15_Best-Practices-Tips-for-Advocacy-and-Lobbying.pdf
- Smith, D. H., & Shen, C. (1996). Factors characterising the most effective nonprofits managed by volunteers. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 6, 271-289.
- Sabatier, P. A., & Weible, C. M. (2007). *The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications*. In *Theories of the Policy Process* (1st ed., pp. 189–220). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367274689-7>
- Sloot, H., Gaanderse, M., & Gehrels, A. (2010, June). Guidelines on lobby and Advocacy - La Strada International. https://documentation.lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/guidelines_on_lobby_and_advocacy.pdf
- Trade Law Centre. (2022). Architecture of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. Tralac.
- United Nations. (2023). Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 3: Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policy and Decision-making Processes.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2016). YOUTH, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING. United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2020). Making the AfCFTA Work for Women and Youth. The Futures Report.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2019). World Commodity Export Dependence, 2018 - 2019. [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://unctad.org/topic/commodities/state-of-commodity-dependence>
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2022). Rethinking the Foundations of Export Diversification in Africa: The Catalytic Role of Business and Financial Services. *Economic Development in Africa Report 2022*.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022). World Population Prospects 2022 [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/MostUsed/>
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2023). The AfCFTA – What You Need to Know: Frequently Asked Questions & Answers,. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Economic Commission for Africa.

- Weible, C. M., Sabatier, P. A., Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Nohrstedt, D., Henry, A. D., & deLeon, P. (2011). A Quarter Century of the Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Introduction to the Special Issue. *Policy Studies Journal*, 39(3), 349–360. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00412.x>
- Whiting, C. (2016). NGO Fora Advocacy Guide: Delivering joint advocacy. https://ngocoordination.org/system/files/documents/resources/ngo_fora_advocacy_guide_english_july2017.pdf
- World Bank (2014). School enrollment, secondary (% gross). [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR>
- World Bank (2019). GDP per Capita (current US\$). [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>
- World Bank (2019). Trade (% of GDP). [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS>
- World Bank (2019). Tariff rate, applied, weighted mean, all products (%). [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TM.TAX.MRCH.WM.AR.ZS>
- World Bank. (2020). THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA. Economic and Distributional Effects.
- World Bank (2021). Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate), [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS>
- World Bank (2021). Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24). [Data Base]. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS>
- YouLead. (2021). *Making the AfCFTA Promises a Reality for African Youth*. Arusha: MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Selected Economic Indicators

Country	GDP (PC)	Trade (% GDP)	Intra-African Trade (% Total Trade)	Tariffs (%)	Commodity Dependence (% Exports)
Algeria	4'115	53.0	2.8	10.0	93.7
Angola	2'612	60.5	6.5	6.5	96.4
Benin	1'202	62.7	18.1	9.9	90.3
Botswana	7'051	94.5	49.7	1.0	93.6
Burkina Faso	738	-	20.6	5.8	97.4
Burundi	278	28.8	32.5	8.5	93.2
Cameroon	1'449	37.1	16.8	15.5	93.2
Cabo Verde	3'482	82.6	2.2	11.6	80.0
Central African Republic	419	44.7	14.0	-	53.3
Chad	660	83.0	7.4	-	98.8
Comoros	1'284	42.3	15.4	4.2	58.4
Congo, Rep.	1'793	95.6	28.1	-	92.9
Cote d'Ivoire	2'328	45.7	25.1	7.7	92.2
Djibouti	3'111	-	15.9	-	61.5
Congo, Dem. Rep.	513	80.5	32.3	10.8	95.2
Egypt, Arab Rep.	3'965	31.4	-	10.4	53.7
Equatorial Guinea	7'413	102.1	9.3	-	91.0
Eritrea	-	-	5.5	-	84.0
Ethiopia	800	24.3	7.2	-	79.5
Gabon	7'116	72.6	6.4	14.5	89.4
Gambia, the	715	42.1	34.4	-	86.4
Ghana	2'054	58.4	11.8	10.0	95.9
Guinea	946	132.4	14.1	10.9	93.5
Guinea-Bissau	650	-	13.2	11.3	98.3
Kenya	1'603	30.7	15.3	11.5	70.0
Lesotho	1'127	132.2	68.4	3.4	43.9
Liberia	650	-	2.0	-	61.9
Libya	8'993	-	-	-	95.7
Madagascar	489	50.4	8.8	7.5	73.0
Malawi	401	-	37.7	4.2	92.3
Mali	815	69.8	50.4	7.2	91.4
Mauritania	1'621	100.4	9.5	8.0	96.9
Mauritius	10'644	97.8	15.0	1.1	37.2
Morocco	3'045	75.0	4.8	3.6	28.0
Mozambique	599	100.2	29.7	-	95.0
Namibia	4'505	79.7	57.2	1.1	81.8
Niger	524	37.5	18.3	9.3	65.9
Nigeria	2'503	22.6	8.9	-	97.9
Rwanda	886	53.9	32.4	9.6	92.1
Sao Tome and Principe	1'673	-	18.2	10.0	65.1
Senegal	1'384	63.3	26.0	9.1	74.4
Seychelles	16'990	152.7	8.0	20.3	75.9

Sierra Leone	650	58.4	20.2	-	71.6
Somalia	447	105.9	-	-	93.8
South Africa	6'126	56.2	19.0	5.4	57.3
South Sudan	-	-	-	-	-
Sudan	1'969	4.1	4.0	-	98.1
Eswatini	3'833	91.0	85.5	2.4	34.5
Tanzania	1'071	31.4	20.5	8.4	73.7
Togo	631	57.5	31.6	11.0	76.1
Tunisia	4'208	94.4	6.6	-	19.7
Uganda	895	41.7	25.7	8.1	84.4
Zambia	1'349	86.0	41.4	-	86.6
Zimbabwe	1'415	56.3	83.5	-	83.7

Appendix 2 – Selected youth Indicators

Country	Median Age	Youth Unemployment	Youth Literacy Rate	Secondary School Enrolment
Algeria	27.8	29.3	-	-
Angola	16.2	17.5	82.8	-
Benin	17.5	4.3	65.0	56.2
Botswana	23.5	38.6	-	-
Burkina Faso	16.6	8.5	65.5	30.4
Burundi	15.6	1.7	92.6	39.4
Cameroon	17.5	7.1	-	57.5
Cabo Verde	26.5	30.6	98.7	95.1
Central African Republic	14.7	11.0	-	-
Chad	15.0	2.0	35.2	23.0
Comoros	20.1	20.4	81.2	61.1
Congo, Rep.	18.2	41.4	82.4	-
Cote d'Ivoire	17.6	4.5	-	38.9
Djibouti	23.7	77.0	-	46.2
Congo, Dem. Rep.	15.6	9.4	87.9	45.5
Egypt, Arab Rep.	23.9	17.8	91.5	80.8
Equatorial Guinea	20.9	17.2	-	-
Eritrea	18.2	11.3	-	59.0
Ethiopia	18.5	6.1	-	34.1
Gabon	21.6	37.5	90.4	-
Gambia, the	16.8	8.3	73.4	-
Ghana	20.4	7.2	-	64.1
Guinea	17.7	7.9	60.3	39.3
Guinea-Bissau	18.3	4.7	67.9	-
Kenya	19.2	13.5	88.7	-
Lesotho	22.1	26.9	89.3	60.2
Liberia	17.9	3.1	-	38.6

Libya	26.3	51.4	-	-
Madagascar	19.0	4.2	80.5	38.4
Malawi	16.8	7.7	76.2	40.2
Mali	15.1	4.2	-	44.0
Mauritania	17.6	22.1	76.5	30.7
Mauritius	36.8	23.6	99.3	99.9
Morocco	28.7	24.9	98.4	-
Mozambique	16.8	8.0	72.5	33.4
Namibia	21.3	40.1	95.6	-
Niger	14.5	0.9	47.2	18.2
Nigeria	17.0	13.6	-	45.6
Rwanda	19.0	17.7	86.9	40.1
Sao Tome and Principe	18.4	22.8	98.1	75.0
Senegal	17.8	4.8	76.4	50.3
Seychelles	32.5	-	-	79.2
Sierra Leone	18.8	4.2	71.9	-
Somalia	15.2	35.4	-	-
South Africa	27.1	49.9	-	107.8
South Sudan	16.1	19.9	-	-
Sudan	18.4	34.8	-	44.9
Eswatini	21.5	50.0	-	73.8
Tanzania	16.8	4.2	88.1	30.7
Togo	18.7	9.9	-	53.0
Tunisia	31.7	37.3	97.7	87.7
Uganda	15.9	6.5	90.8	27.7
Zambia	16.9	11.1	-	-
Zimbabwe	18.1	12.5	90.7	-

Appendix 3: Interview Questions YBA

Project title: *Amplifying youth voices in policy discussions of the AfCFTA: identifying effective structures for youth organisations.*

Interviewer: *Adwoa Awuah Aboah, Marco Cereghetti, Youqing LIN*

Interviewee: **Date:**

Introduction:

1. Can you tell us a bit about you and your organisation?
- 2.

Performance Assessment:

3. Have you been involved in policy processes on a national, regional or international level?
Please Elaborate.

4. Were you successful in advocating some key policy issues relevant to your organization? If so, which ones?
 - a. What is the main characteristic you attribute to the success of your organisation when it comes to business advocacy and involvement in the political process?
5. Has your association collaborated with other organizations or stakeholders to advance your policy agenda? If so, how frequently?
- 6.

Advocacy/Engagement:

7. Can you describe any specific strategies or tactics that your association has used to effectively engage policymakers and government officials in the policy-making process?
 - a. Has your organisation participated in any policy-making processes, such as roundtables and lobbying with government ministries, international organisations/institutions?
 - b. Has the organisation participated in any non-formal activities such as bootcamps, conferences, workshops and if so what was the most effective part of these non formal consultative activities? Do you think they help with amplifying youth voices in policy making?
8. If not, has your organisation identified the most important entities that can aid you with having your voices heard to achieve your goals?
9. Has your association leveraged networks and partnerships to advance your policy agenda, and if so, what lessons have you learned about building and sustaining effective coalitions?
 - a. What specific strategies or tactics have been effective in building partnerships and expanding your network?
 - b. Does your organisation partake in formal or informal partnerships with local governments, regional economic organisations, international organisations such as United Nations entities, Private sector organisations or NGOs?
 - c. Is there a focal group/person who represents your organisation in collaborations with these entities?
10. What enabled your organisation to participate in these policy-making activities? For example, how did you reach out to these stakeholders; or if they reached out to you, through what means?
11. What would you recommend to other African youth business associations to help them improve their influence?
12. What role does your online presence play (social media, website) when it comes to your ability to advocate and form partnerships?
 - a. How often is your website/social media updated? - general activity of the organisation for public consumption and promotion of its aims

Structure:

13. Do you think your current governance structure helps your organisation to achieve your mission (particularly when participating in advocacy or lobbying activities) and if so, how?
 - a. Does your organisation have a board of directors and how does it operate? Does this board hold the function of advocacy?
 - b. Does your organisation have an advisory board and how does it function?

14. How has your organisation structure changed over time since establishment?
 - a. Has the change of organisation structure also changed your advocacy work?
15. Can you tell us a bit about your membership structure? How active are the members of your organisation in organisational activities and through which channels do you engage most with your members? Whatsapp, mailing list, other social media?
16. Has your organisation incorporated diversity into its core values, if so how?
17. Can you tell us a bit about the current leader of the organisation? What is their role and how did they come into power?

AfCFTA:

18. Has the organisation received any formal invitation to participate in any AfCFTA process or event. If yes? From which organization(s) and elaborate on the process.
19. Do you have a clear understanding of the current policy implementation process of the AfCFTA, its operational timing for your business agenda priorities?
20. How do you think you could be better incorporated into policy making, especially in regard to the AfCFTA?
21. Does your organisation plan to organise any AfCFTA related events for its members or with AfCFTA stakeholders?
22. Does your organisation engage with other trade related organisations or agreement's policy processes? Can you detail how those experiences were? Eg. Africa Trade Fund, International Trade Centre, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Barriers:

23. What are some of the challenges your organisation has faced when working with governments, African or international organisations or any other partners?
24. In what ways do you think the voices and interests of youth business organisations can be better incorporated more into policy making? And in the AfCFTA specifically?

Outro:

25. What would you recommend to other African youth associations to help them improve their influence in policy processes and make their voices heard?
26. Do you think there are other associations or policy makers in Africa we should talk to? And if available, could you maybe also share with us some names of other African youth in policy processes you collaborate with?

Appendix 4: Interview Questions Experts

Expert 1- 10.3.2023

- Could you tell us a bit more about your work and the AfCFTA?

Background of AfCFTA:

- As AU Summit 2023 was just held with a specific topic on empowering trade through AfCFTA, what is the current implementation stage of the AfCFTA?
- Which aims & objectives does the AfCFTA pursue? As a trade expert, do you see any risks among them (for example, the potential negative impact of free trade)?

Youth engagement:

- What are the opportunities as well as potential pitfalls for young entrepreneurs in the AfCFTA?
- We see that the AfCFTA has implemented programs like the AfCFTA Youth Inclusion Accelerator Project and 5 day boot camp to raise awareness among young Africans about the AfCFTA, and the role they can play in its implementation and ultimate success. What other commitments are the AfCFTA implementing for more youth inclusion and to tackle any challenges the youth face?
- What role do youth associations currently play in the AfCFTA?
- What are barriers to more youth participation in policy processes in general and specifically in the AfCFTA context?
- How can their voices be heard more in the AfCFTA policy framework? What could institutions like ITC and the AfCFTA do to help them?
- What are some of the characteristics/best practices you have seen from MSMEs, youth and women entrepreneurs and their associations, that have put them in a great position to effectively take advantage of the benefits of the AfCFTA Framework? I.E certain technologies? Certain internal structures?
- Did Covid-19 change youth engagement in the AfCFTA policy making process and, if yes, to what extent?

One Africa:

- Read about One Trade's three-level approach to inclusion in the single market and specifically on the policy-making level, what have been some of the biggest challenges you have personally encountered when it comes to supporting youth in policy processes?
- ITC report suggests 94 value chains in Africa, however, we find they are unequally distributed due to local comparative advantages. Do you consider this inequality as a problem or obstacle for the One Africa mission? And to what extent do you think it would affect policy negotiations?
- We saw that ITC stated that "fewer than 10% of interviewed companies participated in public-private consultations on trade agreements before the adoption of the AfCFTA". How do you think AfCFTA would change them?
- From the website, we found that One Trade Africa is developing online AfCFTA platforms for regional business support organisations. Could you elaborate on this online platform a bit?

Expert 2 - 17.3.2023

Questions:

- Could you tell us a bit more about your work and the AfCFTA?

Follow up questions:

- How are women and WBAs currently included in the AfCFTA agreement?
- In which ways can women’s business associations (WBA) support their members and specifically help them take advantage of trade agreements?
- What are some of the existing effective structures and best practices you have come across in your work with WBAs that help them make their voices heard in policy processes?
- Could you elaborate on the SheTrades’ “four-pronged approach to engage with African women and their business associations and to promote their participation in and shaping the AfCFTA?
- The ITC has identified the lack of a sound business plan as the most urgent capacity-building need for associations and has devised a learning course accordingly. What other actions could the ITC take to further strengthen WBAs?
- How can the AfCFTA ensure that women are included in negotiations?
- On SheTrades’ websites, we see words like “gender-responsive”. How to make sure certain public procurement, policies, laws, and regulations are gender-responsive? And would the process of making youth-responsive public procurement, policies, laws, and regulations be different from making gender-responsive ones?
- What has been your experience working with policymakers on the continent? Do you find that they are willing (have the political will) and are enthusiastic about levelling the playing field for women, particularly in the policy space? How about youth inclusion?
- What is the main or recommendation/advice you give WBAs who want to participate in policy spaces specifically to be relevant in the AfCFTA policy framework?
- What has been She Trade’s biggest challenge when it comes to obtaining data about gender and trade on the continent?

Expert 3- 23.3.2023

Questions:

- Could you tell us a bit more about your work and the AfCFTA?
- What is the current implementation stage of the AfCFTA both at the regional and national levels? What does the future hold for the AfCFTA?
- What role do youth and youth associations currently play in the AfCFTA?
- How does the AfCFTA policy process work exactly? Where would be the most effective points for youth advocacy (e.g. secretariat, regional committees, assembly)?
 - Have you experienced association successfully advocating their interests and needs in the AfCFTA?
- What are some barriers to more youth participation in policy processes in general and specifically in the AfCFTA context?
- What could institutions like ITC and the AfCFTA secretariat do, to help to support youth associations?
- What are the challenges faced by youth & youth organisations hindering them from successfully elevating the needs of youth?

- What are some of the characteristics/best practices you have seen from youth entrepreneurs and their associations that have put them in a great position to effectively take advantage of the benefits of the AfCFTA? i.e certain technologies, internal structures, strategies etc.?
- There were some youth concerns about the timeline for the AfCFTA (I believe full implementation is by 2063), what are some of the ways it can be implemented faster, and how feasible are they?
- What are some of the operational steps being taken by the AfCFTA? We know about the PAPSS system that will help facilitate easier payments across countries, are there any others such as training or systems for customs authorities?
- What does the cooperation between ITC and AfCFTA national committees/business support organisations look like?
- What are the duties and tasks of implementers in One Trade Africa, such as Ghana Export Promotion Authority, EXIM Bank, and CUTS Nairobi?
- “ITC is collaborating with UNECA and UNDP to build complementarities in technical assistance solutions.” What is the focus of this program and how are they complementary to UNECA and UNDP?
- Non-trade barriers (NTB) pose some of the biggest challenges to intra-African trade. How will they be overcome, especially considering that the implementation of the agreement is the responsibility of national governments?

Expert 4 & 5 - 28.3.2023

Questions:

- Could you tell us a bit more about your work and the AfCFTA?
- What is the current implementation stage of the AfCFTA both at the regional and national levels? What does the future hold for the AfCFTA?
- In your opinion, what opportunities does the AfCFTA hold for Women? What about Youth?
- Currently Phase 2 of the negotiations are underway, could you give us some insights into the negotiations and how the protocol aims to include Women and youth in the AfCFTA agreement?
- At the moment, Is there any outside advocacy happening for the interest and need of women and youth entrepreneurs in the AfCFTA policy process?
- Are you or the AfCFTA secretariat in general currently working with business associations from women or youth? If so, how are they advocating their needs?
 - In which ways can women’s business associations (WBA) support their members and specifically help them take advantage of trade agreements?
 - Are there any effective structures and best practices used by BAs you have come across that help them make their voices heard in policy processes?
- As you are part of the institutional AfCFTA framework, where would be the most effective points for women or youth advocacy (e.g. secretariat, regional committees, assembly)?
- How can outside organisations such as the ITC help to advocate the need of Women and Youth in the AfCFTA and help them make their voices heard?

Appendix 5 - Survey

Amplifying youth voices in policy discussions: Identifying effective structures for youth organisations.

Greetings! This survey aims to collect effective structures and characteristics of youth associations which help them to elevate youth voices and strengthen their positions at the policy negotiation table. The research is being conducted by students of The Graduate Institute in Geneva in partnership with the International Trade Centre (UN/WTO) with the aim of providing better support to youth associations and enabling them to participate in policy processes. We really appreciate your efforts and your organisation's work in enhancing youth capacity, as such, your answers will be very valuable in helping us identify the best practices and platforms for youth associations.

This survey should take approximately 8 minutes. Your responses are completely confidential and will be kept only for this research

Section 1: General information:

1. Name of the Organisation
2. Please state the mission statement of the organisation
3. Select which regions the organisation currently or has previously worked in?
 - a. Eastern Africa
 - b. Western Africa
 - c. Northern Africa
 - d. Central Africa
 - e. Southern Africa
 - f. Others
4. How many countries is your organisation currently operating in?
5. How many members does your organisation currently have?
6. Which sectors does the organisation currently support? *Select all that apply*
 - a. Advertising, Arts and Design, & Media
 - b. Banking & Financial Services
 - c. Community Services & Development
 - d. Consulting & Strategy
 - e. Education & Training
 - f. Engineering, Science & Technology
 - g. Governance
 - h. Healthcare & Medical
 - i. Human Resources & Recruitment
 - j. Information & Communication Technology
 - k. Legal
 - l. Manufacturing, Transport & Logistics
 - m. Marketing & Communications
 - n. Real Estate & Property
 - o. Sales, Trades & Services
 - p. Sports & Recreation
 - q. Other

Section 2: Policy participation

1. Does your organisation set policy advocacy as one of your main missions?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What policy issues has your association successfully advocated for in the past? Please select all that apply:
 - a. Access to funding and finance
 - b. Support for entrepreneurship education and training
 - c. Improved business regulations and policies
 - d. Youth inclusion into policy implementation
 - e. Other (please specify): _____
 - f. None
3. Through what means does your organisation often participate in advocacy processes
 - a. Face to Face in person meetings
 - b. Virtual meetings or participation
 - c. Through written correspondence (letters, emails etc)
 - d. Through social media
 - e. Through phone calls or whatsapp
 - f. Other (please specify): _____
4. How frequently does your association engage directly with national or international policymakers on issues relevant to your association?
 - a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Occasionally
 - d. Frequently
 - e. Often

Section 3: Partnerships:

1. Please indicate the difficulty level of forming partnerships or collaborating with the following entities:
1 refers to "easy", 5 refers to "difficult", N/A refers to not applicable.
 - a. Local and national governments
 - b. African regional economic communities (ECOWAS, COMESA)
 - c. African Union structures
 - d. International organisations (e.g UN, ITC, WTO)
 - e. NGOs
 - f. National associations
 - g. Regional associations
 - h. Private sector
 - i. Academic institutions and think tanks
2. Is there a focal group/person who represents your organisation in collaborations with regional, national ministries or committees or International organisations?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Not Sure
3. If yes, is the focal person the leader of the organisation?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

4. Rate to what extent you think your participation in the following events organised by national or international organisations can raise youth voices in policy making. 1 means participation is not helpful at all in raising youth voices. 5 means participation is very useful in raising youth voices.

- a. Policy Consultations
- b. Bootcamps
- c. Conferences
- d. Workshops

6. Has the organisation participated in formal policy activities? *Select all that apply*

- a. Meetings or roundtables with government ministries
- b. Meetings or roundtables with international organisations/institutions
- c. Participation on a national or international advisory committee/sounding board
- d. Research work for youth inclusion with international organisations
- e. Lobbying for youth Inclusion in policy agendas or frameworks
- f. None
- g. Other

7. If Other, please specify below:

8. Please detail the most effective part of these formal activities

Section 4: The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

1. Has your organisation been included in any of the activities or negotiation processes of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Has your organisation received any formal invitation to participate in any AfCFTA process or key events?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Does your organisation have a direct partnership/cooperation with the AfCFTA Secretariat?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. If yes, please kindly specify the partnership:
5. Does your organisation engage with other trade related organisations or agreements? Eg. Africa Trade Fund, International Trade Centre, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
6. If yes, Please detail below
7. Does your organisation have specific channels in which you can access updated information about the AfCFTA?
 - a. Always
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

Section 5. Board of directors

1. Does the organisation have a board of directors?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. In progress
 - d. Not sure

2. Select from the following, the board has the mechanism to: *Select all that apply*
 - a. Support the CEO in strategic planning
 - b. Monitor the performance of the CEO
 - c. Support project selection, operation and evaluation
 - d. Notice and inform risks
 - a. Support Fundraising
 - b. Advocacy and lobbying
 - c. Build public relations and form partnerships
 - d. Recruit young talent
 - e. Other
3. Is there a selection process for new members to join the board?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
4. What is the average age of the members of the board?

Section 6: Advisory board

1. Does the organisation have an advisory board?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
2. Please select from the following. The advisory board aims to: *Select all that apply*
 - a. Support governance of the organisation (eg: board member recruitment and onboarding, periodic assessments of the board, and audits of bylaws)
 - b. Fundraise for the organisation
 - c. Facilitate outreach and recruitment of young people, groom future board members and stakeholders, and introduce people to the organisation
 - d. Run and manage specific programmes or projects
 - e. Other
3. If other, kindly specify below
4. What is the average age of the members of the advisory board?

Section 7: Diversity

1. Do the organisation's board members and leaders come from diverse backgrounds? (e.g gender, ethnicity/race, age etc)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
2. Rate the following statements according to the situation in your organisation:
1=completely disagree, 2=relatively disagree, 3=neutral, 4=relatively agree, 5=completely agree, N/A=Not applicable
 - a. Board members from diverse backgrounds work together and interact with one another.
 - b. Board members value the contributions of diverse members to the board's tasks.
 - c. Diverse members make contributions to the board's critical tasks.
 - d. Diverse members have arguments when doing tasks.
 - e. Diverse members can think of approaches to reduce arguments when doing tasks.
 - f. Diverse members add multi-faceted ideas to projects in a positive way.

Section 8: Leadership

1. Kindly state the age of the leader of the organisation? *If there are more than one leader, please indicate their average age.*
2. Is there an age limit required for the leadership of the organisation?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
3. If yes, kindly specify below:
4. How is the leader of the organisation chosen?
 - a. Elections by members
 - b. Appointed by previous leader
 - c. Appointed by Board of directors
 - d. Appointed by Advisory board
 - e. Other
5. If other, kindly specify below:

Section 9: Engagement and Social Media

1. Does your organisation have an active contact list, eg. a mailing list, or a WhatsApp group?
 - e. Yes
 - f. No
 - g. Not sure
2. Please rate to what extent members are active in organisational activities.
1 indicates "very active" and 5 indicates "not active", 3 as moderately active
 - a. The youth on your contact lists are active
3. Does your organisation have an active social media presence?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Which social media platform is your organisation active on that has the largest member engagement? *Select all that apply*
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Twitter
 - c. Instagram
 - d. Whatsapp
 - e. LinkedIn
 - f. TikTok
 - g. Hubspot
 - h. Buffer
 - i. Pinterest
 - j. Youtube
 - k. Other
5. If Other, please specify below:
6. Please detail below your contact information or link to social media if you are willing to have us get in touch with you for further interviewing (Your opinions will be highly valuable to aid promote youth in policy processes):

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

**AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES IN POLICY
DISCUSSIONS: IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE
STRUCTURES FOR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS**

**FOLLOW THIS LINK:
[HTTPS://EE.KOBOTOOLB
OX.ORG/X/YG9SOM19](https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/x/yg9som19)**

Fill out this survey by a team of young graduate students working with the International Trade Centre (UN/WTO).

Your inputs will be invaluable!

