

YOUTH BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES RAPID RESPONSE PROGRAMME, FUNDED BY GOOGLE.ORG, TO SUPPORT STRUGGLING UNDERSERVED SMALL BUSINESSES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Youth Business International (YBI) has been awarded a \$5 million grant by Google.org to support over 200,000 underserved micro, small and medium businesses in 32 countries to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The global economy is suffering from an unprecedented shock as a result of COVID-19. With typically tight margins, micro, small and medium businesses are particularly vulnerable to economic downturn. The current pandemic is having a serious impact on these businesses, many are struggling to get through the crisis and need support now.

One such business is run by Chaima Doya, a young entrepreneur in France whose sewing business stopped overnight when the country went into lockdown, leaving her unable to make loan repayments. Now, she has pivoted to making free face masks for nursing staff, supported by YBI's member in France, [Adie](#). From signposting government support to advising her on how to run a business in isolation and how to resume it once the crisis is over, Adie has been there every step of the way. As Chaima says, "Adie has fully supported me. From the first week of isolation, when my adviser Cécile called to offer to extend the terms of my loan. It touched me that she offered help."

Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm, is providing funding to enable YBI to deliver a rapid response and recovery programme that backs underserved micro, small and medium-sized businesses, sustains livelihoods and supports communities across Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific. The programme will be implemented in 32 countries and will focus on the most affected business owners, including young people (aged 18-35 years), women, and refugees and other migrants.

A holistic package of emergency support will be provided to business owners through YBI's global network of members and delivery partners. This includes crisis helplines, targeted advice and signposting, online training through webinars and mentoring. Google employees plan to volunteer their time to share their knowledge and expertise, helping business owners to upskill and adapt to the challenges they are facing.

As an experienced, global network of enterprise support organisations, YBI is uniquely placed to support business owners during these challenging times.

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Anita Tiessen, CEO of Youth Business International, said: *“The world is changing dramatically from day to day and I feel deeply for business owners everywhere, especially those running smaller businesses and are from underserved communities, who are often least able to bear the economic shocks of this crisis. In the face of these challenges, I have been incredibly inspired by the quick response of our network to support business owners around the world. YBI and Google.org’s new commitment will help us sustain and extend this support throughout 2020, ensuring more than 200,000 businesses can get the advice they need right now to navigate this crisis.”*

Rowan Barnett, Head of Google.org, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific (EMEA & APAC) added: *“The coronavirus outbreak is taking a devastating toll on lives and communities, and small businesses are facing unprecedented challenges as they struggle to stay afloat. With this grant to Youth Business International, alongside a series of Google initiatives and products, we hope to help some of the most vulnerable small businesses find a way through the crisis.”*

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Notes to editors:

For further information, please contact:

Youth Business International (YBI)

Julia Maillebiau

Head of Communications

+44 7930878697

julia.maillebiau@youthbusiness.org

Youth Business International (YBI)

YBI is a global network of expert organisations in over 50 countries supporting underserved young people to turn their ideas into successful businesses, creating jobs and strengthening communities. Our vision is a world where youth entrepreneurship is recognised for driving sustainable economic development and all young people who want to set up a business can fulfil their potential. We connect our members to share expertise and collaborate on solutions to common challenges. Visit www.youthbusiness.org.

Google.org

Google.org, Google's philanthropy, supports nonprofits that address humanitarian issues and apply scalable, data-driven innovation to solving the world's biggest challenges. We accelerate their progress by connecting them with a unique blend of support that includes funding, products, and technical expertise from Google volunteers. We engage with these believers-turned-doers who make a significant impact on the communities they represent, and whose work has the potential to produce meaningful change. We want a world that works for everyone—and we believe technology and innovation can move the needle. We are also committing \$50 million to the global COVID-19 response, focusing on health and science, access to educational resources and small business support.