



Generation Connect Podcast

Episode 10: Youth In the Workforce: A Conversation with Past and Present ITU-D Interns

With Saba Tiku Beyene, Raphael Dutois, Thomas Frost, Jacobo Garcia, and Anastasiia Maiorova

Hosted by Ellen Taylor

Transcript

***Disclaimer:** The following transcript is machine-generated and has been slightly edited for clarity and legibility.*

Intro: Hi everyone, welcome to the Generation Connect Podcast Co designed with youth, for youth. The ITU Generation Connect initiative aims to engage global youth alongside the leaders of today's digital change by empowering youth voices in the digital development Dialogue TuneIn every month to listen to inspiring stories of youth all across the world on the power of technology for sustainable development. Get involved by joining our global community of future leaders, shaping the world of tomorrow.

Segment 1: Roundtable Dialogue

Ellen Taylor: Hello everyone and welcome to the 10th episode of The Generation Connect Podcast co-designed with youth and for youth. My name is Ellen Taylor, and it is my pleasure to host this podcast episode. I'm a youth program consultant with the Generation Connect team but before that I was an intern at the ITU's Development Bureau.

In this episode, we are talking about youth in the workforce, specifically considering the experiences of past and present ITU interns and their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for young people starting their careers in the fields related to Information and Communication Technologies or ICTs.

To begin our podcast, I wanted to learn more about what motivated past and present ITU interns to apply to the ITU. So, I asked Jacobo, Saba and Thomas to help me answer this question.

Thomas Frost: Hello Ellen. Thanks for having us.

Ellen Taylor: Thank you so much for being here, Thomas, and thank you all for being here today. If you could all introduce yourselves and describe why you chose to apply to work as an ITU intern, that would be wonderful.

Jacobo, let's start with you.

Jacobo Garcia: Hello. Nice to meet everyone. It's nice to be here.

So, what got me interested in ITU was that I first learned about it when I wrote a report as a law student on international regulations about our space sustainability.

Here I learned how the ITU plays a role in assigning satellite orbits and spectrum, among other things.

Always having an interest in aerospace and having worked in the aerospace industry before, I thought that the ITU would be the place to combine my interest and background in something that I genuinely cared about and found fascinating.

Ellen Taylor: Great. Thank you Jacobo. Over to you, Saba.

Saba Tiku Beyene: Thank you, Ellen. I'm so happy to join you on this podcast today. My name is Saba, and I'm a Generation Connect Africa Youth Envoy at ITU. I previously interned as a junior project intern at the ITU regional office for Africa. My passion lies in digital transformation and the inclusion of youth in digital engagement and internet governance.

I have actively participated in policy and public consultations and research projects with member states and partners. I have a background in electrical and computer engineering. I chose to intern at the ITU because of my deep belief in its mission to connect the unconnected and global impact.

As a Youth Envoy, I have witnessed the ITU's crucial role in shaping the international digital landscape, promoting cooperation in addressing the challenges of the digital divide, and fostering youth engagement. Notably, I had the privilege of participating in significant events such as the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit in Rwanda and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Romania last year. So, this experience has further motivated me to say that the opportunity to intern at the ITU allowed me to enhance my understanding of the work of the ITU and to develop my professional career as well.

So, throughout my internship, I actually contributed my skills and also learned much from the regional expertise and supporting the ITU efforts in advancing digital transformation, connectivity, inclusivity, and many more on both global and regional events. Thank you. Ellen, over to you.

Ellen Taylor: Fantastic. Saba, thank you so much for sharing a bit there about what got you involved in the ITU. Thomas last but not least, over to you.

Thomas Frost: Yes, thank you so much. As you already said, my name is Thomas and I currently work as an intern at the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, especially in the membership in private sector service. And why I'm at ITU actually, I'm part of the Carlo Schmid Program, which is a program of the German Academic Exchange service. And we are over 100 scholars that go to different international and European Union organizations worldwide. And this is what how I got into the role of being an ITU intern and being the Interns' Association President right now¹ I obviously know that there are so many other reasons why joining ITU is a great chance for everyone who's

¹ Thomas Frost was the President of the Interns' Association at the time of recording.

interested in ICT and in getting connected everyone in the world and getting everyone into the digital age.

And I think that could also be a great reason to join ITU as an intern, especially in the Development Bureau.

Ellen Taylor: Great. Thank you all so much for sharing a bit about yourselves and what got you involved in this space. It's really interesting to hear. So, to help us better understand the opportunities and challenges that youth face in entering the workforce, I would really love to hear what you each worked on during your internships, your biggest takeaways from these experiences, and how these experiences are shaping or have shaped your professional journeys in the field of ICTs and beyond. So, Thomas, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this to start off this dialogue.

Thomas Frost: Yes. Thank you. Yeah. So, the Division I work in, as I said, deals with everything that is related to membership in the ITU Development Sector, especially in the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector or short ITU-D, but also where Generation Connect is located. And so it's always a great thing to work in membership if you want to get to know the whole sector and the larger image because all our Members are involved in the different areas and the different activities that ITU-Development undertakes and so it's a great opportunity to get to see all the different areas that we work in, to get, as far as possible, this great and complete picture of the ITU development. And of course, everything at ITU and all the three sectors is about ICT, and we always try to get to know as much as possible in these ICT areas.

And this is also the greatest experience that I have been seeing in the ITU while I've been here as an intern, and this is actually only my second month. So, I already saw a lot of things at ITU and there's still more to come. So that's also something that we as an association of the interns try to do to connect everyone here at ITU and it's not just about technical connection, it's also about human connection, and I feel like that's a great thing that you can do at ITU and that you can enhance in ITU. Maybe Saba you want to say something else to that.

Saba Tiku Beyene: Oh, thank you. Thank you very much, Thomas. OK mine, also doing my internship as a Junior Project Intern, I had the opportunity to engage in various impactful activities.

I conducted extensive research in data gathering to support the ongoing projects, particularly in the areas of Digital Skills and Capacity Building. This included, for example, contributing to the ITU Digital Capacity for All Platform in Ethiopia. One notable experience was my involvement in exploring new project areas, such as ITU regional data science opportunities for youth. I can say that this has allowed me to gain insights into the emerging trends and opportunities in the field of ICTs as well as youth empowerment. So, I actively participated in discussions and collaborations related to the youth in the region, focusing particularly in Ethiopia.

This involved engaging with organizations like ISOC (Internet Society) or Anyone Can Code, the African Union, the UNICEF youth groups, just to name a few. So, we aim to create greater impacts and address the challenges faced by the young people, especially in an increasingly connected digital society, by fostering the synergies between these entities and the ITU's youth-related work.

So, through my internship, I also supported the establishment of the Digital Ethiopia Youth Network, a platform and community that brings young Ethiopians together to share opportunities and to address the challenges that they encounter in the digital world. So, these experiences have had a significant impact on my professional journey. They have really deepened my understanding of the importance of digital skills and capacity building for inclusive development.

And moreover, my internship has broadened my perspective on the global digital landscape and the vital role played by international organizations such as ITU in shaping it. So, it has reinforced my commitment to working towards digital not only in Ethiopia, but also on a broader scale.

So just overall, this internship at the ITU regional office have provided me with a real practical experience and valuable insights and network of professionals as well in the field and it has really shaped my inspiration, my professional aspiration, and motivates me to work, to continue making a meaningful contribution to the advancement of ICTs and also their positive impact on the society.

Now I will also give the floor to Jacobo to say something on this.

Jacobo Garcia: Hello, so I worked for the Future Networks and Spectrum Management Division of the Development Bureau which focused on satellite connectivity development and developing countries.

The purpose of the project I worked on was to analyze national satellite communication regulations and from that create a standard satellite regulatory framework guide to assist countries to begin to establish telecommunication logs for the first time focused in like I said developing countries within this project. I assisted my team with outlining the relevant laws of Brazil with a focus on satellites operating and non-geosynchronous orbits. And of course, I also studied the Radio Regulations Treaty administered by the ITU to understand how national regulations fit within the international framework.

For me, one of my biggest takeaways from my internship was that it gave me an understanding of how fast the aerospace industry and satellite telecommunications is growing and the many challenges that still need to be overcome within aerospace regulations and satellites at the national and international level, which necessitate global cooperation and agreement for mutual thriving of space activities and for the benefit of humanity in general.

So that's a little bit about my work as well and it was really nice hearing everyone else's work very inspiring.

Thomas Frost: Maybe when we started to exchange into connect all our three experiences that we did here at ITU, two things that I would like to highlight now that I heard what you worked in. First of all, the difference between working in the ITU headquarters in Geneva and in the regional offices, because that's, I think something that is especially great about working in the ITU development sector, because we do have all these regional offices and area offices all around the world, which actually implement all the projects that we do.

And on the other side, we do have the Geneva headquarters where a lot of our colleagues are located. So most of the colleagues are here. So, it's always a great opportunity to connect actually personally with all the people that are here, while still remain in contact with the people we would like to influence and to support with our projects in the field.

So that is one thing and ICT can be everywhere. So, it's something that connects people all around the world, but at the same time, it's always also a great opportunity to actually get to know people as a person and individually in-person physically. And so that's what these regional offices are great for, and maybe that's a point that we can tag along as well. And the other point is that we have such a wide range of topics. So, we have the regulatory part. We have satellite communications and aerospace and at the same time, we have emerging trends and empowerment in regional initiatives.

So, it's like this far range that we have at ITU-D and so it's always a great thing to see that every day coming to work here and seeing all the different projects that we have at ITU.

Ellen Taylor: Absolutely, Thomas. I completely agree and I'm loving this discussion right now. I'd love to come back to a point or a couple of points that that you brought up in this discussion already. Thomas, you mentioned the technical connection work that ITU does, but also the human connection work and I think that's a really great place to think about global collaboration and youth empowerment, which Saba you spoke to, also in the context of the speed of development that Jacobo you mentioned. And the work that ITU does is really needing to adapt and adjust quite quickly to a lot of these emerging trends and the speed at which ICTs can develop and move quickly.

So, I'd love to hear maybe one more round here on kind of what you found your biggest challenge to be during your internship and how you overcame that challenge. So maybe Saba I could start with you.

Saba Tiku Beyene: Thank you, Ellen, for that question. The challenges were so minor for me because of the support and encouragement I received from my colleagues in the regional office. However, if this is counted as a challenge, one challenge I faced initially was adapting to a new work environment.

And some new tasks, as you know, take time to become familiar with the whole process. Still, with the support I got from my supervisor and also from colleagues, I was able to adapt very quickly and had a very good learning experience at the ITU.

Ellen Taylor: Perfect. Thanks Saba. I think that's really well said. Jacobo, could you speak to some of the challenges you experienced during your internship and how you overcame them?

Jacobo Garcia: Sure, one of the main challenges that I had was just getting familiar with the huge subject matter and scope of information that is the international regulations treaty and also the Brazil regulatory frameworks.

I just thought it was a lot of new information that I wasn't used to. I usually study United States law, and so it was a completely unfamiliar territory for me, and I sort of had to figure out, number one, where to even begin, begin looking into information. Of course, having some sort of mentor or supervisor that is attentive to your work helped me a lot because it sorts of helped guide me into a direction to find the information that I needed. They connected me with other divisions within the ITU that helped me further understand better the laws and I think that was one of my biggest challenges, which was overcome with the help of my team.

Ellen Taylor: Perfect. Thank you, Jacobo. I love how that collaboration with your team really helped you overcome those challenges and Thomas last but not least, if you could share some of the challenges you're currently experiencing or that you could foresee and how you might tackle them or how you are tackling them.

Thomas Frost: Of course. So, first of all, I need to agree with Jacobo because it's always great support that interns get here, at least that's the case for me with great supervisors and great colleagues that are always open to get connected, to help with anything, that have open doors.

I think the challenge is that something I need to agree to Saba when she said that they are non-ITU specific. In many cases it's something that happens every time you need to get to a new job. You need to acclimate to the new surroundings, to the new setting.

To everything, to your colleagues and, that's something that is always the case for new jobs. And that's also the same at ITU.

But I think the time that you need to adapt is not as long as it could be. So now being in my second month, I feel like I'm already more or less settled at ITU and that's a great achievement. That's also a great achievement of the onboarding process that you get here at ITU that especially was changed this year and that is a great opportunity that we got here.

I need to say it is different to work in the UN specialized agency like the ITU compared to the private sector and ICT is a part where the private sector is really large. But we of course have private sector members, so it is always really connected. So being interested in ITU doesn't mean that you need to work in ITU, but working in ITU also doesn't mean that you completely lose the connection to the private sector. And that is a challenge I think many people assume when working in the ITU, but that is not really that challenging as it might sound in the first, seconds or minutes after hearing that.

Ellen Taylor: Perfect. So well said. All of you. Thank you very, very much for this engaging dialogue. I think, and I hope, that our young listeners around the world can learn from your takeaways here and as you all mentioned, they're widely applicable. And so as young people entering any kind of work these are really great lessons learned and things to keep in mind. So, thank you all very much again.

Thomas Frost: Thank you for the invitation. It was great having this discussion with all of you.

Jacobo Garcia: Thank you so much for this. It was fascinating to hear about you guys and very inspirational.

Saba Tiku Beyene: Thank you very much to everyone. It was very inspirational.

Segment 2: Individual Interventions

Ellen Taylor: After hearing Saba, Jacobo and Thomas talk about the challenges they face during their internships as young people entering the workforce, I wanted to hear more about the opportunities for both youth and employers as young people start their careers. So, I decided to seek out two more ITU interns, one former intern and one current intern, who have some ideas on this very topic.

Anastasiia and Raphael. Thank you so much for joining me.

Anastasiia Maiorova: It's great to be here.

Raphael Dutois: Thank you for having me.

Ellen Taylor: As you just heard in our conversation with Saba, Thomas and Jacobo, there was a lot of discussion around the work they did during their internships with the ITU, as well as the challenges and lessons they've learned from these experiences.

I would really love to build on this conversation with both of you by asking the following question: What opportunities do young people have when entering the workforce? Anastasiia, let's start with you.

Anastasiia Maiorova: I think I should start with mentioning that when I was applying for an internship at ITU, I didn't expect that my application would be approved. I thought so because I don't have any education in ICT, neither do I have any experience in ICT. I suppose I got the internship due to my quite proud education in International Relations, and also my internships as a journalist.

So, within the past two months, I've been mostly involved in the work of the DNS support team with some tasks from the COP team.

And recently I've been also engaged in the translations from the COP team, and honestly, the translations is most exciting from all the work because mostly my work comprises just emailing people to go through the approval process.

But yeah, the translations have been most exciting because I'm really into languages and there I need to work with them precisely with Russian and English. And while translating I can perform my knowledge, my skills better than when just sending emails.

I think that generally the work that I've mentioned is not extremely hard, though I do have some challenges in the beginning as everyone, but now it's fine and I think it is also thanks to my wonderful mentors.

They help me, anytime with anything. I'm fine with that. And I mean with my internship, and I hope that my efforts will be appreciated in the future, but I don't expect much after my internship ends next March because I know the rules and I guess the competition is very tight. So, I'm just doing what I enjoy or at least what I don't mind. And I'll see what it will result in.

At the same time, I believe that engaging young people like me into ICT work is not just choice but a necessity, because we are the generation that practically grew up with smartphones in our hands and as digital natives, it is us who have to address the challenges in the digital world.

To conclude, I would like to say that the internship might not have turned me into a coding genius. But it has shown me how vital it is to have a mix of experiences in the tech world, and I'm happy to be part of it. Thank you for having me today.

Ellen Taylor: Thank you so much, Anastasiia, that was fantastic.

Now Raphael, same question for you: What opportunities do young people have when entering the workforce?

Raphael Dutois: Hello everyone so my name is Raphael, and I am a former ITU intern and president of the Interns Association. I am currently studying International Relations in France and I'm glad to be part of this podcast. So first I would say young people entering the workforce have a range of opportunities available to them. These opportunities might vary depending on their education, skills, interests and location. But for the podcast, I'm going to focus on my personal internship experience as a former ITU intern. Internships can provide valuable work experience and can be a steppingstone to a full-time job. They are available in various fields including business, healthcare or even in our case, technology.

To focus on technology, I would say it's perfect fit for young people. We have grown up with technology and can bring a different perspective to it than some people. And so, in my case I was confronted with multiple opportunities because the vision of young people is very important to ITU.

Young people don't realize how valuable their almost innate facility with technology can be. We are often faster and have greater ease of familiarization, research, and software programs. We also know how social networking works, so we can help with any awareness raising initiatives. For example, I remember creating and sharing a promotional visual to one of the benefits of aging in the digital world and to announce the broadcast of a discussion session with stakeholders, for example. And it is thanks to these little things that we'll be able to change people's minds and warn them about a wide range of subjects.

The very essence of the United Nations is to warn about the dangers of our world and in the digital age, we have a very important role to play, and we must use social networks to do so. Apart from your added value, I would say it is essential to build up a solid experience. I learned a lot from the many specialists I met during my six-month internship for which I am infinitely grateful. It was in this context that I realized the importance of the intergenerational approach, learning from people with years of experience gives you a lot, and it would be a shame to miss out on that.

And yeah, add it to your technological skills and I think you can become a very, very, complete young candidate on the job market.

Ellen Taylor: Thank you so much, Raphael. I love how you talked about really the value that young people bring to the job market and especially with technology as yes, we are digital natives and that's very exciting. Thank you so much.

Segment 3: Pieces of Advice

I would now like to bring everyone back in to close this session. So, to end this episode I wanted to ask each of you to share one sentence of advice you would give to young people who are beginning their careers in ICT fields right now. Saba. I'll start with you.

Saba Tiku Beyene: Thank you, Ellen. One sentence of advice for young people beginning their careers in ICT fields I would give is: Embrace a continuous learning. Stay curious and actively seek out opportunities to expand your knowledge and skills in this fast-evolving world of technology.

Thomas Frost: I would like to say to work in ICT, you don't need to be a nerd or a geek, but you can be. It really is a place where everyone can find his or her purpose and I think that's really obvious whenever you work in the ITU telecommunication development sector.

Jacobo Garcia: So, my piece of advice would be to find a mentor or someone that's willing to guide you. A lot of times, people entering the workforce are not very familiar or inexperienced, don't know where to start, and having that person guide you and sort of mentor you I think is very helpful for your career and to start whatever work you're doing.

Anastasiia Maiorova: Don't be afraid to try, even if you aren't sure, try.

Raphael Dutois: Personally, I would say so that you are motivated. Get involved as much as possible, take an interest in as many things as possible and take advantage of your ICT skills, because obviously not everyone has your abilities.

Ellen Taylor: And with that we conclude our segment on youth in the workforce featuring the voices of past and present ITU interns. Thank you very much to our speakers today for your time and goodbye.

Outro: Thank you for listening to our podcast. You can find all the podcast episodes on the ITU Generation Connect website and if you don't want to miss an episode, subscribe to us on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Thanks again and see you next month for a brand new episode of The Generation Connect Podcast.

