

# Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship : The Role of Digital Economy



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Date : 24<sup>th</sup> February - 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Application Deadline : 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025



ONLINE COURSE



CERTIFICATE

Languages : English - French

# YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP : THE ROLE OF DIGITAL ECONOMY



## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Announcement in brief

Type : Short Term Course

Programme Area : Youth

Beginning of the course : 24 February 2025

Duration : 4 Weeks

Languages : English - French

Location : Web Based E-Learning

Fee : Covered by the UNECA

Application Deadline : 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

Specific Target audience : Technocrat in the fields of Youth employment



NB : IDEP strongly encourage and supports the participation of suitably qualified female officials in its capacity development and training programmes

# PROGRAM RATIONALE

While considerable progress has been made over the past two decades in reducing poverty, alleviating hunger, reducing inequality and improving outcomes for many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable, such progress has been uneven (United Nations, 2017c). The Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time (2020), therefore, highlights inequalities as one of the five megatrends affecting economic, social and environmental outcomes, and asserts further efforts to be made to attain an inclusive, sustainable and equitable future<sup>1</sup>.

Inequality has not only persisted, but in many instances widened, with substantial numbers of people, including youth, excluded from full participation in economic, political and social life. The situation of young people from groups considered vulnerable or marginalized—including indigenous people, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, people living in poverty, and girls and young women—underlines the fact that the 2030 Agenda will not be a success unless it is based on the ideals of inclusiveness, leaving no one behind and shared prosperity<sup>2</sup>.

Africa has the youngest population in the world with more than 400 million people aged between the ages of 15 to 35 years. It is this young population who will drive the future of the continent. Their success or failure will also be that of the continent as a whole.

The African region today is home to a labour force that is almost 500 million strong. However, by 2030, the size of the labour force will have grown to 676 million, a staggering 40 per cent increase, driven by the rapidly growing number of youth labour market entrants<sup>3</sup>.

Youth unemployment and underemployment are fundamental development challenges globally, but particularly in Africa, which is undergoing a demographic transition. Africa's youth are its biggest asset and the drivers of sustainable economic growth<sup>4</sup>.

In Africa, employment in general and women's employment in particular exhibit somewhat different patterns relative to other regions of the world. In this region, youth leave school earlier than in other regions and join the workforce at an earlier age, mostly joining the informal sector. Education past primary school is often out of the reach of young people living in poverty and those who are otherwise vulnerable or marginalized, as they are expected to help cover their family's more immediate needs, and this early exit from education further limits their future employment options.

The importance of education in expanding job opportunities in the school to-work transition (SWTS) period is particularly evident in these circumstances<sup>5</sup>.

According to the African Development Bank, Africa creates 3 million wage-earning jobs annually, compared to the 10-12 million youth that enter the labor force each year. As a result, fostering entrepreneurship has become a key pillar of the policy agenda in developing and emerging countries to expand employment opportunities for youth. The policy discourse has coalesced around two distinct pathways whereby entrepreneurship can address youth employment: (i) Growth approach: entrepreneurship as an engine of economic growth and job creation — these are entrepreneurs of all ages that create and grow businesses that will generate jobs for youth, and (ii) Livelihood's approach: entrepreneurship by youth as a means to acquire productive employment and livelihoods for themselves<sup>6</sup>.

that special attention is paid to addressing gender barriers, as well as to special needs of other disadvantaged youth groups such as persons with disabilities, rural youth, and displaced and refugee youth. Among those unemployed, young women are particularly faced with greater challenges and barriers to employment, constituting 35% of the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) population in Africa, compared to 20% of young men.

Youth unemployment remains disproportionately high in Africa. However, a growing digital economy, supported by improvements in information and communications technology, including access to the Internet, provides an opportunity for addressing youth unemployment. Still, Africa suffers a digital infrastructure and a skills gap. These gaps are likely to affect inclusive employment among the youth adversely<sup>1</sup>.

The Digital Skills for Decent Jobs for Youth campaign, led by International Telecommunication Union and ILO, aims to incentivize stakeholders to train and equip 5 million young people by 2030 with job-ready, transferable digital skills; foster digital jobs for youth; and promote an enabling environment for youth employment and entrepreneurship in the digital economy.

A digital economy is an economy based on digital technologies. This is an economy based on an internet (New Economy) with main components of e-business infrastructure which includes hardware, software, telecoms, networks, and human capital; e-business which includes the process of conducting business using the computer-mediated networks; and e-commerce which involves a transfer of goods from a place to another online<sup>2</sup>.

Africa needs a multi-stakeholder approach to create an enabling environment where the youth can live and drive digital economic trends. To achieve this, there is a need for the continent to invest in networking or connectivity, research, and design, and to improve and provide quality comprehensive education to all without leaving anyone behind<sup>3</sup>.

This calls for professional training in specific areas of the digital economy such as coding, artificial intelligence, robotics, and cybersecurity. This approach is based on the fact that Africa's youth is trailing behind the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where labor market, growth, and development need new occupations, ways of organizing official works and coordination, new skills for new jobs and new tools/facilities to help people do their jobs.

It's against this background that IDEP is organizing the course on "Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship: The Role of Digital Economy".

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The overarching objective of this course is to provide mid and senior level officials and decision makers with the necessary skills, tools, and mechanisms to harness the potential of the digital economy to alleviate youth unemployment and foster economic growth in Africa.

The specific objectives are to :

- Take full stock of the youth unemployment issue in Africa, along with its wide range of consequences for the achievement of SDGs.
- Appraise the current trends and dynamics in this unemployment and, ultimately, the urgency of action.
- Review existing compacts and initiatives in the region for addressing youth unemployment, including the strengths and shortcomings of these various initiatives

- Explore the theoretical potential of digital economies and entrepreneurship in alleviating youth unemployment in the region
- Review the conditions required for countries to harness this potential from digital economies. These conditions include efforts to address gaps in skills and infrastructure.
- Propose a model to support youth during their School-to-work-transitions.
- Discuss how to develop evidence-based youth policies that leaves no youth behind; foster entrepreneurship to expand job opportunities for youth; promote an enabling environment for youth employment and entrepreneurship in the digital economy.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

By the end of the capacity-enhancement training programme, the participants are expected to have acquired:

- An improved knowledge of youth employment programming and policy-making in Africa; and Youth Development in International compacts to meet the SDGs and Agenda 2063 objectives.
- An improved capacity to identify and analyze equal economic opportunities available to young women and other disadvantaged youth groups, and understand strategies to remove barriers to economic participation.
- An improved awareness of approaches to create an enabling business environment that supports youth employment and entrepreneurship within the digital economy, emphasizing policy, infrastructure, and skills development.
- A critical understanding of possible institutional mechanisms to empower young people during their transitions to work. These institutions must ideally help youth acquire essential skills, including financial, entrepreneurial, and digital literacy, while expanding their access to networks and markets to enhance economic participation and opportunities.
- Foster entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth and job creation, focusing on building supportive ecosystems that encourage digital skills and innovation.

## CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course consists of the following key modules:

- **Module 1:** Youth Employment in Africa: Full Scope, Consequences, Trends and Dynamics
- **Module 2:** Youth Employment in Africa: Existing Initiatives and Compacts
- **Module 3:** Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship as Potential remedy: Strengths and Weaknesses
- **Module 4:** Harnessing the Digital Economy: Closing the Gaps in Digital Skills and Infrastructure
- **Module 5:** Harnessing the Digital Economy: Closing the Gaps in Entrepreneurial Skills and Infrastructure
- **Module 6:** Harnessing the Digital Economy: Public Policy
- **Module 7:** Monitoring and Evaluating the Digital Entrepreneurship Programs

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Middle and senior level policy officials and managers directly connected with or responsible for planning, designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating youth development policy and instruments in their countries;
- Officials outside the core planning institutions who play key roles in economic and/or social policy formulation focusing on youth
- Representatives from Youth Organizations

## METHODOLOGY

This self-paced course will be delivered from **24<sup>th</sup> February to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025**. The course will be moderated asynchronously. In addition, each module has interactive lessons that provide the core content around the topic for that module. The lessons are designed in a way that learners are also able to self-assess their understanding through built-in quizzes. Additional resources such as bibliographies, web links and optional readings are provided for participants who wish to deepen their knowledge of the course topic.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### *Acceptance to the Course*

Applicants to the course are expected to have, as a minimum, a bachelor's degree preferably in social policy or Economy. In addition, two years of work experience in the field will be required. Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Until the registration deadline, participants are accepted to the course on a rolling basis and subject to availability of slots.

Applications must be completed exclusively on IDEP online application platform at :

<https://knowledge.uneca.org/idep>

### *Certificate of Completion*

A Certificate of Completion will be issued by IDEP to all participants who successfully complete the course-related self-assessments presented for each module.

### *Technical Requirements*

Access to internet is an essential condition for participation. The following specifications, as a minimum in terms of hardware and software, are required to take this e-Learning course, please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

- Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; Linux
- Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
- Software:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader
  - Adobe Flash Player
  - Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office
  - Browser: Google chrome, Firefox 36 or higher or Internet Explorer 7 or higher
- Modem: 56 K
- Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Pop-ups must be enabled

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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