



International
Labour
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DECENT JOBS
FOR YOUTH

**BOOSTING
DECENT JOBS AND
ENHANCING SKILLS
FOR YOUTH IN
NIGERIA'S DIGITAL
ECONOMY**





According to two prize-winning [Nigerian entrepreneurs](#), the key to success is empathy.

Dimeji Falana and Dare Adebayo graduated from the same computer science programme at university in Nigeria in 2010. Soon afterwards, they started a business as software developers, winning big clients like banks and even the Nigerian Government.

When a friend complained about difficulties in administrative processes at a local school, Dimeji and Dare jumped into action. They developed a programme to speed up small tasks, so school administrators could focus on what really matters: improving the quality of schooling.

Today, [Edves](#) serves 300 schools in 14 states and plans to expand to other African markets.

Their story serves as inspiration for the continent, as Africa's youth population continues to grow and as many countries undergo digital transformation.



The programme

Many young Africans face barriers to accessing decent work, which the COVID-19 pandemic has only made worse. At the same time, **the digital transformation of Africa has potential to create new jobs in the digital economy and to build back better.**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) - in support of the African Union (AU) and under the umbrella of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth - are implementing a programme to create decent employment and enhance skills for youth in Africa's digital economy.

The project

Name: Boosting decent jobs and enhancing skills for youth in Nigeria's digital economy

Location: Nationwide

Duration: 2021-2025

Implementing partners: ILO and ITU

Contact: jdey@ilo.org and itu-ro-africa@itu.int

Fast facts



Youth population

55.1 million
aged 15 to 29 (2019)



Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET):

31.4%
26% men | 37.6% women
aged 15 to 24 (2019)



ICT sector share of GDP:

15%
(2020)



Internet usage

28% of the population using the internet (2017)	42 active mobile internet subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2020)
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Youth employment challenges and opportunities

Nigeria has the largest population of all African countries. It is also very youthful: 27% of the country's 206 million inhabitants are 15 to 29 years old. However, two-thirds of young people are unemployed or underemployed, and most work informally. Economic growth has not resulted in sufficient decent job creation, and young people's skills often do not match the jobs that are available.

The digital economy presents opportunities for job creation, economic growth and productivity. **Nigeria is already home to some of the largest tech hubs on the continent and has the largest e-commerce market in Africa.** The country's ICT sector has steadily grown, even during the pandemic.

With access to digital skills, markets, networks, finance, information and representation, youth in Nigeria will both benefit from and contribute to their country's digital transformation and development.

Our goal

The goal of the project is to enable more young people in Nigeria to access decent jobs in the digital economy.

We aim to strengthen institutional capacity to design and deliver policies and services to boost decent jobs and enhance digital skills for youth. The project directly benefits young people aged 15 to 29, with a special focus on young women and youth with disabilities.

Our approach

We will achieve our goal through an iterative cycle of:

- Interventions to promote employment opportunities, digital skills and employment services
- Providing policy advice using new diagnostic tools and data
- Establishing partnerships and networks

KEY ELEMENTS INCLUDE:

- **Part 1:** Promote job and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth

We link young people to jobs, internships and work-based learning opportunities in the digital economy through a "My First Digital Job" scheme. We partner with employers, enterprises, workers' organisations and tech hubs to improve entrepreneurship support and business development services, making them fit for purpose for the digital era. Working with national institutions, we will promote dialogue on youth employment opportunities, skilling, and work quality in the digital economy.

- **Part 2:** Transform digital skills curricula and training, equipping young people with market-oriented digital skills

We update digital skills curricula and competency standards, making them more responsive to skills needs in the digital economy. We support education and training providers to reach more young people by digitalizing training services and building staff capacity. In partnership with local training providers, we will deliver inclusive digital skills training that is suitable for different skill levels and is responsive to the needs of young women, youth with disabilities and other vulnerable youth.

- **Part 3:** Modernize employment services, improving outcomes for young jobseekers and employers

We help public and private employment services provide up-to-date labour market information and connect youth to job opportunities by training staff and introducing new digital tools and systems. The career and vocational guidance offered in schools will also be improved to include a focus on job opportunities in the digital economy.

- **Part 4:** Provide policy advice using new diagnostic tools and data showing what best boosts youth employment.

We assess current digital skills availability and needs as well as job creation opportunities in Nigeria's digital economy. We also analyse what support young digital entrepreneurs need to succeed and the capacity of education and training providers to go digital. These data will support the provision of evidence-based policy advice. The knowledge gained through the project is shared nationally and regionally with other countries participating in the programme and through the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth.

- **Part 5: Establish partnerships and networks**

We strengthen collaboration across sectors to craft effective digital economy policies that are pro-employment and will enhance skills for youth. A national campaign will show how decent jobs in the digital economy can be promoted, highlighting the rights and responsibilities of young workers. It will also provide young people with information about skills development, career guidance and job placement opportunities.

Actions and achievements

In 2020, following a series of consultations and workshops with representatives from the federal government, workers' and employers' organizations, academia, development partners and youth-led organisations, we validated the project plan.

2021 marked the start of the project with a pilot implementation period.

Several actions are planned or underway:

- **Digital economy assessment** taking stock of skills needs, identifying opportunities for job creation and entrepreneurship promotion in the digital economy
- **National Innovation Challenge for Decent Digital Jobs** to design and deliver business development services for young entrepreneurs
- **Digital skills training for youth** in collaboration with national stakeholders
- **Establishment of a National Advisory Committee**, continuing the engagement of key stakeholders in the implementation of the project

Spotlight on action: Innovation Challenge for Decent Digital Jobs

Through a national Innovation Challenge, **we are selecting a youth-led organisation with innovative ideas to work with us in supporting young entrepreneurs and stimulating job creation in the digital economy.**

The Innovation Challenge is open to all youth-led organisations – such as incubators, innovation or tech hubs and co-working spaces – that are supporting young entrepreneurs in Nigeria, for example through training, access to networks and markets or mentoring.

In their proposals, applicants are asked to showcase their best ideas for business and skills development that will address the needs of young entrepreneurs and catalyze job creation in the digital economy. **The most innovative, scalable and sustainable proposal will be selected.**

We will work with the winning applicant to develop and implement their idea, demonstrating how youth-led digital solutions can move the needle on decent job creation.

Support our work

Are you ready to invest in decent jobs and digital skills for youth in Nigeria?

We are looking for partners who can:

- Provide **financial and technical support** to implement and scale up project interventions
- Engage public and private stakeholders to **establish new partnerships** and attract additional investments

If you are interested in supporting our work, email us at jdey@ilo.org or itu-ro-africa@itu.int

