



Concept Note

Digital Skills for Connected Jobs

Empowering Refugees and Host Communities

ILO-UNICEF

Learning Lab #2

Thursday 31 August 2023

13:00 - 14:00 CET - [Zoom](#)

Background

In today's rapidly changing world driven by digital transformation, digital skills are increasingly becoming important for the workforce. Studies consistently highlight the escalating demand for digitally skilled talent in labour markets worldwide. For example, in EU countries, 57 per cent of enterprises struggle to fill Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialist roles. While in sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 65 per cent of job opportunities demand at least a basic level of digital proficiency ([Rand, 2021](#)). As many existing tasks will be complemented by technology, new skills will be demanded, including in hybrid jobs requiring the combination of digital skills and multidisciplinary training ([ILO, 2021](#)).

Connected jobs are becoming the norm as many roles shift online and remote and platform work becomes more common. However, the demand for digital skills outpaces the available supply, posing a significant global challenge. For instance, Africa's literacy rate at 64 per cent is notably below the global average, underscoring a significant digital skill gap. Even in South Africa, where Internet access is relatively higher, only half of the population possesses an intermediary level of digital literacy. The skill gap is particularly pronounced among displaced young people and youth in refugee-hosted communities. With the global population of forcibly displaced people reaching 108.4 million by the end of 2022, including approximately 43.3 million children and young people under the age of 18, the significance of providing essential digital skills to these individuals becomes paramount ([UNHCR, 2023](#)).

The demand for digital skills spans a wide range, from basic digital literacy required to specialized expertise in areas such as web development, coding, programming, and data science. The rapid pace of technological innovation has resulted in certain skills, such as machine learning, automation, and data analysis, becoming especially sought after. In addition to digital skills, success in the digital economy also requires a focus on transferable skills.

Many upskilling initiatives have been carefully designed to support youth from displaced populations and underrepresented communities. However, with the ongoing evolution of the

digital landscape and the issue of skill mismatch, the workforce needs to continually improve their digital skills. This requires investment, which is seldom sufficient in refugee contexts. Moreover, transferable skills, also crucial for success in the digital economy, often do not receive the same level of attention in these initiatives.

To ensure the youth's prosperity in this rapidly changing digital era, it is essential to equip them not only with technical knowledge but also with the necessary soft skills. This learning lab aims to delve into the essential digital skills and transferable skills required for refugee youth and their peers in host communities thrive in the digital age.

Learning Lab Objectives

1. **Explore the most in-demand digital skills for connected jobs** that would benefit young refugees and support access to further education and decent work.
2. **Discuss approaches to unlock the potential of digital skills** to support learning to earning initiatives and smooth transitions into the labour market for displaced youth.
3. **Exchange good practices** to acquire the digital skills and put youth refugees and their peers in host communities in the pathway to decent work.

Outcomes

By the end of this Learning Lab participants will:

- ▶ **grasp the profound impact of digital innovation** on the job landscape and the required skill sets, encompassing both traditional employees and freelancers.
- ▶ **gain insights into the most in-demand technical and durable/transferable skills** essential for connected jobs, in particular, for freelancing. Additionally, participants will understand how the demand for these skills rapidly evolves in response to technological advancements and market developments, and they will identify the emerging trends and specialized areas of expertise that are increasingly gaining importance in the digital job market.
- ▶ **learn from on-ground practitioners about equipping displaced individuals and underrepresented groups** with necessary skills (digital and transferable/durable) and adapting their initiatives to the rapidly changing digital economy. Additionally, they will gain insights into the challenges and successes these practitioners face while implementing their programs.

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Agenda

Co-hosted by ILO-UNICEF

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Opening and Introduction to Learning Lab

Overview on digital skills most in-demand skills for connected jobs and freelancing

- › *ILO*
- › *UNICEF*

How is training responding to changes in-demand for connected jobs

- › *Alan El-Kadhi, Gaza Sky Geeks Program Director*
- › *Julian Helderle, Learning Lions Kenya Co-Founder*

Q&A

Recap and Close