



# Future-proofing Africa's working youth

Enhancing job-related digital skills to increase employability and hinder youth unemployment



## The context

Youth unemployment is a worrying problem worldwide. The World Bank's 2017 figures placed the global youth unemployment rate at about 13.4%. However, most African countries are struggling with significantly higher rates (e.g. Tunisia at 36.3%; Ivory Coast at 25%).

In large parts of Africa, even young adults with higher education are unemployed. The lack of "employable skills" – knowledge and abilities demanded by today's economy including among others, digital skills – is a growing problem. The current skills shortage hinders local companies' development.

Therefore, equipping young people job-related digital skills plays a key role in developing and strengthening a sound job market in various African countries. Broadly effective job-related training in digital skills will not only benefit the local ICT sector but also all private sectors requiring digitalisation for example agriculture, food processing, automotive industry supplies, electronics, healthcare or the textile industry. Generally, the more digitally-trained a country's youth are, the more attractive the country becomes as a sustainable business location.

This, however, is not yet the case in several Middle Eastern and African countries.

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*'Together, we can make digital a solution for youth in Africa & Middle East to help them build a brighter future'*

Asma Ennaifer, Director of Orange Digital Center Program, Orange

## The partnership

Orange is one of the world's leading telecommunications operators, with a total customer base of 264 million worldwide in 2019. With 19 subsidiaries in Africa and the Middle East, as well as its innovation centres in Abidjan, Cairo, and Amman, Orange is one of the leading telecommunication operators in the region.

As one of the major socio-economic actors in Africa and the Middle East, Orange has a clear mid- and long-term interest in building innovative digital ecosystems in countries where it is present. Supporting local economic development through youth is important to create a stable, sustainable business environment to the Group's affiliates.

Recognising that it shares the same regional vision as the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it entered into a partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH under BMZ's develoPPP programme, which supports sustainable initiatives by private companies. In Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia, the partnership is supported by the BMZ's Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation, which operates under the brand Invest for Jobs.

Under the Orange Digital Center project, Orange's know-how in training and supporting young people in digital transformation and innovation will be complemented by GIZ's vast experience and international expertise in the inherent challenges of employability and entrepreneurship of African youth through its various country programmes.

Together, both partners hope to fulfil their shared vision of greater youth employability – including more women and girls in ICT jobs – while improving these countries' sustainable growth and supporting their digital transformation.



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## Our project

The participating countries for this wide-ranging project include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Tunisia.

The plan is to establish an Orange Digital Centre in every capital city that comprises a coding school, a digital manufacturing space to create and prototype with digital equipment - "FabLab Solidaire" - and a startup accelerator "Orange Fab". These centres will have affiliates in regions outside the capitals, the "Orange Digital Centre Clubs" in universities. The idea is to build synergies among all these programmes, and among each country's capital and regions, by offering trainings, working on real projects with social impacts and hosting events and challenges such as hackathons and talks.

Women and girls are particularly encouraged to participate with the offer of women-only courses and events.

The **coding schools** are equipped with computers and software in which Orange experts will offer to young graduates or non-graduates as well as people in professional retraining internships, workshops and free training on, among others, web, mobile (Android, iOS), design UX/UI, unity, cyber security, IOT, Big Data, IA, Python, and also soft skills.

The "**FabLab Solidaire**" meanwhile is part of a worldwide network of spaces where objects and digital hardware can be created and prototyped with digital equipment (3D printers, laser cutters, etc.). It offers training sessions, bootcamps, and support for youth with innovative ideas/concepts, all based on regional needs.

The training of young people on the latest technological trends will be done at the coding school for the software part and the "FabLab Solidaire" for the hardware part, which will favour the creation of successful technological projects. The young people thus trained will have the choice to start their own start-up and benefit from a technological incubation or to move towards the job market on which they will be privileged and directly operational.

The **Orange Fab accelerators** are building blocks that are part of an international network of accelerators that helps incubated start-ups grow by building commercial partnerships with Orange Business Units and Orange group partners, at national and international level.

Orange experts will also provide free training sessions on the latest technological trends and soft skills to students of local partner universities.

For all programmes, Orange and GIZ will organise speed recruiting days every semester and invite all interested partner firms in the country to recruit newly trained students and young people who are now qualified, from Orange Digital Centers and partner universities..

### At a glance

<b>Duration</b>	01 January 2020 – 31 December 2022
<b>Country</b>	14 Middle Eastern and African countries
<b>Objective</b>	Train youth in job related digital skills, enhance their employability and hinder youth unemployment
<b>Partners</b>	Orange and GIZ
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At least 8,000 youth – 20% girls and women – secure internships and/or jobs where they can apply the digital skills acquired through the project</li><li>• At least 20,000 youth – 20% girls and women – are trained and/or further qualified in various digital fields.</li></ul>

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