

AfDB launches coding centres of excellence across Africa

The African Development Bank has launched a digital tool to help African youth learn to code. The goal is to scale up the program to 130 centres of excellence across the African continent over a 10-year period.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

The African Development Bank and technology firm [Microsoft](#) this week launched the '[Coding for Employment](#)' [digital training platform](#), an online tool to provide digital skills to African youth, wherever they are across the continent.

The platform, launched at the 2019 African Economic Conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, aims to promote a continuous learning culture among young people and build their capacity to shape the continent's future.

The high-level event drew heads of state and government, ministers and leaders from the private sector and academia to discuss how this new tool and other technological innovations could be used to spur development across the continent.

"The youth employment and skills development challenge is a complex issue that requires systemic thinking and bold partnerships ... to address the existing skills gap and link youth to decent and sustainable employment," said Hendrina Doroba, the African Development Bank's acting director for Human Capital, Youth & Skills Development.

"The skills training platform launched today is a testament to the impact that such partnerships can achieve and the Bank looks forward to strengthening similar partnerships."

The platform teaches technical courses such as web development, design, data science and digital marketing and will be constantly adapted to respond to market demand. It is accessible on mobile devices, even in low internet connectivity settings and has an affordable, easy-to-navigate, secured and private interface.

“A defining challenge of our time is ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to benefit from technology,” Ghada Khalifa, Director of Microsoft Philanthropies for the Middle East and Africa, said at the launch.

“Forward-thinking initiatives such as the digital training platform represent our commitment to helping drive the momentum needed. Though there is still much work to be done, we believe that through dynamic partnerships such as these, we can help build a knowledge-based economy in Africa that leaves no person behind.”

The Coding for Employment Program is a crucial part of the [African Development Bank's strategic agenda](#) to create 25 million jobs by 2025, and to equip 50 million African youth with competitive skills. The Bank piloted the program in five countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire) in partnership with [The Rockefeller Foundation](#) and Microsoft and is currently developing 14 ultra-modern centres specialised in ICT and entrepreneurship skills trainings for youth.

The goal is to scale up the program to 130 centres of excellence across the continent over a 10-year period. It will create nine million jobs by building synergies with the public and the private sector globally to deliver demand-driven, agile and collaborative skills to empower young people to become innovative players in the digital economy.

The Coding for Employment training platform can be accessed [here](#) across 54 African countries.

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