African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

IDEP | **CEA**

Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship: The Role of Digital Economy

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS
Announcement in Brief

Type :	Short Term Course
Program Area :	Economics and Social Policy
Beginning of the course :	22 March 2021
Duration :	6 Weeks
Language :	English & French
Location :	Web Based E-Learning
Fee :	Covered by UNECA
Application Deadline :	12 March 2021
Specific target audience :	Technocrats in the fields of Economics and Social Policy
Website :	http://services.unidep.org/e-idep/
Applications :	https://www.unidep.org/?apply

N.B.: IDEP encourages particularly and supports the participation of qualified women in its capacity building and training programs.

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). 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 peoples, 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[1].

By 2030, as the global population is expected to reach 8.6 billion, the youth population will increase to more than 1.3 billion. Pervasive unemployment, underemployment and longer school- to-work transitions are some of the most significant challenges facing the rising youth population. These challenges are the result of the lack of adequate professional opportunities for young people, and increasingly skewed skills imbalances, i.e. shortages, surpluses and mismatch of skills acquired versus those demanded by the world of work[2].

Today, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population. The active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by the target date, and to averting the worst threats and challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration.

Young people in developing economies face an employment situation that is very different from that of youth in developed economies. In most developing economies opportunities for youth are concentrated in the informal sector, where poor job security, low wages, and limited chances for on-the-job learning restrict the ability of young people to leverage such jobs to secure better, more formal work. Those youth most affected by poverty and marginalization face challenges relating to the cost of education and the possibility of having to leave school to help cover their families' rising cost of living; these factors effectively prevent many youth from completing secondary education or in some cases even primary education. For young people who lack a strong educational foundation, initial experiences in the labour market can reinforce the cycle of poverty and undermine the intergenerational promise of improving economic outcomes. For a large number of youth, working poverty continues to weaken their ability to prepare themselves for better employment and to escape chronic financial hardship and its attendant challenges.

Technological innovation and automation are rapidly changing the nature and context of work for the young people of the world. Advances in ICT have greatly increased the productivity of workers and enabled the creation of new jobs and industries. Youth are particularly well-positioned to benefit from these developments, given their early familiarity with digital technologies and their openness to exploring their application in an ever-widening range of new and existing contexts[3].

Interventions designed to empower youth to start their own businesses are increasingly part of the youth-oriented development agenda. With the high levels of unemployment in many countries, entrepreneurship is seen as a means of engaging ambitious youth in creating their own employment opportunities while also generating work opportunities for other youth. Entrepreneurship is a path suitable for some young people but must be viewed in the context of a broader youth employment strategy and not seen as the main approach to youth employment.

One of the social and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, worldwide, is the loss of jobs that come as a result of the lockdown and extreme social distancing measures. In Africa, for instance, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that in the first month of the pandemic, the income deriving from the informal sector (major source of employment in the continent), was expected to drop 81 percent. According to ECA estimates, 19 million jobs will be lost due to the pandemics, increasing the levels of poverty and inequality.[4]

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[1] UN World Youth Report - Page 6 , 252 Pages
[2] Population 2030 "Demographic Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development Planning", UNDESA 58 pages
[3] World Youth Report - Page 58, 252 pages
[4] Source: COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, April 2020

Furthermore, the McKinsey report states that between 9 to 18 million formal jobs in Africa can be lost or made redundant, whereas 30 to 35 million formal jobs will suffer a substantial decrease, due to the respective decrease of working hours.[5]

Harnessing technology might be one of the solutions to the above stated challenges and more so for the youth, tech savvy and abreast with the technology in other aspects of their lives. The pandemic is proving that the ability to leverage digital tools for solutions and transformation are a critical part of all economies in a post-pandemic scenario and for Africa this means tapping on the potential for youth. Most governments have already leveraged this potential as the youth already inwardly produced protective equipment and other innovative products, as in the cases of Senegal, Rwanda and South Africa.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The overarching objective of the course is to provide middle and senior level officials and decision makers with the necessary skills, tools and mechanisms to enhance youth development efforts, develop evidence-based youth policies that leaves no youth behind; and that can accelerate youth related objectives.

Expected skills upon completion include :

- An improved knowledge of Youth Development in the international compacts to meet the SDGs and Agenda 2063;
- Integrating Youth Policies in National Development Plans;
- Promoting result driven multi-stakeholder collaboration on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship;
- Enabling young people to acquire useful skills, including financial, entrepreneurial and digital literacy skills, and increasing their exposure to networks and access to markets;
- Creating an enabling business environment for Youth in order to facilitate the emerging of firms and job creation;
- Understanding the Role of Digital Economy in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course consists of six standard modules, and one writing module that involve the drafting of individual or team papers. Time devoted to this module will be spread over the duration of the course with a final day of team presentations.

Each module will address two major aspects: sensitization of issues (WHAT and WHY) and operational issues (HOW). Key components of the modules include:

- **Module 1** : Youth Development in the SDGs 2030 and Agenda 2063
- **Module 2** : Education and Skills Development
- **Module 3** : Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
- **Module 4** : Evidence-Based Youth Policies
- **Module 5** : Financing Youth Development
- **Module 6** : The Role of Digital Economy within the Context of COVID-19

METHODOLOGY

This self-paced course will be delivered from 15th March to 23rd April 2021. The course will be moderated asynchronously on a weekly basis and participants are required to participate in weekly on-line discussions. 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.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target participants are as follows:

- 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Acceptance to the Course

Applicants to the course are expected to have, as a minimum, a bachelor's degree preferably in Economics or Social Policy. 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://www.uni-dep.org/?apply

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:
  o Adobe Acrobat Reader
  o Adobe Flash Player
  o Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office
  o 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

CONTACT INFORMATION

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