

# Coding for Employment's new training centres to empower women in ICT

African Development Bank's Coding for Employment programme is setting aside half of its initial training slots specifically for women applicants, the bank announced on International Girls in ICT Day.



Image source: Andor Bujdoso – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The Coding for Employment programme, which equips African youth with the digital skills, is part of a foundational pipeline for girls and young women to pursue science and technology-related careers.

Coding For Employment held virtual and in-person ribbon-cutting ceremonies for three new centres of excellence recently. Two of the centres are in Nigeria — at Covenant University in Ogun State and at Gombe State University, Gombe State. The third centre of excellence is situated on Kenya's University of Nairobi campus.

“This launch is a reflection of the bank’s strong commitment to creating a world where gender equality is true in the classroom, in the boardroom, and in every sector of the economy in order to build a more inclusive, innovative, and resilient African society,” said Martha Phiri, bank director for human capital, youth and skills development.

Initially, the centres will serve participants in Coding for Employment's Digital Ambassadors programme, a new, intensive peer-to-peer training model set to expand digital skills to more African youth, especially in rural communities where internet connectivity is low.

The launch event also included a virtual discussion on the role of women in Africa's digital economy as well as persistent gender disparities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

According to the International Telecommunication Union, which organises the Girls in ICT Day, only 30% of the world's tech science and technology professionals are women.

"Socio-cultural norms, beliefs, and bias have long informed how women are perceived and limited the opportunities for women to pursue careers in the technology field. Breaking these biases requires exposing young girls to coding and to STEM-related fields very early on, for them to see it as a viable career path," said Olatomiwa Williams, Microsoft's Nigeria country manager. Microsoft is a Coding for Employment partner.

The new centres of excellence are equipped with 50 computers, ergonomic furniture in classroom-style learning stations, and informal networking areas. Students enrolled in Coding for Employment programs gain access to free courses in web design, app development, data science, and digital marketing, among others.

The Coding for Employment Program is a key component of the African Development Bank Group's [Jobs for Youth in Africa Initiative](#), which aims to put Africa's youth on a path to prosperity. By 2025, the Jobs for Youth in Africa Initiative aims to equip 50 million youth with employable skills and create 25 million jobs in agriculture, information, communication and technology fields, and other key industries across Africa.

The centres' opening brings to seven the number of Coding for Employment-branded learning spaces across the continent, including in Rwanda, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire. Coding for Employment plans to open 130 centres across Africa by 2025.

To learn more about Coding for Employment, visit: [www.Coding4Employment.org](http://www.Coding4Employment.org)

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