

UK-Kenya Tech Hub's Digital Apprenticeship Programme

Part of DCMS' [International Tech Hub Network](#).

Overview

Challenge

High unemployment rate (40%) mostly impacting young people (85% of unemployed are under 35) and a need for experienced digital talent

Solution

- UK-Kenya Tech Hub partnership with EldoHub and Thunderbird School of Global Management
- 3-month business placements for junior tech professionals
- Participants also receive training and mentoring

Impact

- 40 junior tech professionals trained and matched with mentors and businesses

Background

COVID-19 has accelerated the need for SMEs to digitise their business models, however many do not know how to start. Young Kenyans are technically able to support this shift, having gained skills through formal education or being self-taught, but lack the necessary work experience.

The UK-Kenya Tech Hub partnered with [EldoHub](#) – a local tech innovation company – and [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#) to launch the Digital Apprenticeship Programme. It was designed to provide junior tech professionals (JTPs) with practical work experience and training, whilst demonstrating to businesses the importance of digitisation and subsequent need to hire tech talent.

Programme

The Digital Apprenticeship Programme placed 40 JTPs in host businesses for 3 month placements, during which they worked on specific digital projects

identified by the businesses. Participants received one-to-one mentoring from experienced professionals in the tech industry, alongside soft skills training on communication and leadership.

543 applications were received from across 40 of the 47 counties in Kenya, with 137 of these from women. 89 businesses expressed interest, with identified digital projects including app development and digital marketing amongst others. Following online tests, assessments and interviews, the top 40 applicants were selected to participate. The main digital skills that businesses were looking for were software development, digital marketing, and data analysis.

At the conclusion of the pilot programme, 50% of JTPs had secured further employment – either permanently hired by their host business, securing work elsewhere, or starting consultancy work and/or their own business.

We are excited to be a part of this multi-stakeholder collaboration that makes available talent and skills of the future that are necessary for companies to build forward stronger beyond COVID-19. The Pandemic has accelerated the digital revolution which makes this initiative a timely intervention to ensure businesses recover faster and remain relevant, while offering real experience to the Junior Tech Professionals

Philip Thigo, Director for Africa at Thunderbird School of Global Management

Tech Hub leadership

The UK-Kenya Tech Hub, together with FCDO Africa Technology and Innovation Partnership (ATIP), provided funding and technical advisory support to the consortium, and stipends for the JTPs.

Through this partnership, the Hub is addressing both supply and demand issues surrounding digital skills and entrepreneurship. Specific digital projects based on business need were identified at the outset, allowing a tailored JTP match. Each JTP gained real business experience and a completed project to add to their portfolio, and each business solved a critical issue, resulting in increased revenues, decreased costs, or improved efficiencies. As many SMEs do not have the necessary resources to mentor junior employees, this programme also meets that need by matching each participant with a corporate mentor & 'tech buddy' alongside soft skills training.

Looking to the future

Kenya has a rapidly growing youth population (75% of Kenyans under 35) who need decent employment, and businesses are feeling the impact of COVID-19 and needing to digitise – creating opportunities for win-win initiatives for business and talent. Innovative approaches addressing both issues, such as the Digital Apprenticeship Programme, must continue to be piloted, implemented and scaled.

For more information

Read local media coverage of the partnership:

[Capital Business](#): How Eldohub Is Transforming Kenya's Tech Space

Local media reports on the graduating cohort:

More about the Digital Apprenticeship Programme and the UK-Kenya Tech Hub

To learn more about the Digital Apprenticeship Programme please visit the [website](#). To learn more about the UK-Kenya Tech Hub please contact: UKKenya.TechHub@fco.gov.uk.

The UK government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is building a global network of Tech Hubs. The International Tech Hub Network aims to forge innovation partnerships between the UK and international tech sectors, stimulate local digital economies; and build high-end digital skills to drive sustainable jobs and growth.

Contact the network at: international-tech-hub-network@dcms.gov.uk