



#HACKTHEDIVIDE: CALL FOR YOUNG AFRICAN INNOVATORS

SHAPE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN NAIROBI, CONNECT WITH
A GLOBAL NETWORK, AND GROW YOUR IDEA THROUGH
ITALY'S LEADING TECH INCUBATOR

7 – 8 OCTOBER 2025
NAIROBI

Call for applications



**Are you a digital entrepreneur
using technology to expand access
to work, training,
and better opportunities?**



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

#HacktheDivide is your chance to take your ideas further—starting with a two-day hackathon in Nairobi, and continuing with incubation support in Italy.

Applications are open to **young digital innovators (aged 18-35) from 25 African countries** to co-create inclusive tech solutions that address real challenges such as youth employment, digital inclusion, and labour mobility.

You'll spend two days in Nairobi collaborating in teams, supported by expert mentorship, and interacting directly with global institutions and policy leaders shaping Africa's digital future. **Travel, accommodation, and meals will be covered for all selected participants.**

On the final day, you'll have the opportunity to present your solution live during the broadcast event [Skills for Fair Digital Transitions in Africa](#) in Turin, connecting you with key decision-makers in Italy and linking local innovation to global decision-making.

One team will be selected for a **tailored incubation experience with I3P**, Italy's leading tech incubator. This includes a funded trip to Italy and access to the Italian innovation ecosystem.

Apply here by 7 September: <https://forms.office.com/e/nMhsmmJwnu>

Selected participants will be contacted on 15 September.

BACKGROUND

#HackTheDivide is part of the broader Skills for Fair Digital Transitions in Africa initiative, co-organized by the [International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization \(ITCILO\)](#), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and in partnership with the African Union Commission - Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Aligned with the ILO Decent Work Agenda and Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa, this event supports continental frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2025. It places digital skills at the heart of inclusive, human-centred transitions, contributing to AU Agenda 2063's goals of inclusive digital growth and youth empowerment.

THEMATIC AREAS

#HackTheDivide is built around **six core themes**, priority areas where digital innovation can make a meaningful contribution to shaping a more inclusive and sustainable world of work in Africa. Each theme is drawn from priorities shared by governments, social partners, training institutions, and local authorities, reflecting key areas where digital innovation can strengthen Africa's skills and employment landscape.

The specific challenge prompts will be unveiled on day 1. Participants will be grouped into teams based on the six challenges, and each team will work together to co-develop one solution during the hackathon, drawing on diverse backgrounds and experiences.

1. TVET and youth employment

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) equips people with the practical skills they need to access decent work. But too often, training systems don't reflect what the labour market actually demands. This theme explores how digital tools can make TVET more responsive, flexible, and aligned with the needs of youth and employers.

2. Labour mobility and migration

Millions of Africans move in search of work, but many face barriers when their skills aren't recognized. This theme looks at how digital innovation can make migration fairer and more empowering through tools that help people document their experience, verify informal skills, and match with decent job opportunities across borders.

3. Entrepreneurship and business development

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), especially those led by youth and women, are vital engines of innovation and growth. Yet many struggle to access capital, markets, and support. This theme focuses on how digital tools can unlock opportunities for entrepreneurs and help small businesses thrive.

4. AI for the public good

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping how we learn, work, and make decisions. But how can we ensure that its benefits are shared, especially by those outside the formal economy? This theme explores how AI can be used to support inclusive job-matching, personalized career guidance, and public planning while ensuring transparency, fairness, and ethical use.

5. Gender equality, inclusion and the transition to formal work

Across Africa, many people work in informal jobs: without contracts, recognition, or access to services. This theme explores how digital tools can support informal workers by expanding access to training, social protection, and economic opportunity. Solutions should be designed to work in low-connectivity settings and reach those most often excluded, including women, rural workers, and marginalised communities.

6. Local innovation and governance

Local governments and communities are closest to the people they serve, but don't always have the tools to address employment and training needs. This theme explores how technology can support local solutions, helping cities and regions plan better services and respond to local priorities.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Applications are open to young digital innovators (**aged 18-35**) based in the following countries:

Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda.

Whether you are already building solutions that help people gain skills, access decent work, or grow their businesses, -or working in related areas like education, digital inclusion, migration, fintech, or data innovation-, we are looking for young entrepreneurs with the ideas and drive to help shape a more inclusive digital future. Selection criteria:

- **Relevant experience:** you or your startup work in one or more of the hackathon's focus areas.
- **Commitment to inclusion:** your work aims to expand access and opportunity, especially for underrepresented groups.
- **Potential for impact:** you bring ideas or insights that could help build solutions others can use and adapt.
- **Availability:** you should be available to attend the full hackathon in Nairobi on 7-8 October 2025.

PRIZE

At the end of the hackathon, each team will present their idea to a panel of experts. One winning team will be selected based on the quality, relevance, and potential of their solution.

The winning team will receive a tailored incubation experience with [I3P](#), the incubator of the Politecnico di Torino, and the first public incubator in the world. This includes:

- A fully funded trip to Italy at the end of the incubation process.
- Ongoing mentorship to further develop the idea.
- Access to Italy's vibrant innovation ecosystem.

APPLY HERE BY 7 SEPTEMBER

<https://forms.office.com/e/nMhsmmJwnu>

INFO

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT**

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