



Local developers will benefit from training on Google and Android clouds. FILE | NATION

Kenyan developers to receive Android and cloud training

BY KEVIN ROTICH

Kenyan developers will be trained on android and Google cloud by Google with an aim of increasing the number of certified software professionals in the country. Google last week announced 30,000 training opportunities for Kenyans as well as other African countries.

The programme, which is open for application until 31 May 2022, will be implemented in partnership with Andela and Pluralsight.

"Opportunities for software developers in Africa are at an all-time high. At Google, we have been supporting developers in Africa through community and training programs for over 10 years," Africa Developer Training Programme Manager John Kimani said.

Successful applicants will get access to curated content on android apps development using Kotlin and Google Cloud preparing them for associate engineer level certification. They will also get access to a pan-African network of peer learning groups and community mentors to assist them in their journey.

The announcement coincides with the global Google I/O event, an annual developer conference, where Google will be sharing more about Africa's booming developer ecosystem.

"Today, there are more than 180 active developer communities in 30 countries across Africa that provide developers with the opportunity to connect, learn and grow together," Mr Kimani said.

Only last year, 10,000 Google developer scholarships were disbursed across Africa to beginners (with little or no programming experience) and 5,000 to professional developers (with +1 year of experience) spread across Android and mobile web development tracks.

According to the 2021 Africa Developer Report by Google and Accenture, opportunities for software developers in Africa are driven primarily by the booming startup ecosystem and the global demand for remote work.

The ADR report looked at ways that technology companies can accelerate access to these opportunities through education and training programs that improve on job readiness.

The report further showed that nearly 1 in every 2 developers in Africa has been through a Google developer training or community program.

This comes at a time when the number of registered Kenyan domains grew by 61.5 percent in 2020, a new report shows, coming on the back of tough lockdown measures that were introduced to curb the spread of the virus.

Official data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2021 Economic Survey shows that the number of local domains grew to 101,123 in 2020 from 62,636 in 2019, representing a 38,487 increase.

Getting corporates to buy from women-owned firms

World Bank's IFC is trying to help female-owned businesses build their capacity to overcome limited access to capital, inadequate resources and skills to help them access big ticket jobs

BY OTIATO GUGUYU

When asked what portion of their procurement goes out to women-owned businesses, most corporates in Kenya estimate it at about 10 percent.

The reality is that in most cases it is one percent and on average three percent of direct purchasing volume.

Women entrepreneurs dominate the low-value procurement categories such as personal services in health clubs, gyms, and catering; and business services that provide bulk printing, marketing materials, signage, and cleaning.

World Bank's private equity fund the International Finance Corporation (IFC) wanted to find out the reason behind the dismal performance of women-owned businesses, and they discovered that it starts with defining what women-owned businesses are and facing top corporates to show them their own numbers.

"It is not like any company wants to exclude women-owned businesses, they do but they do not necessarily know how to make that happen," said Amena Arif, IFC country manager.

IFC launched a programme in June last year called Sourcing2Equal seeking to change this after surveying data from 571 SMEs, and interviews with 14 corporate buyers in Kenya, providing unique data on gender gaps in the participation of SMEs in corporate supply chains.

They want to link 1,300 Kenyan businesses to top corporate and replicate the model globally with a target of 5,000 women-owned businesses in three years.

Kenya is the first country specific location where the programme is being applied after examining barriers that Kenyan SMEs face in accessing private procurement contracts, and if there are differences based on whether companies are owned by women, men, or owned jointly by both.

They have enlisted 10 firms including Stanbic, Absa, Safaricom, Kengen, Unilever, Bidco, Bamburi, and Tropical brands.

IFC has organised learning where companies work with and learn from one another. They set voluntary targets within a time-bound period.

"How can we ensure this is not a CSR activity, it is not something they are doing that is just good



Amena Arif, IFC country manager. FILE

for their brand, but it makes economic sense, there is actually a business case. And with these companies we want to demonstrate there is a business case," Ms Arif said.

On the demand side, IFC discovered that most corporates just can't just find the right fit of women-owned suppliers who are reliable enough or have the experience to deliver on larger ticket procurement.

They are also unaware of some of their contracting policies that deny women opportunities including terms and conditions, that create unintentional constraints, particularly for new WSMEs, which must compete on an equal footing with large or existing suppliers.

IFC says the limited operational

capacity of women-owned small business to deliver on contracts, and buyers being unable to identify capable female suppliers were the most important challenges buyers face in trying to increase their purchasing from women.

On the supply side, IFC is trying to help women-owned firms build their capacity to overcome limited access to capital, inadequate resources, skills, and a rolex that can get them through the door before they can even try to break the glass ceiling.

"Is there enough capacity in women-owned businesses to participate and tap that opportunity? So we are also doing capacity building for women-owned businesses and are looking to train at least 1,300 businesses. Globally we are looking at 5000," Ms Arif said.

Kenyan government policy to ensure that 30 percent of government procurement contracts are awarded to micro, small, and medium-sized businesses that are owned by women, persons with disabilities, and/or youth is spreading to the private sector.

They are becoming alive to documented studies that show that a diverse supplier base provides several business benefits, including lower procurement costs, lower risk of disruptions in sup-

ply chains, greater brand recognition, and increased innovation. This business case is not well known to most buyers and does not appear to be the main driver for procuring goods and services from women-owned businesses.

IFC found that even progressive private players who adhere to sustainability standards that include gender equality are not doing enough on the procurement side.

Most buyers have not established the business case for supplier diversity, including gender-inclusive sourcing, and they do not collect sex-disaggregated data on their suppliers, which would enable them to determine how many suppliers are women-owned and led.

Nor are buyers able to set targets for achieving supplier diversity, and they do not have a budget for monitoring progress toward gender inclusion in tenders.

IFC wants to change that by partnering with local financial institutions to facilitate access to working capital and adapt contract payment terms to help them maintain their cash flow while linking with top corporate who have set targets to increase supplier tenders to women.

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Ms Alice Kimotho, arranges various types of fruits at her stall at Top Market in Nakuru county.

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