



SKILLS SPRINT
...upskilling Youth for productive engagement

Digital Dawn

— Igniting Potential, Transforming a Generation

*Empowering 20,000 Nigerian Youth
with Digital Skills*

A visual legacy publication of the
Skills Sprint programme



Olumide Balogun

Director, Google West Africa

FOREWORD

In an era where digital transformation is not merely a trend but a fundamental reshaping of our world, the imperative to equip every individual with the knowledge and skills to navigate, contribute to, and thrive in this new landscape has never been more urgent. Google.org is driven by the conviction that technology, when thoughtfully applied, can be a profound force for progress, unlocking human potential and expanding opportunity for everyone, everywhere. Their mission is to bring the best of Google – innovation, research, resources, and people – to bear on solving some of humanity's biggest challenges.

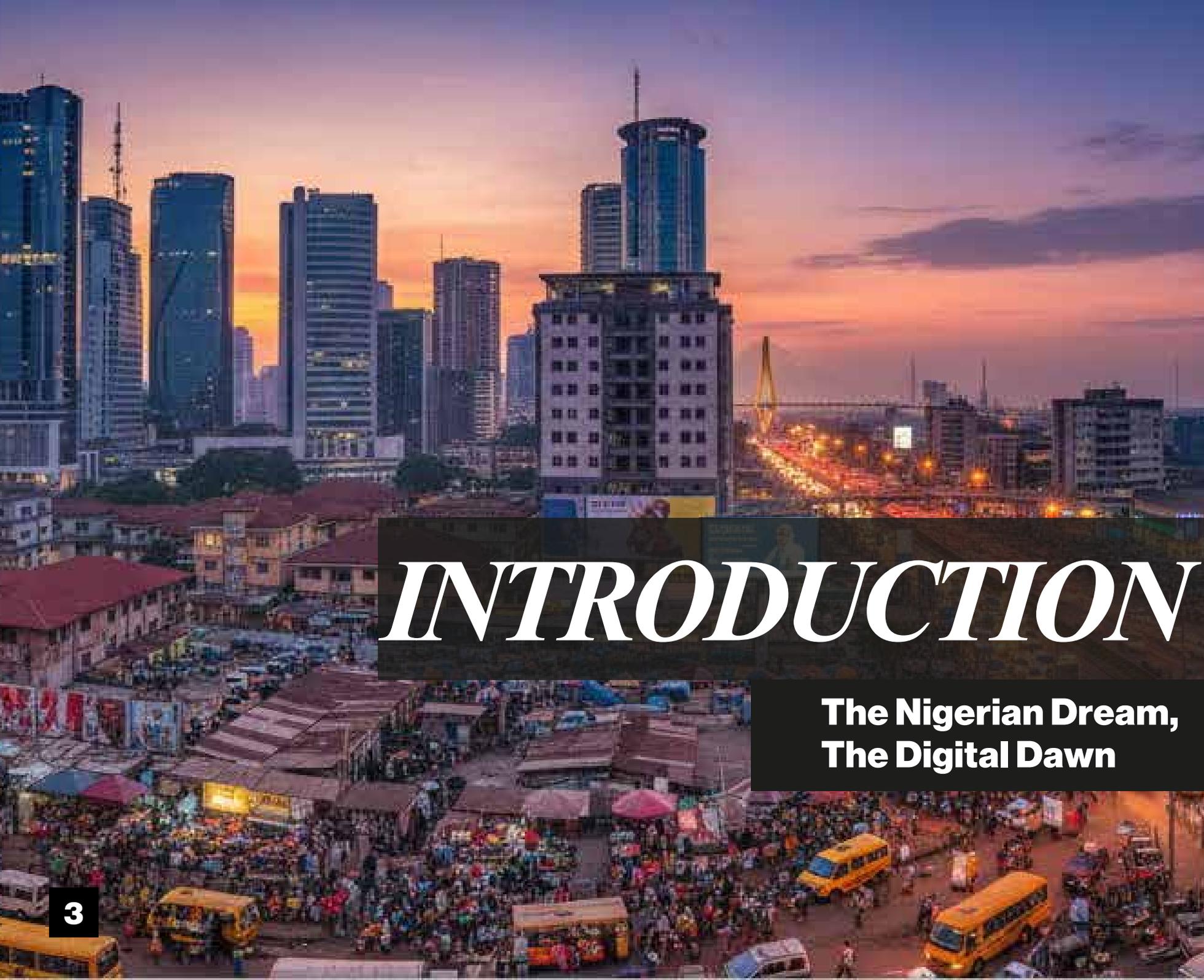
Africa, a continent of extraordinary dynamism, youthful energy, and boundless potential, is central to this global vision. We see a future where African innovation leads the world, and we are committed to playing our part in making that future a reality. This commitment is embodied in significant, long-term investments, such as Google's \$1 billion, five-year plan announced in 2021 to support Africa's digital transformation. This plan encompasses not only critical infrastructure and connectivity projects but also, crucially, tailored skill development programmes designed to empower the youth, entrepreneurs, and communities.

Nigeria, with its vibrant and rapidly growing youth population – a true powerhouse of talent and aspiration – stands at a pivotal moment in this digital dawn. The nation is already a recognized leader in Africa's flourishing tech ecosystem, and the drive of its young people is a powerful engine for innovation and change. It was in this spirit of partnership and shared optimism that Google.org proudly supported the Skills Sprint initiative. This programme, backed by a \$1.5 million grant, was conceived with an ambitious goal: to train 20,000 Nigerian Women and youth, particularly those from underserved communities, in essential 21st-century digital and creative skills. This endeavor is a direct contribution to supporting the Nigerian government's vital programmes aimed at creating over one million new internet-based jobs, a goal that Google wholeheartedly endorse and strive to facilitate.

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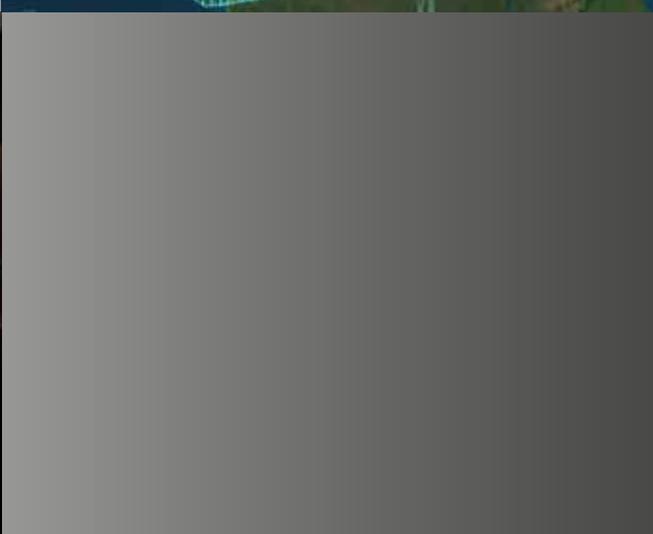
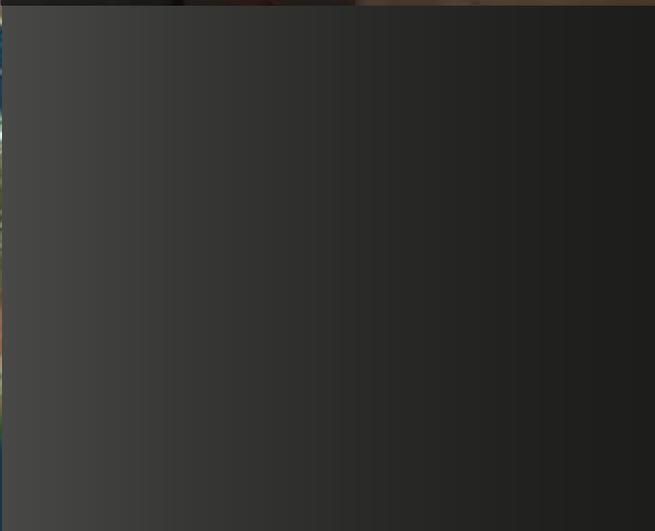
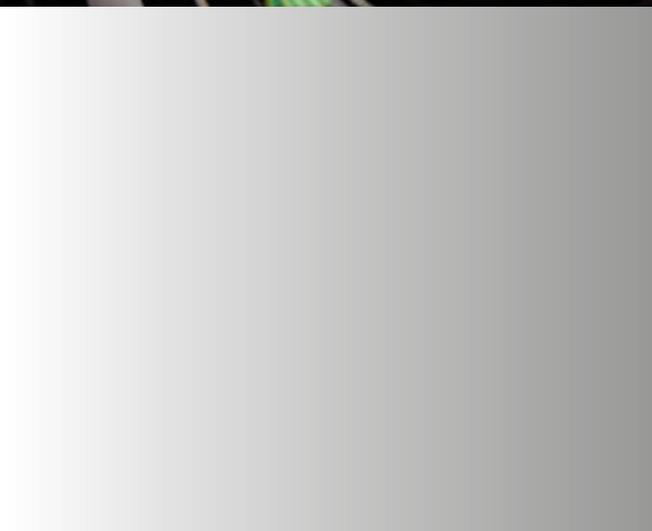
This is more than a record of a programme; it is a chronicle of human endeavor, a testament to the incredible power of collaboration, and a celebration of the transformative impact of targeted skills development. Within these pages, you will find the story of how Mind The Gap, Data Science Nigeria (DSN), and Creative Industries Initiative for Africa - C.I.I.F.A. (Engage Nigeria) – three exceptional organizations with deep local expertise – translated a bold vision into tangible reality. Their dedication, coupled with the unwavering enthusiasm of thousands of young Nigerians, has created ripples of positive change that extend far beyond the classroom.

The stories and achievements detailed herein are not mere statistics; they are vibrant reflections of resilience, creativity, and the unyielding human spirit. They illustrate how strategic investment in digital and creative literacy can unlock doors to new careers, foster entrepreneurship, build more inclusive communities, and contribute to a more



INTRODUCTION

**The Nigerian Dream,
The Digital Dawn**

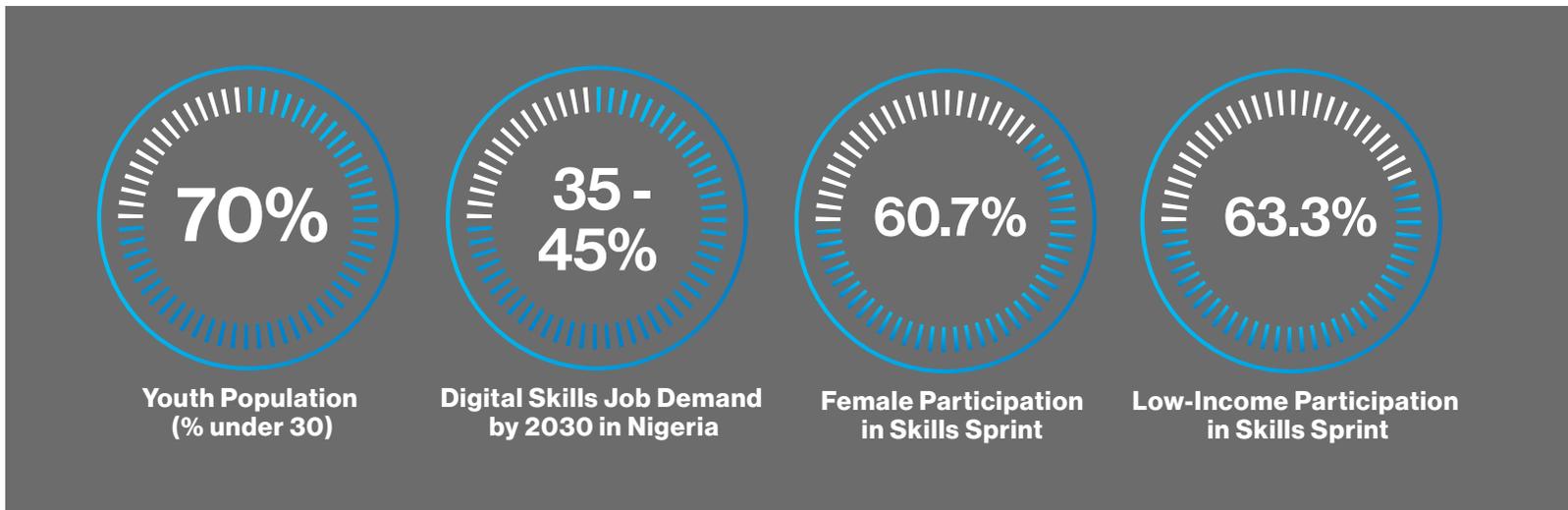


Nigeria, a nation of over 200 million people, pulses with an undeniable, youthful energy. With approximately 70% of its population under the age of 30, this demographic vibrancy represents both an immense opportunity and a profound challenge. The Nigerian dream, for many of these young individuals, is one of aspiration: for quality education, for meaningful and dignifying work, for the chance to contribute to their families' well-being and their nation's progress. Yet, in a world undergoing rapid economic and technological shifts, traditional pathways to achieving these dreams are often constrained, and the spectre of unemployment and underemployment casts a long shadow for a significant portion of this youth cohort.

However, even as these challenges persist, a new dawn is breaking, illuminated by the transformative potential of the digital and creative economies. The global shift towards digitalization has not merely touched Nigeria; it is actively being embraced and shaped by Nigerian ingenuity. The nation is rapidly carving out a significant space for itself on the world stage, from the global cultural impact of Nollywood and Afrobeats to a dynamic and resilient startup scene that positions Nigeria as a leading tech hub in Africa. This rapidly growing digital ecosystem offers a powerful beacon of hope, promising new avenues for employment, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic diversification. Indeed, the demand for digital proficiency is no longer a niche requirement but a fundamental necessity. Studies project that by 2030, a staggering 35% - 45% of all jobs in Nigeria will require digital skills, underscoring a critical imperative for upskilling and reskilling. The World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs Report 2025" further reinforces this global paradigm shift, signaling that adaptability, lifelong learning, and practical digital competencies are increasingly valued, often above traditional

It was precisely to harness this immense potential, to bridge the identified skills gap, and to answer the urgent call for future-ready capabilities that the Skills Sprint programme was conceived. Launched with the foundational and catalytic support of Google.org, Skills Sprint emerged as an ambitious, multi-partner initiative driven by a clear and compelling vision: to empower over 20,000 Nigerian youth, with a dedicated focus on women and individuals from underserved communities, by equipping them with cutting-edge 21st-century digital and creative competencies. This was not envisioned as a monolithic, one-size-fits-all training exercise. Instead, it was designed as a dynamic collaboration leveraging the unique strengths and deep contextual understanding of three distinguished implementing partners: Mind The Gap, Data Science Nigeria (DSN), and the Creative Industries Initiative for Africa (C.I.I.F.A.). Each partner brought a distinct focus, a tailored methodology, and an established network, ensuring that the training delivered was not only world-class but also deeply relevant and impactful across diverse segments of the youth population and various sectors of Nigeria's digital and creative economies.

The Skills Sprint initiative, therefore, represents far more than a skills development project. It is a strategic investment in Nigeria's most precious resource – its human capital. It is an affirmation of belief in the potential of Nigerian youth and a tangible contribution to the nation's journey towards a more inclusive, innovative, and prosperous future. By fostering digital literacy, nurturing creative talent, promoting AI fluency, and championing entrepreneurship, the programme aimed to do more than just fill job vacancies; it aimed to ignite a spark – a spark of curiosity, of confidence, of ambition – empowering young Nigerians to become not just passive participants in the digital dawn, but its active architects, innovators, and leaders. This book is dedicated to documenting that transformative journey – the vision that set it in motion, the partnerships that gave it strength, the challenges that were overcome, the myriad triumphs celebrated along the way, and above all, the thousands of transformed lives that stand as enduring testament to the profound and lasting power of "The Digital Dawn."



Metric	Data/Statistic
Estimated Youth Population (% under 30)	Approx. 70% of population under 30
Projected Digital Skills Job Demand by 2030 in Nigeria	35-45% of all jobs
Projected AI Contribution to Nigeria's Economy by 2030	\$15 billion
Skills Sprint Overall Youth Trained	20,585
Skills Sprint Campaign Awareness Reached	Over 5 Million
Overall Female Participation in Skills Sprint	Approx. 60.7%
Overall Low-Income Participation in Skills Sprint	Approx. 63.3%
Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs) Trained	7,104 (via OnTheJob)

This table provides a concise overview of the demographic context and the scale of digital opportunity in Nigeria, underscoring the relevance and significant reach of the Skills Sprint program, particularly its focus on inclusive growth by targeting key demographics such as women, low-income individuals, and YNEETs.

The Visionaries

Partners in Empowerment

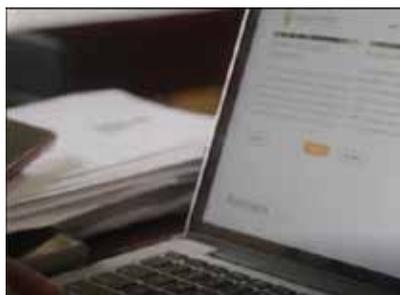
The ambitious scale, nuanced approach, and ultimately the resounding success of the Skills Sprint programme were forged in the crucible of strategic collaboration. This was not a solitary endeavor but a powerful alliance between Google.org, as the visionary supporter and enabler, and three exceptional implementing partners, each a recognized leader and specialist in their respective domains.

This synergy allowed for a multifaceted strategy, meticulously designed to address the diverse needs within Nigeria's vast youth population and to cater to the distinct requirements of different facets of the rapidly evolving digital and creative economies. The story of Skills Sprint is, at its heart, a story of collective expertise, shared commitment, and the exponential power of partnership in driving transformative change.

7







Google.org stands at the confluence of Google's unparalleled technological innovation and a profound, deeply ingrained commitment to addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges. Our mission is clear and unwavering: to apply Google's innovation, research, and resources to promote progress and expand opportunity for everyone.¹ We believe that technology can be a powerful equalizer, a force that democratizes access to information, skills, and pathways to a better future. This philosophy guides our work across several key focus areas, including "Knowledge, Skills, & Learning," where we strive to create accessible pathways for individuals globally to acquire the technical and Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills necessary to thrive in the ever-evolving digital economy.¹ Other vital areas include accelerating "Scientific Progress" through AI-enabled innovation for societal impact and building "Stronger Communities" by promoting digital wellbeing, enhancing online safety, and supporting local initiatives in the places we live and work.

In Africa, Google.org's commitment has translated into substantial, long-term investments aimed at catalyzing the continent's digital transformation. A great example is the 2021 announcement of a \$1 billion, five-year investment dedicated to supporting a range of initiatives across Africa. This comprehensive plan encompasses critical infrastructure development, enhancing connectivity, and, significantly, funding skills development programmes meticulously tailored to empower young people and entrepreneurs.² The Skills Sprint initiative in Nigeria is a direct and impactful manifestation of this broader commitment. The allocation of a \$1.5 million grant to train 20,000 Nigerian women and youth, particularly those from underserved communities, in essential 21st-century skills, was far more than a financial contribution. It represented a strategic investment in Nigeria's human potential, carefully designed to align with and bolster the Nigerian government's ambitious programmes aimed at creating over one million new internet-based jobs.

The philosophy underpinning Google.org's support for programmes like Skills Sprint is rooted in the conviction that access to digital skills is a fundamental enabler of economic mobility, social inclusion, and individual agency. We understand that sustainable impact is best achieved through collaboration with local organizations that possess deep contextual understanding, established networks, and a shared vision for empowerment. By partnering with Mind The Gap, Data Science Nigeria, and C.I.I.F.A. for the Skills Sprint programme, Google.org aimed to act as a catalyst, empowering these specialized entities to scale their expertise, innovate in their delivery, and ultimately maximize the reach and effectiveness of the investment. Through such strategic partnerships, Google.org seeks to ignite the spark of innovation and opportunity within communities, helping to build a more equitable, resilient, and prosperous digital future for Nigeria and beyond.

mindthe  gap

 **On The Job**
Bridging Youth to Opportunity



Mind The Gap



Mind The Gap stands as a formidable force in Nigeria's youth development landscape, a project-based strategic skills development, job creation, and social enterprise incubation platform. Their operational ethos is anchored in the profound belief that "Youth is the gateway to Nigeria's prosperity". As an award-winning thought leader, **Mind The Gap** has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to empowering young Nigerians with the critical skills and knowledge they need to forge better futures for themselves, their families, and their communities. With an impressive track record of engaging over 3 million youths, training more than **500,000**, and mentoring over 5,000 across the nation, Mind The Gap brings a wealth of experience, an extensive network, and a deep understanding of the youth demographic to the Skills Sprint consortium. Their work aligns closely with key **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)**, **Quality Education (SDG 4)**, and **Reduced Inequality (SDG 10)**.

Within the Skills Sprint initiative, Mind The Gap spearheaded the "OnTheJob Digital Onboarders" programme. This vital component was meticulously designed to target one of Nigeria's most vulnerable youth segments: **Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs)**. The OnTheJob programme aimed to equip these young individuals with essential 21st-century digital skills, not only to enhance their immediate employability but also to empower them to support the digital transformation of **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** across Nigeria. This dual focus is particularly salient given that an estimated **75%** of job seekers in Nigeria find employment within the MSME sector, making these enterprises critical engines of economic growth and job creation.

The achievements of the **OnTheJob** programme under Skills Sprint are a testament to its efficacy and reach. A total of 7,104 YNEETs were successfully trained in a comprehensive curriculum covering digital skills, social media management, and an understanding of opportunities within the rapidly growing digital economy. This intensive training was delivered across an impressive 12 states: Lagos, Oyo, Anambra, Abia, Edo, Rivers, Benue, Plateau, Kano, Kaduna, Gombe, and Adamawa. A remarkable outcome was that 3,576 of these trained youths transitioned into active participation in economic activities, many through paid internship opportunities where they could apply their newly acquired skills to directly benefit local businesses and gain invaluable hands-on experience. The accompanying **#ItsUp2Youth** campaign played a pivotal role in sensitization and mobilization, reaching over 150,000 youths through diverse channels, including strategic orientation camps for **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)** members and targeted social media outreach, effectively encouraging participation and illuminating pathways into the digital economy. The **OnTheJob** initiative, therefore, served as a critical and transformative bridge, connecting often-marginalized youth with tangible skills, practical experience, and sustainable pathways to economic engagement and self-reliance. The programme saw **46%** female participation and a significant **61%** of its beneficiaries identified as low-income.

7,104 youths

Total YNEETs Trained
(OnTheJob)

150,000+

#ItsUp2Youth Reach

75%

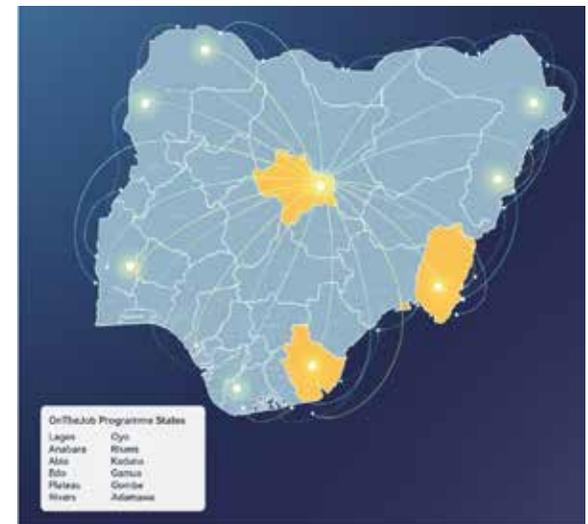
MSME Sector Importance
job seekers in Nigeria find
employment in MSMEs

3,000,000+

Total Youths Engaged
by Mind The Gap

46%

Female
Participation





Empowering Women in Tech in the North



ance Nigeria
S4
org

Arewa Ladies Tech
by Data Science
With support from **Google**



Data Science Nigeria (DSN) is unequivocally recognized as Africa's foremost Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Science organization. Established in 2016, DSN is driven by an ambitious and transformative mission: to nurture 1 million AI talents across the continent and to build and deploy AI solutions that improve the quality of life and well-being for 2 billion people in emerging markets. DSN's multifaceted approach encompasses robust talent development pipelines, pioneering AI for social good initiatives, strategic AI implementation for enterprises, cutting-edge research, and the cultivation of a vibrant and inclusive AI community that now connects over 14,000 professionals and enthusiasts across more than 90 countries. Their work is not just about shaping the workforce of tomorrow but also about driving digital transformation and fostering innovation across African organizations. For the Skills Sprint programme, DSN spearheaded the groundbreaking "Arewa Ladies4Tech" initiative. This was a highly targeted and culturally nuanced intervention dedicated to empowering women in Northern Nigeria, with a significant operational focus on Kaduna State. The initiative directly confronted the prevailing gender disparity in the technology sector and aimed to equip women with high-demand, future-proof skills in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, thereby enabling them to lead, innovate, and participate fully and equitably in the digital era. The programme's design was deeply contextualized, demonstrating a profound understanding of and respect for the unique cultural and social landscape of Northern Nigeria, which was pivotal to its acceptance and success.

Arewa Ladies4Tech achieved remarkable and measurable success. The programme successfully trained 5,378 women, with 5,217 starting the program and 2,324 completing the comprehensive job readiness training, demonstrating a strong retention and completion rate. A standout and defining feature of the initiative was the establishment and strategic rebranding of four female-only learning hubs in Kaduna: Kadict hub Kafanchan, Almara hub, 360 Maaas hub, and the Ibrahim Dabo Centre Zaria. These hubs were meticulously curated to provide safe, supportive, and collaborative spaces where women could learn, network, and grow, free from societal constraints. Crucially, the initiative launched the "AI in Hausa Series," an innovative and pioneering approach to democratize complex AI concepts by making them accessible through engaging animated content delivered in the Hausa language. This series reached an audience of over 30,000 Hausa speakers and gained further significant traction through a 12-week broadcast on DSTV, effectively breaking down language barriers and amplifying its impact on technological literacy in the region. The impact of Arewa Ladies4Tech resonated deeply, extending beyond individual skill acquisition. The Kaduna State Government formally recognized the project's outstanding contribution to human capital development with a prestigious award at the National Council on Communications Innovation and Digital Economy (NCCIDE). Furthermore, the programme successfully facilitated 100 paid internship opportunities for beneficiaries, providing them with vital hands-on experience and a bridge to employment.

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5,217
Women started the program



+30,000
"AI in Hausa Series" reach
(Hausa speakers)



2,324
Women who completed job
readiness training



5,200
Participants benefiting from
job-focused content



2,324
Women who completed job
readiness training



Nurturing Creative Talent



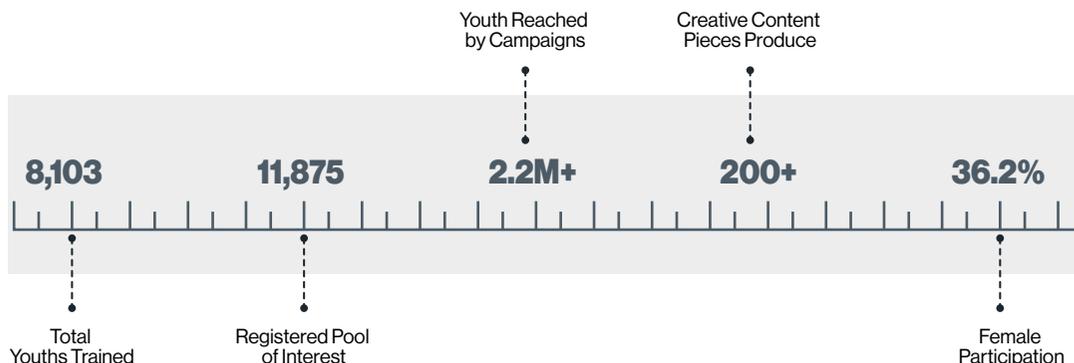


The Creative Industries Initiative for Africa (C.I.I.F.A.) is a dynamic organization passionately dedicated to empowering the next generation of creative professionals across the African continent. Through its **"Engage Nigeria"** programme, implemented as a core component of the **Skills Sprint initiative, C.I.I.F.A.** focused on identifying, nurturing, and equipping young Nigerians with valuable, industry-relevant skills across the diverse and rapidly expanding spectrum of the creative industries. The programme offered comprehensive instruction in disciplines including, but not limited to, music business and production, live event management, cinematography, videography, animation, graphic design, and cutting-edge content creation. This timely initiative tapped directly into Nigeria's globally influential and economically significant creative sector – home to Nollywood and Afrobeats – aiming to provide participants with the sophisticated tools, practical knowledge, and critical networks needed to thrive and innovate.

Engage Nigeria achieved impressive results, successfully training **8,103 youths**, selected from a keenly interested registered pool of **11,875**, thereby significantly exceeding its initial training targets. The programme's awareness and outreach campaigns resonated widely, reaching an estimated **2.2 million** young people with compelling messages about the vast economic opportunities available within the creative fields. A key tangible outcome was the generation of over **200** distinct pieces of high-quality creative content produced by the participants themselves, vividly showcasing the practical application of their newly honed skills and their flourishing talent. The programme was strategically structured into cohorts hosted in key creative hubs, including Kaduna, Rivers, and Lagos, and forged crucial partnerships with esteemed academic institutions such as the **University of Lagos, Kaduna State University, and the University of Port-Harcourt**. Collaborations were also established with governmental bodies like the **Lagos State House of Assembly (Eti-Osa 03)**, further embedding the programme within supportive local structures.

A notable characteristic of Engage Nigeria's operational journey was its adaptive management and strategic agility. The organization astutely identified an early challenge wherein some potential partnerships appeared to be primarily financially driven, offering limited intrinsic value to the programme's core mission. In response, Engage Nigeria strategically pivoted its focus towards cultivating collaborations with organizations and institutions that demonstrated genuine alignment with the programme's mission and values, such as academic bodies and proactive governmental entities.⁶ This adaptive approach ensured the integrity, depth, and ultimate effectiveness of the training delivered. The participant base for Engage was diverse, with 36.2% female participation and **68.8%** of beneficiaries coming from low-income backgrounds.⁶ Looking to the future, Engage Nigeria is actively pursuing further avenues for participant success, including plans to partner with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** to provide valuable internship opportunities for successful graduates through the **Nigeria Jubilee Fellowship Programme (NJFP)**. This demonstrates a clear commitment to facilitating long-term career development for its alumni. The consistent emphasis on creating a "vibrant community of creatives" and providing invaluable mentorship from seasoned industry professionals further underscores the holistic and nurturing approach of

The specialized focus of each implementing partner—**MindTheGap's** unwavering dedication to **YNEETs** and vital **MSME** support, **DSN's** pioneering empowerment of women in Northern Nigeria with sophisticated AI and data skills, and **C.I.I.F.A.'s** passionate cultivation of diverse talent within the creative industries—was undeniably a cornerstone of the Skills Sprint programme's widespread success and deep impact. This decentralized yet cohesively managed strategy allowed for interventions that were not only expertly delivered but also profoundly attuned to the specific needs, cultural contexts, and economic realities of diverse youth populations and rapidly evolving sectors. Rather than imposing a generic, one-size-fits-all approach, Skills Sprint championed bespoke, tailored solutions, thereby demonstrating a sophisticated and highly effective model of collaborative impact. This meticulous attention to relevance and specificity ensured that the training provided was not only of the highest quality but also maximally transformative for the thousands of young Nigerians who embarked on this journey across the nation.





Journeys of Transformation:

Voices from the Sprint



The true, enduring measure of the Skills Sprint programme lies not merely in the impressive statistics of individuals trained or certifications awarded, but in the deeply personal and profoundly transformative journeys of each participant. Behind every data point is a human story – a narrative of aspiration, dedicated learning, resilience in the face of challenges, and the exhilarating discovery of newfound opportunity.

This section brings to the forefront the authentic voices of those who embarked on this empowering journey, offering an intimate glimpse into the tangible and intangible impacts of acquiring new skills: the careers launched, the incomes enhanced, the businesses started, the communities strengthened, and, most importantly, the futures reimagined with confidence and hope. These narratives, drawn from diverse backgrounds, varied experiences, and across the three distinct programme streams, vividly illustrate the real-world outcomes of Skills Sprint.



The Engage Nigeria Training Programme, part of the Skills Sprint initiative, has opened up incredible opportunities for me,

Samuel Akayi

Designing a New Path with Engage Nigeria

Samuel Akayi

"The Engage Nigeria Training Programme, part of the Skills Sprint initiative, has opened up incredible opportunities for me," shares Samuel Akayi, a talented graphic designer whose journey vividly exemplifies the creative empowerment and professional launchpad fostered by C.I.I.F.A.'s Engage Nigeria. Before encountering the programme, Samuel possessed a raw, innate talent and a burning ambition to make his mark in the creative world. Engage Nigeria provided the crucial structured training, industry-specific knowledge, and invaluable network connections necessary to refine his skills, hone his artistic vision, and channel his passion into a sustainable and rewarding career.

During the intensive programme, Samuel delved deep into the multifaceted world of graphic design, learning not just the technical intricacies of industry-standard software and design principles, but also the strategic application of these skills in diverse professional contexts. "Working with professionals at the Kaduna State Government Media team has been an enriching experience," he notes, highlighting one of the significant practical outcomes of his participation. "I'm currently working part-time with Sen. Uba Sani (Governor of Kaduna State) media team as a graphics designer. In this pivotal role, I've had the privilege of creating impactful designs for various governmental organizations and dynamic entertainment agencies, thereby gaining invaluable, real-world experience in both the public and private sectors".

For Samuel, the impact of Engage Nigeria extends far beyond immediate employment. "It has significantly broadened my skill set, exposed me to new creative frontiers, and crucially, connected me with a supportive network of industry experts and fellow creatives," he explains with enthusiasm. "The programme has truly transformed my career path, equipping me with not only the advanced tools and techniques but also the profound confidence to excel and innovate in the competitive field of media and design". Samuel's story is a powerful underscore of how targeted, high-quality creative skills training, when coupled with mentorship and exposure to real-world projects, can unlock doors, shatter limitations, and set young Nigerian talents like him on an upward trajectory of professional success, economic independence, and deep personal fulfillment.



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Participating in the Engage Nigeria programme, a key stream of the Skills Sprint, has been an absolute game-changer for my career in music

Ojonugwa Daniel-Ajih

Producing Success in the Music Industry with Engage Nigeria

Ojonugwa Daniel-Ajih

"Participating in the Engage Nigeria programme, a key stream of the Skills Sprint, has been an absolute game-changer for my career in music," attests Ojonugwa Daniel-Ajih, whose experience vividly showcases the initiative's profound impact on aspiring music professionals in Nigeria. Ojonugwa's journey through Engage Nigeria was a comprehensive immersion into the multifaceted world of the contemporary music industry, encompassing not only the development of creative and technical production skills but also the acquisition of crucial business acumen essential for navigating this dynamic field. "I picked up some awesome music production skills, learning the ins and outs of recording, mixing, and mastering," he recalls with appreciation. "The music business courses were particularly enlightening; they opened my eyes to the critical aspects of marketing, distribution strategies, and, importantly, how to actually monetize my music and build a sustainable career".

The practical, hands-on nature of the Engage Nigeria programme was especially beneficial for Ojonugwa. "Being actively involved in planning and executing a live concert was a fantastic, immersive experience," he adds. "It taught me a tremendous amount about the complexities of event planning, the importance of teamwork and effective communication, and the art of engaging with an audience to create memorable experiences. I also got to connect with established industry professionals and dive deep into the rich tapestry of Nigerian music culture, which was incredibly inspiring". These diverse experiences and newly acquired skills rapidly translated into tangible career advancements. "On completing the programme, I had the incredible opportunity to produce a track for Ric Hassani, a popular and respected Afrobeats & RnB artist. I'm also currently planning my own project release while actively pursuing a publishing deal, opportunities that seemed distant before Engage".

The collaborative spirit and supportive community fostered by Engage Nigeria have also had a lasting and significant effect on Ojonugwa and his peers. "The programme directly led to several exciting collaborations, including the planning and execution of a live concert with other talented participants. We've continued to attend industry events together, share opportunities, and support each other's growth and success in the music industry. This network is invaluable". Ojonugwa's story is a powerful illustration of how comprehensive, industry-aligned creative training, combined with practical experience and robust networking opportunities, can empower individuals to confidently navigate and achieve remarkable success in the competitive yet rewarding global music landscape.

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Learning in a dedicated space with other women, guided by inspiring female mentors, was incredibly empowering and affirming. We learned to code, to analyze complex data sets, and to understand the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence. Resources like the 'AI in Hausa Series' were revolutionary; they made highly complex technical topics so much clearer and more accessible by explaining them in our own language”

Zainab Abdullahi

Forging a Future in Northern Nigeria's Tech Scene with Arewa Ladies4Tech

Forging a Future in Northern Nigeria's Tech Scene
with Arewa Ladies4Tech

Zainab Abdullahi

For many ambitious young women in Northern Nigeria, the path to a fulfilling career in the rapidly evolving technology sector can often seem fraught with obstacles. Deep-seated cultural norms, limited access to specialized, high-quality training facilities, and a scarcity of visible female role models in STEM fields can collectively pose significant barriers to entry and advancement. Zainab Abdullahi (a representative name) found herself at such a crossroads before she discovered the Arewa Ladies4Tech programme, a transformative initiative implemented by Data Science Nigeria as part of the Skills Sprint, with a keen focus on Kaduna State. "I always had a strong interest in technology and how it was changing the world," Zainab might share, reflecting the aspirations of many. "But I didn't know how to translate that interest into tangible skills or a viable career path. Opportunities in tech felt scarce, especially for women in my community, and the field seemed intimidating."

The Arewa Ladies4Tech initiative, with its dedicated focus on empowering women with sophisticated skills in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, and its profoundly culturally sensitive approach – exemplified by the establishment of female-only learning hubs in Kaduna – provided Zainab with a nurturing and transformative learning environment. "Learning in a dedicated space with other women, guided by inspiring female mentors, was incredibly empowering and affirming. We learned to code, to analyze complex data sets, and to understand the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence. Resources like the 'AI in Hausa Series' were revolutionary; they made highly complex technical topics so much clearer and more accessible by explaining them in our own language". These hubs, including Kadict hub Kafanchan, Almara hub, 360 Maaas hub, and the Ibrahim Dabo Centre Zaria, became sanctuaries of learning and collaboration.

The impact for Zainab, mirroring the experiences of many of the over 5,300 women trained by Arewa Ladies4Tech, has been profound and multifaceted. "Through the programme, I gained not just advanced technical skills, but also an immense boost in confidence to pursue a career in technology, a field I once thought was beyond my reach. I successfully secured an internship, and now I am employed in a role where I use my data analysis skills daily. I am earning a sustainable income, contributing to my family's well-being, and I feel a deep sense of pride in being able to contribute to the growth of technology in Northern Nigeria." The programme reported that 100 participants secured paid internships and 32 gained full-time employment, demonstrating concrete career outcomes. Zainab's journey reflects the broader success of Arewa Ladies4Tech in creating tangible employment pathways and fostering a new generation of skilled female tech leaders and innovators in the region. As the Kaduna State Commissioner for Business Innovation and Technology highlighted, there are "success stories of over 60 women that have gotten employment in various sectors after the training," a testament to the programme's efficacy. Zainab is now not just a beneficiary, but a beacon of possibility, inspiring other young women in her community to dream big and embrace the opportunities of the digital age.



Learning in a dedicated space with other women, guided by inspiring female mentors, was incredibly empowering and affirming. We learned to code, to analyze complex data sets, and to understand the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence. Resources like the 'AI in Hausa Series' were revolutionary; they made highly complex technical topics so much clearer and more accessible by explaining them in our own language"



Since completing the Engage Nigeria Training Programme, I've been able to seamlessly apply my newfound graphic design skills directly in my role as a teacher

Justina Ikio

Applying Creative Skills for Community Impact with Engage Nigeria

The transformative impact of skills development often extends far beyond direct employment in a new field, rippling outwards to enrich existing professions and benefit entire communities in diverse and often unexpected ways. Justina Ikio's story, as a beneficiary of the Engage Nigeria programme (implemented by C.I.I.F.A. as part of Skills Sprint), beautifully and powerfully illustrates this broader empowerment dividend. As a dedicated teacher, Justina was keen to enhance her professional capabilities, make her teaching methods more engaging, and explore new avenues for supplementary income generation.

"Since completing the Engage Nigeria Training Programme, I've been able to seamlessly apply my newfound graphic design skills directly in my role as a teacher," Justina shares with evident enthusiasm. "I'm now using these skills to create more visually appealing, dynamic, and engaging lessons and learning materials for my students, both for in-classroom activities and for supplementary resources they can use independently. The difference in their engagement and understanding has been remarkable". This innovative application of creative skills directly benefits her students, enriching their educational experience and demonstrating how upskilling a single individual can have a cascading positive effect on many others within her community.

Beyond her impactful work in the classroom, Justina is also leveraging her enhanced skill set for economic advancement. "Additionally, I've successfully set up professional profiles on various media platforms to source freelance graphic design jobs, which provides a welcome source of extra income and allows me to further hone my craft on diverse projects," she explains. For Justina, the journey through Engage Nigeria has been one of significant personal and professional growth, opening doors she hadn't previously envisioned. "Gaining this new skill has been a significant milestone for me, and being able to use it effectively in multiple spheres of my life – and receive appreciation for it – has been incredibly rewarding and confidence-boosting. I continue to stay in touch with other participants from my cohort; we support each other, share insights, and seek professional guidance as we all keep learning and growing together in this creative journey". Her experience compellingly highlights how creative literacy can empower individuals not only to pursue specialized creative careers but also to significantly enhance existing professions, contribute meaningfully to community development, and achieve greater financial independence.



Since completing the Engage Nigeria Training Programme, I've been able to seamlessly apply my newfound graphic design skills directly in my role as a teacher



We learned skills that we could apply immediately. The mentorship and coaching sessions were also invaluable; they helped build my confidence, taught me how to navigate the professional world, and provided clear guidance on how to apply these skills effectively in a real-world business setting.



Joel Kiate

From Unemployment to Digital Professional

Joel Kiate

For countless young Nigerians categorized as Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs), the future can often appear shrouded in uncertainty, with limited discernible pathways to stable employment, economic independence, or the realization of their inherent potential. Joel Kiate found himself navigating this challenging landscape before he connected with Mind The Gap's impactful "OnTheJob" programme, a critical component of the broader Skills Sprint initiative. "I had completed my formal education but, like many of my peers, I struggled to find a job," Joel might recount, his voice reflecting a common experience. "It was a deeply frustrating period, filled with uncertainty, and I wasn't sure what practical steps to take next. The digital world seemed to be brimming with opportunities, but I lacked the specific, in-demand skills that employers were actively seeking."

The OnTheJob programme, meticulously designed by Mind The Gap to equip YNEETs with vital 21st-century digital skills, provided Joel with a crucial and timely lifeline. Through intensive, practical training in high-demand areas such as digital marketing, social media management, content creation, and other essential competencies identified by industry needs, he gained job-ready knowledge and hands-on experience. "The training was incredibly practical and directly relevant to what businesses need today," Joel would note with appreciation. "We learned skills that we could apply immediately. The mentorship and coaching sessions were also invaluable; they helped build my confidence, taught me how to navigate the professional world, and provided clear guidance on how to apply these skills effectively in a real-world business setting."

The impact for Joel, mirroring the transformative experiences of many of the 7,104 YNEETs trained by the OnTheJob programme, has been nothing short of life-altering. The programme successfully facilitated the transition of 3,576 participants into active economic activities, including highly sought-after paid internships that served as a vital bridge to the formal economy. For Joel, this meant securing a digital role that not only provided him with meaningful employment but also led to a significant increase in his annual income. On average, participants in the OnTheJob programme saw their pre-programme annual income of approximately \$213 USD rise to around \$302 USD post-program, a substantial improvement that directly impacted their quality of life and economic stability. "Getting that first job, earning a steady income – it changed everything for me and my family," Joel would affirm with newfound assurance. "I can now support myself, contribute to my household, and I have a clear career path ahead of me in the digital space. The Skills Sprint and the OnTheJob programme didn't just give me a set of skills; they gave me a future, a sense of purpose, and the belief that I can achieve my dreams." This powerful journey from unemployment and uncertainty to becoming a skilled digital professional perfectly encapsulates the core mission of the OnTheJob programme: to bridge the opportunity gap for vulnerable youth and effectively integrate them into Nigeria's dynamic and growing digital economy.

These individual stories, each unique in its details yet resonant with common themes of aspiration, perseverance, and ultimate achievement, are the living, breathing embodiment of the Skills Sprint programme's profound success. They reveal that beyond the mere acquisition of technical proficiency, the true and lasting transformation lies in the ignited spark of self-confidence, the opened doors to previously unimagined possibilities, and the deep, empowering sense of agency that enables young Nigerians to take control of their destinies, shape their futures, and contribute meaningfully and significantly to their nation's ongoing progress and development.



We learned skills that we could apply immediately. The mentorship and coaching sessions were also invaluable; they helped build my confidence, taught me how to navigate the professional world, and provided clear guidance on how to apply these skills effectively in a real-world business setting.



Ministry Of Business,
Innovation And Technology

ArewaLadies4Tech
ALUMNI HANGOUT

Impact in Focus

Kaduna and the Northern Light

Impact in Focus

While the Skills Sprint programme cast an impressively wide net, touching lives across numerous states in Nigeria, a particularly compelling and illuminating narrative of focused impact and culturally attuned intervention unfolded in Kaduna State and, by extension, across the broader landscape of Northern Nigeria. This region, with its unique and rich socio-cultural dynamics, as well as specific developmental aspirations and challenges, became a significant focal point for a pioneering effort to empower women in technology through the Arewa Ladies4Tech initiative. Spearheaded with vision and expertise by Data Science Nigeria (DSN), the efforts in Kaduna and the North not only yielded remarkable, quantifiable results but also provided a powerful and replicable blueprint for how targeted, context-sensitive programmes can unlock immense latent potential within underserved communities and catalyze profound social and economic change.

The strategic and deliberate decision to concentrate significant efforts on empowering women in the technology sector within Northern Nigeria was driven by a clear-eyed understanding of the existing gender disparities in STEM fields and the immense transformative potential inherent in equipping women with future-ready digital skills. Arewa Ladies4Tech was meticulously designed to be far more than just a conventional training programme; it aimed to cultivate and nurture an enabling and supportive ecosystem where women could learn, innovate, collaborate, and ultimately lead in the rapidly evolving digital age. This holistic approach was fundamental to its success. A cornerstone of this carefully crafted strategy was the establishment and significant rebranding of four dedicated female-oriented learning hubs, strategically located across Kaduna State to maximize accessibility and impact: the Kad ICT hub in Kafanchan, the Almara hub, the 360 Maaas hub, and the Ibrahim Dabo Centre for Entrepreneurship and Community Development in Zaria.

These hubs were thoughtfully conceived and developed as "safe and collaborative spaces for women to explore and advance in the tech ecosystem," providing environments free from societal pressures and conducive to focused learning and peer-to-peer support. By creating these female-only learning environments, the programme directly addressed potential cultural sensitivities and fostered a uniquely supportive atmosphere that encouraged active participation and open collaboration. These hubs were equipped with bespoke, job-ready curricula focusing on comprehensive data science, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and essential digital skills training, directly benefiting thousands of girls and women in Kaduna State. Overall, the Arewa Ladies4Tech initiative successfully trained 5,378 women, with a significant contingent – 22.1% of Arewa's total participants – hailing specifically from Kaduna, underscoring the depth of engagement in the state.

Impact in Focus

One of the most innovative, impactful, and widely acclaimed components of the Kaduna focus was the development and successful launch of the "AI in Hausa Series". Recognizing that language can often be a formidable barrier to accessing complex technical knowledge, DSN ingeniously introduced this series to demystify intricate AI and data science concepts, presenting them in an engaging, accessible animated format delivered entirely in the Hausa language. This pioneering educational initiative reached an impressive audience of over 30,000 Hausa speakers and gained even further traction and visibility through a strategic 12-week broadcast partnership with DSTV, a major satellite television provider, thereby vastly amplifying its educational reach and impact across the region and beyond. The Kaduna State Government itself lauded this significant step, highlighting that it was the first state in Nigeria to launch AI and Digital Literacy Content in Hausa, a crucial and commendable move designed to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive learning.

The robust collaboration with the Kaduna State Government was a vital and indispensable element of the programme's remarkable success in the region. The state's proactive commitment to skills acquisition, innovation, and human capital development created a highly supportive and enabling environment for the Arewa Ladies4Tech initiative to flourish. This fruitful partnership was formally and publicly recognized when the Kaduna State Government, as a direct result of the impactful Arewa Ladies4Tech project, was among the esteemed winners of the Human Capital Development award at the National Council on Communications Innovation and Digital Economy (NCCIDE). This prestigious accolade powerfully underscored the programme's strong alignment with regional development priorities and its tangible, recognized contributions to empowering the state's female population. The Honourable Commissioner for Business Innovation and Technology in Kaduna State reported that through this vital collaboration with DSN and Google.org, a total of 5,100 women were trained in ICT under the AREWA LADIES-4-TECH banner, with over 60 documented success stories of these women gaining meaningful employment in various sectors post-training.

The enduring impact in Kaduna and across the North extends far beyond mere numbers and statistics. It is fundamentally about changing perceptions, shattering stereotypes, creating visible and inspiring role models, and fostering an unshakeable belief in the capabilities and potential of women in fields traditionally dominated by men. By providing highly relevant, in-demand skills in critical areas like Data Analytics and Data Science to over 5,200 participants in the region and successfully facilitating 100 paid internships, Arewa Ladies4Tech has laid a strong and enduring foundation for significantly increased female participation and leadership in Nigeria's burgeoning tech industry. The initiative's forward-looking plans, including the development of the "Mentor Her" programme which will focus on mentoring young girls in secondary schools, signal a deep and long-term commitment to nurturing this vital talent pipeline from an early stage. The resounding success story in Kaduna serves as a luminous and inspiring example of how thoughtful, culturally aware, strategically partnered, and resourcefully implemented programmes can effectively illuminate pathways to empowerment, drive inclusive and sustainable growth, and ensure that the manifold benefits of the digital revolution reach all corners of society, leaving no one behind. The localization of content, the creation of gender-specific safe learning spaces, and strong, proactive governmental collaboration proved to be absolutely critical factors in unlocking vast untapped potential and ensuring the programme's profound and lasting success.

The logo for Google.org, featuring the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font (blue, red, yellow, blue, green, red) followed by ".org" in a grey sans-serif font.

Google.org

Measuring Impact, Empowering Futures

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

Google.org's steadfast support for the Skills Sprint initiative is deeply rooted in a comprehensive and strategic vision: to significantly foster and advance digital and creative literacy across the length and breadth of Nigeria. This commitment is driven by the understanding that such literacy is a fundamental enabler of inclusive economic development, individual empowerment, and societal progress. This support transcends mere philanthropy; it represents a strategic and deliberate investment in Nigeria's most valuable and promising asset – its people, particularly its dynamic and ambitious youth. The Skills Sprint programme serves as a compelling and prime example of how precisely targeted interventions, delivered through strong local partnerships, can yield substantial, tangible, and measurable social returns, aligning seamlessly with Google.org's global mission to expand opportunity for all through the power of knowledge, skills, and technological innovation.

The following scorecard provides a clear, quantitative overview of the key achievements and milestones attained by the Skills Sprint programme during its operational period from August 2023 to its projected completion in January 2025. These metrics were made possible through the foundational support of Google.org and the tireless, dedicated efforts of the three implementing partners: Mind The Gap, Data Science Nigeria (DSN), and Creative Industries Initiative for Africa (C.I.I.F.A.). The data presented offers a comprehensive snapshot of the programme's impressive reach, its unwavering focus on including and uplifting underserved populations, and the tangible, life-changing outcomes experienced by its thousands of beneficiaries. This data collectively and powerfully demonstrates a significant and positive return on philanthropic investment – a return measured not in monetary profit, but in lives transformed, communities strengthened, economic barriers dismantled, and a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant digital future fostered for all Nigerians.

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

Overall Programme Reach & Scale

Metric	Achievement	Partner(s) Involved
Total Youth Trained by Skills Sprint (supported by Google.org)	20,585 (102.93% of target)	All
Original Target for Underserved Women & Youth Trained	20,000	All
Campaign Awareness Generated	5 Million people (187% of target)	All
Registrations for Programmes	11,875	All (Engage data)
Total Job Readiness Program Completions	8,368	All

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

Focus on Underserved & Priority Demographics

Metric	Achievement	Partner(s) Involved
Percentage of Female Beneficiaries (Overall Programme Average)	Approx. 60.7%	All
Women in Tech Trained in Northern Nigeria (Arewa Ladies4Tech)	5,378 (5,217 started, 2,324 completed job readiness)	DSN
Percentage of Low-Income Beneficiaries (Overall Programme Average)	Approx. 63.3%	All
Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs) Trained (OnTheJob)	7,104	Mind The Gap
YNEETs Placed in Internships/Economic Activities (OnTheJob)	3,576 (2,903 in internships from dashboard)	Mind The Gap

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

Career & Economic Outcomes

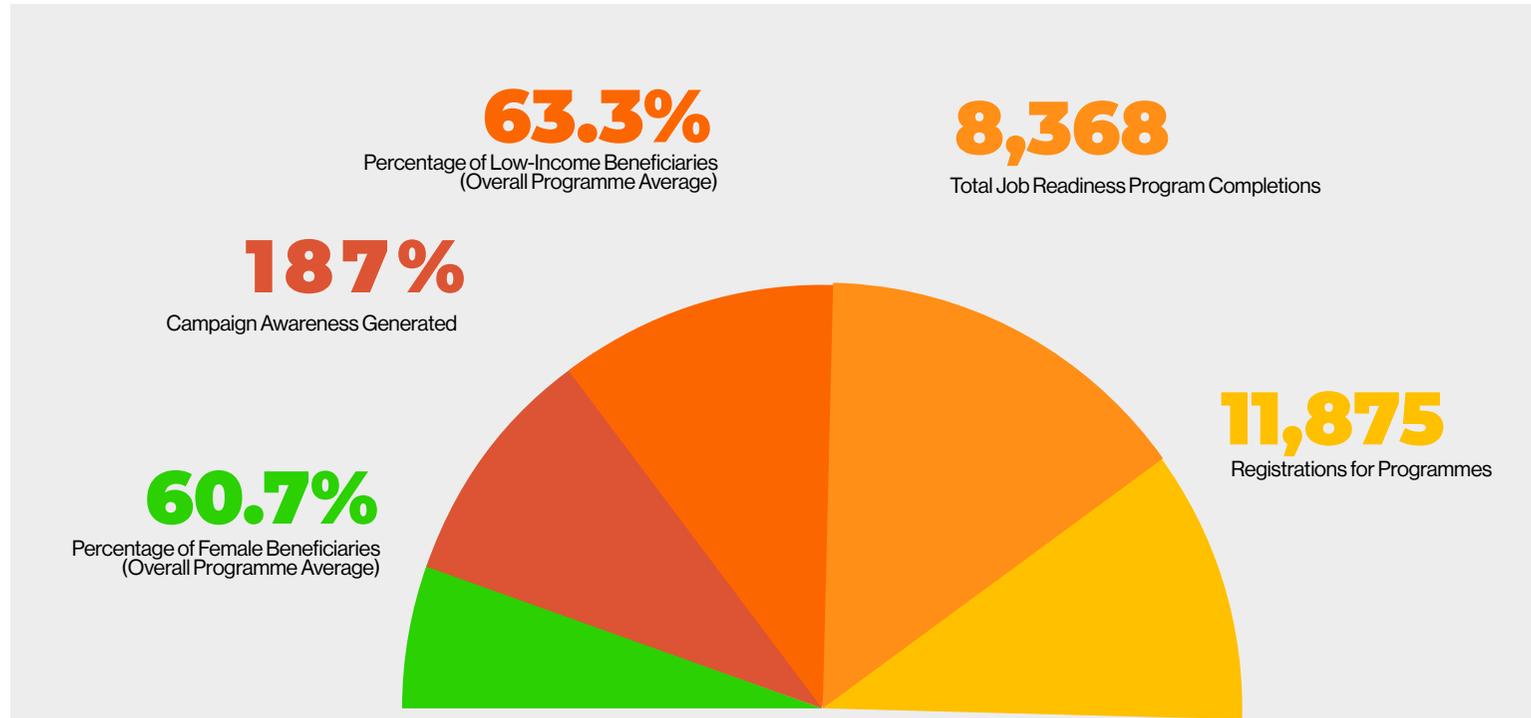
Metric	Achievement	Partner(s) Involved
Individuals Acquiring Full-Time Employment (Overall Programme)	374	All
Individuals Reporting Increased Annual Income (Overall Programme)	437	All
Average Pre-Programme Annual Income (Engage & OnTheJob combined average USD)	Approx. \$287 (Engage: \$362; OnTheJob: \$213)	Engage, Mind The Gap
Average Post-Programme Annual Income (Engage & OnTheJob combined average USD)	Approx. \$367 (Engage: \$431; OnTheJob: \$302)	Engage, Mind The Gap

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

Specific Programme Highlights & Innovations

Metric	Achievement	Partner(s) Involved
Hubs Rebranded/Established in Kaduna for Women in Tech (Arewa Ladies4Tech)	4 (100% of target)	DSN
Reach of "AI in Hausa" Initiative (Arewa Ladies4Tech)	30,000+ individuals	DSN
States Covered by OnTheJob Programme (MindTheGap)	12 states (incl. Kaduna)	Mind The Gap
Creative Content Pieces Generated by Engage Nigeria Participants	200+ (exceeding target of 50)	Engage
YNEETs Certifications Achieved (OnTheJob)	3,390 (96.8% of target)	Mind The Gap
Meet The Expert Participants (Overall Programme)	3,121 (156% of target)	All

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)



This scorecard powerfully encapsulates the multifaceted and far-reaching impact of the Skills Sprint programme. The data meticulously reveals not only the impressive scale of participation, exceeding initial targets in many areas, but also the programme's deliberate and successful focus on fostering inclusivity. This is evidenced by the significant numbers of women, individuals from low-income backgrounds, and Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs) who were reached and empowered. The reported increases in income and the acquisition of full-time employment for many participants point directly to tangible and life-altering economic benefits. Furthermore, innovative and culturally attuned approaches, such as the pioneering "AI in Hausa" series and the establishment of specialized, safe learning hubs for women in Kaduna, demonstrate a profound commitment to delivering contextually relevant, accessible, and highly effective skills training.

Google.org Skills Sprint Impact Scorecard (Nigeria: August 2023 - January 2025)

The remarkable success articulated in this scorecard is a direct and resounding testament to a collaborative model that skillfully combines strategic philanthropic investment from Google.org with the deep, localized expertise and unwavering dedication of local implementing partners. Google.org's role as a crucial catalyst and enabler has empowered these exceptional partner organizations to significantly scale their impact, to innovate boldly in their pedagogical approaches, and ultimately, to contribute meaningfully and sustainably to building a more skilled, resilient, and digitally fluent youth population in Nigeria.

This investment, therefore, transcends mere numerical achievements; it represents an enduring commitment to nurturing human potential, fostering innovation from the grassroots up, and actively supporting Nigeria's dynamic journey towards a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous digital future for all its citizens.

The outcomes detailed here reinforce the fundamental understanding that empowering individuals with relevant, in-demand skills is one of the most powerful levers for driving sustainable development, fostering social equity, and achieving inclusive economic growth in the 21st century.



The Ripple Effect

Building a Skilled Nation

The Ripple Effect

The profound impact of the Skills Sprint programme extends far beyond the immediate and laudable achievement of imparting new skills to its over 20,000 participants. Like the concentric ripples that spread outwards when a stone is cast into a still pond, the effects of this initiative are subtly yet significantly permeating families, strengthening communities, and energizing local economies. This ripple effect is contributing to the larger, national aspiration of building a truly skilled, digitally proficient, and future-ready Nigeria. The programme has not only equipped individuals for personal advancement and career success but has also sown fertile seeds for wider socio-economic development, fostering a culture of innovation and resilience that will yield dividends for years to come.

One of the most significant and immediate ripple effects is the programme's tangible contribution to local economies and the enhanced capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Mind The Gap's "OnTheJob" programme, for example, was strategically designed to empower YNEETs to directly support MSMEs with their newly acquired digital competencies. As these small businesses, which form the very backbone of Nigeria's economy and are crucial for job creation, become more digitally adept through the infusion of skilled young talent, they are inherently better positioned for sustainable growth, product and service innovation, and the creation of further employment opportunities. The 3,576 YNEETs from the OnTheJob stream who successfully transitioned into active economic activities, many through impactful internships with such businesses, are serving as direct conduits and catalysts for this vital digital transformation at the grassroots level.

In Nigeria's vibrant and globally recognized creative sector, the Engage Nigeria initiative, implemented by C.I.I.F.A, has meticulously nurtured a new cohort of skilled and ambitious talent, poised to further enrich and expand the nation's dynamic cultural landscape. The over 200 original pieces of creative content generated by participants during the programme are not merely academic exercises; they represent tangible contributions to the creative economy, potential new products, and the launchpads for new artistic careers. As these skilled individuals embark on careers in music, film, animation, graphic design, and digital content creation, they contribute to an industry that already wields significant global influence and possesses immense, largely untapped economic potential. The establishment of a "vibrant community of creatives" by Engage also fosters essential collaboration, cross-pollination of ideas, and innovation – all critical ingredients for the sector's sustained growth and international competitiveness.

The Ripple Effect

Furthermore, the programme's strong emphasis on digital and AI literacy, particularly evident in Data Science Nigeria's Arewa Ladies4Tech initiative, is of paramount strategic importance for Nigeria's future economic competitiveness and technological sovereignty. With Artificial Intelligence projected to contribute as much as \$15 billion to Nigeria's economy by 2030, initiatives that build foundational AI skills, especially among historically underrepresented groups such as women in Northern Nigeria, are strategically vital for inclusive growth.⁹ The pioneering "AI in Hausa" series, by making complex technical knowledge accessible in a local language, plays a crucial role in democratizing these future-critical skills and ensuring wider participation in the AI revolution. This deliberate cultivation of a digitally skilled and AI-aware workforce is indispensable for attracting foreign investment, fostering indigenous innovation, and enabling Nigeria to participate more fully and equitably in the global digital economy.

Programmes like Skills Sprint also play an undeniable and crucial role in directly addressing the pervasive and multifaceted challenge of youth unemployment, a significant concern across Nigeria and much of Africa. By providing in-demand, industry-relevant skills and facilitating clear pathways to employment, internships, and entrepreneurship, the initiative offers tangible, practical solutions. The 374 individuals who acquired full-time employment and the 437 who reported an increase in their annual income as a result of the programme are direct and compelling evidence of this positive economic impact. More broadly, however, the programme instills a profound sense of agency, self-belief, and hope, empowering youth to transition from positions of economic vulnerability to becoming active, confident, and contributing members of society.

Looking towards the horizon, the sustainability and scalability of this impact are paramount considerations. The implementing partners have all outlined ambitious and forward-thinking future plans, indicating a strong and collective commitment to building upon the considerable successes of the initial Skills Sprint programme. Arewa Ladies4Tech, for instance, plans to launch a "Mentor Her" initiative targeting secondary school girls, ensuring a continued and strengthened pipeline of female talent entering the tech field. C.I.I.F.A went into a partnership with prestigious bodies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide further internship opportunities, thereby continuing to bridge the gap between training and meaningful employment. Mind The Gap has articulated a vision to organize quarterly Skills Sprint programmes with the potential to reach all 774 Local Government Areas in Nigeria, which would represent a monumental expansion of reach and impact. These future endeavors strongly suggest that the initial spark ignited by the Skills Sprint will continue to illuminate pathways of opportunity for many more thousands of young Nigerians in the years to come.

Acknowledgements



Acknowledgements

The incredible journey and the multitude of achievements chronicled within the pages of this book are the inspiring result of a remarkable and multifaceted collective effort. This book stands as a testament to the immense power of a shared vision, the strength found in strategic partnership, and the unwavering commitment of countless individuals dedicated to empowering Nigeria's youth. We extend our deepest and most sincere gratitude to all who contributed their time, talent, resources, and passion to making this transformative initiative a resounding success.

Our foremost and most profound acknowledgement goes to Google.org. Your visionary support, generous funding, and steadfast belief in the potential of Nigerian youth were the essential catalysts that brought the Skills Sprint programme to life. Your commitment to fostering digital and creative literacy has been instrumental in transforming thousands of lives, opening new horizons of opportunity, and igniting a passion for learning and innovation across the nation.

We owe an immense debt of gratitude to our dedicated and exceptional implementing partners, whose expertise and tireless efforts were the driving force behind the programme's on-the-ground success:

- **Mind The Gap:** For your unwavering dedication and remarkable success in bridging youth, especially those Not in Education, Employment, or Training (YNEETs), to tangible economic opportunities through the impactful "OnTheJob Digital Onboarders" programme. Your extensive reach across 12 states and the mobilizing energy of your #ItsUp2Youth campaign have made a significant and lasting difference in countless lives.
- **Data Science Nigeria (DSN):** For your pioneering and transformative work with the "Arewa Ladies4Tech" initiative, empowering women in Northern Nigeria with critical and future-facing AI and Data Science skills. Your innovative "AI in Hausa Series" and the establishment of supportive, female-only learning hubs in Kaduna have broken new ground in fostering inclusive and culturally relevant technology education.
- **Creative Industries Initiative for Africa (C.I.I.F.A.):** For your profound passion and expertise in nurturing Nigeria's next generation of creative talent. Your efforts in equipping youth with sophisticated skills in music, film, design, animation, and content creation are vital for the continued growth, innovation, and global impact of Nigeria's dynamic creative economy.

Acknowledgements

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks go to the numerous trainers, facilitators, mentors, and programme staff across all partner organizations. Your deep expertise, unwavering dedication, boundless patience, and tireless efforts in delivering high-quality training, providing invaluable guidance, and fostering supportive learning environments were the bedrock upon which participants built their new skills, their confidence, and their dreams for the future.

We also acknowledge and deeply appreciate the vital support of community leaders, government bodies (including the proactive Kaduna State Government), educational institutions, and other collaborating organizations that partnered with the Skills Sprint programme. Your collaboration, endorsement, and provision of resources were crucial in creating an enabling environment for the programme's success and ensuring its alignment with local needs and national development priorities.

And finally, our most profound gratitude, admiration, and respect go to the more than 20,000 young Nigerians who embraced the Skills Sprint programme with such inspiring enthusiasm, unwavering resilience, and an unyielding determination to learn, grow, and succeed. Your individual journeys, your hard work, and your achievements are the true inspiration behind this story and the ultimate validation of this initiative. You are, indeed, "The Spark," and your accomplishments are brightly illuminating the path towards a more skilled, more innovative, and more digitally inclusive future for all of Nigeria. It is your success that imbues this initiative with its deepest meaning and provides its most enduring and powerful legacy.

May the skills you have acquired and the confidence you have gained continue to propel you forward to even greater heights, and may you, in turn, become beacons of inspiration for others in your communities, encouraging them to reach for their own dreams and unlock their own extraordinary potential.



**Igniting Potential:
Empowering 20,000 Nigerian Youth with Digital Skills”**





SKILLS SPRINT

...upskilling Youth for productive engagement

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