

IICD and Microsoft's online platform to bridge the gap for job seekers and entrepreneurs



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Ewelina Szopinska

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Microsoft Ghana in partnership with IICD have launched the 'TizaaWorks' online platform, which will be a national one-stop online hub for employability and entrepreneurship. With the World Bank reporting that 65% of Ghanaian youth are unemployed, the platform aims to equip young graduates and school-leavers with the right hard and soft skills to bridge the skills gap and secure first-time job opportunities, in addition to providing career guidance and resources for those wanting to build their own businesses.

The **TizaaWorks** platform is a Microsoft YouthSpark and Microsoft 4Afrika Initiative.

With the news about the platform generating a lot of interest in local and international

news and media outlets, TizaaWorks has started to offer access to free courses to develop the youth's professional skills.

"Technology can empower young people to make a vital contribution to their community and our world. We hope that this platform serves as a bridge, connecting Ghana's young people to the tools, resources, and people they need to find the fulfilling careers they deserve", said Brad Smith, General Counsel and Executive Vice President, Legal and Corporate Affairs, Microsoft.

Although there are several employment resources for Ghanaian youth, many do not know where to find them. TizaaWorks aggregates the best, ensuring access to rich e-content and exposing youth to the various learning and training organisations that can help them realise their career aspirations.

Offerings include:

- *Plan your career* – career counselling, job market info and stats
- *Get trained* – mentor matching, IT training, entrepreneurship, CV writing, soft & language skills
- *Find a job* – job matching tool
- *Entrepreneurs* – Start-up training, funding tools, social entrepreneurship and free-lance opportunities.
- *Get engaged* – Community-based networking platform for users to share ideas and volunteer opportunities

Gallup World Poll data indicates that African governments currently only employ around 14 million people aged 15-29 which corresponds to about 5% of Africa's population in this 'youthful' age group.

In Ghana, many young people who cannot find employment in the public or private sector end up working in the informal sector in low quality jobs. Research conducted by the African Development Bank shows that it is very difficult to get out of the informal sector, unless one pursues entrepreneurship opportunities. Private companies are instrumental to curbing youth unemployment, but at the same time, youth face a shortage of skills. Microsoft's aim through the platform is to match the right skills to appropriate jobs, and equip youth with the necessary training, tools and knowledge required to succeed in their desired job.

In a technologically-driven world, softer skills are also often overlooked. The platform offers hundreds of soft skills training courses to equip youth with the best possible opportunity to land their dream role.

“The TizaaWorks platform is critical for expanding IICD’s impact in supporting Ghanaian youth in smart learning, working, and earning. Thanks to TizaaWorks, our programs that build market-driven digital skills and help youth find employment and start their own IT-related businesses can reach out to a much wider audience, beyond our physical presence,” says Martine Koopman, Ghana Country Manager, Global Advisory Services Manager for IICD. “With the current online platform, physical programs and the upcoming mobile version of TizaaWorks, any young person in Ghana will be able to access information and services enabling them to become more employable.”

Employability Platforms are being rolled out in collaboration with key local partners across Middle East and Africa as part of Microsoft’s YouthSpark and 4Afrika Initiatives with a plan to have 25 platforms across the region by the end of FY15 including thirteen in Africa: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, and Nigeria within Africa. Microsoft aims to reach a target of seven million youth across the Middle East and Africa, and create 96, 000 job opportunities and 200,000 new entrepreneurs by the end of 2015.

Microsoft in Ghana

Microsoft has been operating in Ghana for 10 years, continues to recognize the long-term growth opportunities in the country and we have made significant investments to date in Ghana especially in education, the youth and the communities.

Microsoft has seen tremendous growth in broadband availability and internet penetration in Ghana, which has the highest mobile penetration rate on the continent (an estimated 112%, according to ITU). Microsoft is excited to play an active role in this transformation, using technology to lead economic and social transformation in the country.

Through its programs in Ghana, Microsoft has:

- trained 15,000 teachers
- reached over one million students
- created over 1,800 jobs, and
- supported 35 successful startups in Ghana.

One of Microsoft’s core projects in the country is its partnership with the Ghanaian Ministry of Education and the British Council, to set up ICT hubs in local schools and communities to accelerate digital literacy across the country. Falling under a regional project called Badiliko, 17 digital hubs have been created in Ghana and Microsoft has trained 26 local Master Trainers who are serving as Digital Ambassadors and School Leader Facilitators in the hubs, helping over 1,700 people in Ghana become trained to date.



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IICD in Ghana

IICD is an international expert organization, which specializes in leveraging technology for social and economic development.

By connecting people to sustainable technology, IICD makes it possible for people to learn, work and earn in a smart way. IICD's approach in ICT4D is based on bottom-up innovation that involves all critical stakeholders, including customers. This approach developed over the past 20 years ensures high adoption rates and sustainability of technology solutions.

IICD offers sustainable ICT solutions and advisory services to accelerate development through supporting smart learning, working and earning in the following areas of impact:

- Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Healthcare delivery
- Agricultural value chains

In Ghana IICD has been working for 17 years. During the last 5 years our programs directly benefited over 6,000 people and impacted 362,500 Ghanaians.