



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

## COVID-19 and Digital Employability Project

Enhancing Livelihoods for 2832 Vulnerable Women through Digital skilling, Development of local relevant digital media Content

### PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

Presented by:

The African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT)

April 2024





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0 Project Context</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>2.0 Methodology</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>3.0 Summary of Key Findings</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>4.0 Lessons Learnt</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>5.0 Recommendations</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>6.0 Contacts</b>	<b>10</b>



# 01. PROJECT CONTEXT

The 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census reported a population of 47,564,29, with women and girls making up over 50%. This highlights the need for gender equality and empowerment in development policies. With 38.6% of the population living below the poverty line, especially in rural areas, women face significant challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to widespread job losses globally, affecting Kenya severely, particularly informal sector workers.

**1.3M** workers lost jobs in the three (3) months leading up to June 2020

**48%** were Young People 18 - 34yrs Hit hardest by the job cuts.



### Project Implementation (2020 - 2021):

The **Enhancing Livelihoods for 2,832 Vulnerable Women project** was launched in response to COVID-19's economic impact on young women in informal settlements and rural areas.

The project aimed to improve employment prospects by providing digital skills training, mentorship, psycho-social support, and job linkages. It included three phases, leveraging partnerships with Microsoft to create digital platforms for training management, job matching, and e-learning, ultimately fostering entrepreneurial skills among vulnerable women.

### Project Objectives

Provide demand-driven training to 1,832 beneficiaries of the COVID-19 and Digital Employability project, focusing on prioritized skills in the digital ecosystem. Additionally, 1,000 vulnerable young women would receive training in digital content production, monetization, and branding to support their careers in the digital creative space.

- Market-driven digital skills
- Online work skills
- Mentorship
- Psycho-social support
- Job linkages in the digital work environment

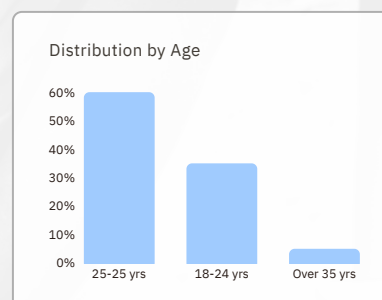


# 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The impact evaluation utilized various primary and secondary data collection methods to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. A cross-sectional survey, including farmer surveys, Focus Group Discussions, project records, and case studies, was conducted to support field observations. Data on demographics, employment, income levels, and psychosocial indicators were collected and statistically analyzed to assess the relationship between interventions and the employability of vulnerable women. To reduce bias, randomization efforts were implemented, and ethical considerations were followed.

## 2.1 SAMPLE PROFILE

Of the sampled beneficiaries, majority (60%) were between 25 and 35 years, while 35% were between 18 and 34 years. and over 35 years of age.



## 3.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### 3.1 Relevance

The project effectively aligns with the priorities of young women in targeted counties. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened women's vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV), with 20% of women experiencing income loss compared to 12% of men in 2020.

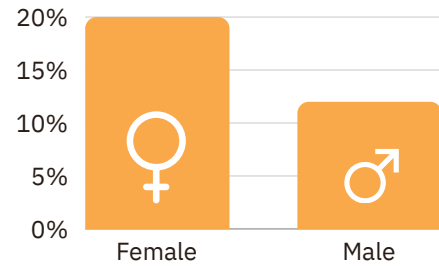
This was especially challenging for young women in informal settlements and rural Kenya, who already faced higher unemployment rates. The pandemic worsened their situation, as most youth work in the informal sector compounded by sluggish corporate earnings and hiring freezes affecting nearly one million young graduates entering the job market annually.

**20%**

Income Loss  
**Women**

**12%**

Income Loss  
**Men**



### 3.2.1 Training on Digital Content

**2,832**

Targeted

**2,874**

Trained

**72%**

Earned from Digital  
Jobs

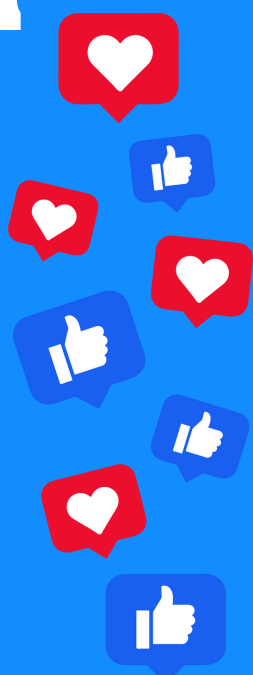
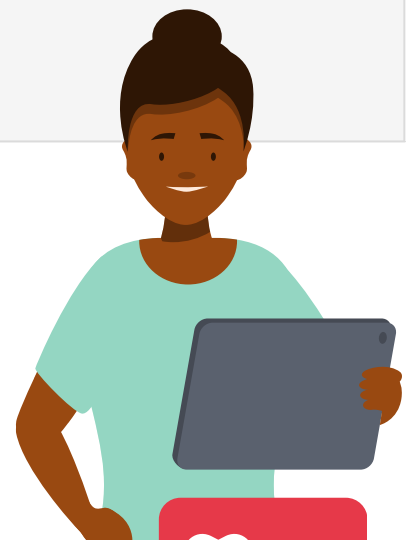
**490**

Trained (Digital  
Content Creation)

Needs Assessment	Conducted to identify skill gaps and requirements of vulnerable women.
Curriculum Development	Aligned with evolving online and digital job market demands.- Included prioritized training modules based on feedback from previous phases.
Skill Enhancement	Improved basic, intermediate, and advanced digital skills were provided to all participants.- Targeted new and refresher training for 1,832 beneficiaries.
Market Responsiveness	Continuous environmental scanning for digital landscape updates.- Agile curriculum design to adapt swiftly to emerging trends.
Industry Collaboration	Consultations with industry experts to validate and update training modules.- Fostered partnerships for insights into emerging skill requirements.
Workshops and Webinars	Organized specialized sessions featuring experts to keep participants updated on digital trends.
Customized Skill Tracks	Focused on areas like artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics to meet current job market needs.
Digital Content Development	Skills imparted to <b>490</b> young women in production, monetization, and branding.- Practicums provided hands-on experience in digital content creation.
Community Sensitization	Conducted by KFCB for responsible digital content creation.- KICTANET provided sensitization on cybersecurity risks for young women.
Networking Opportunities	Introduced to expand brands and markets in digital content creation.
Collaboration with Experts	Worked with Kenya Film School and Grayspace Studio for refined content and practical training.

### 3.2.2 Mentorship and Connections

Mentorship Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalized advice matching personal strengths &amp; goals.</li> <li>Insights into the complexities of the digital job market.</li> <li>Valuable industry insights, trends, and practical knowledge.</li> </ul>
Networking Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional networks and industry contacts.</li> <li>Introductions to potential employers and colleagues.</li> </ul>
Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of areas for skill refinement.</li> <li>Constructive feedback to enhance digital skills.</li> <li>Action plans for continuous skill development.</li> </ul>
Additional Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career advice and goal setting.</li> <li>Increased confidence and self-efficacy.</li> <li>Access to new opportunities.</li> <li>Soft skills enhancement.</li> <li>Retention and career advancement.</li> </ul>



#### SUCCESS STORY:

Interacting with other mentees improved my interpersonal skills and confidence through personal presentations.

Practical sessions were insightful, while one-on-one sessions sparked my curiosity about sound and camera operations. Engaging tutors at ACWICT helped me discover my interests, leading me to pursue sound production and plan my podcast.

### 3.2.3 Financial Literacy

The project provided participants with comprehensive financial knowledge and skills, focusing on savings, budgeting, investing, and debt management. It significantly improved financial literacy, enhancing employability and fostering a financially savvy community. This holistic approach empowered participants as skilled professionals and financially literate contributors to the workforce.



### 3.2.4 Entrepreneurship



The capacity development program enhanced entrepreneurial skills among vulnerable women, significantly improving their employability in online and digital jobs. Training fostered creativity and innovative thinking, leading participants to become proactive risk-takers with a go-getter attitude. They developed self-direction, competitiveness, and a commitment to continuous learning, making them valuable assets in the evolving job market.

### 3.2.5 Psychological/Soft Skills

#### SOFT SKILLS

A positive relationship between adaptability skills and employability. Enhanced immediate employability and long-term adaptability for the workforce.

- Dealing with Uncertainty
- Handling Emergencies
- Creative Problem Solving
- Cultural Adaptability

#### EMOTIONAL EFFICACY

Improved emotional intelligence positively impacts employability and interpersonal skills.

- Manage Personal Emotions
- Understand Own Emotions
- Handle Others' Emotions
- Perceive Emotions via Non-Verbal Cues

#### RESILIENCE

Significant impact on employability for women, young girls, and job seekers. There is a Positive correlation between resilience skills and employability.

- Personal Strength
- Personal Competence
- Social Resources
- Social Competence

#### CRITICAL SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration
- Emotional Intelligence



### 3.2.6 Partnerships and Collaborations



The project collaborated with various partners, including MYSA, Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), and organizations like Open Space, SHOFCO, KICTANET and TESPOK. Their key contributions included content refinement, mobilizing young women as beneficiaries, raising awareness about cybersecurity risks, providing practical training, and offering industry expertise. The importance of these partners is significant.

## 3.2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework was established early on, incorporating regular monitoring and adaptive management. The project team tracked progress, conducted baseline and mid-term evaluations for informed decision-making, and ensured transparency. The end-term evaluation offers independent evidence of the project's impact, validating achievements and assessing the sustainability of outcomes post-project.



## 3.3 IMPACT

Young women transitioned from traditional businesses to digital technologies

- Improved livelihoods were reported through enhanced use of technology in business models and customer experiences.
- Focus on quality jobs rather than just skills and experience.
- Three placement partners: Shortlist, TESPOK, Stepwise, connected trained women to job opportunities while others secured freelancing opportunities.
- Information shared with 2,874 trained young women.
- Mentors assisted in applying for available job opportunities.

**10k-100k**  
Beneficiaries Earning  
Range



## 3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

Digital skills training helped 1,832 beneficiaries remain competitive in the job market. The project focused on culturally relevant digital content to boost community engagement.

Strategic partnerships enhanced project effectiveness, emphasizing women's empowerment and digital inclusion.

- Market-driven digital content skills for sustainable careers.
- **Mentorship** - 2,874 young women with guidance and networking opportunities.
- Tailored training fostered entrepreneurial skills and innovative business practices among vulnerable women.
- Psychological well-being and soft skills training improved communication, teamwork, and adaptability.

**1,832**  
Beneficiaries

**2,874**  
Young women  
Trained & Mentored

**2,000**  
Out of 2,874  
participants linked  
to Online Work

### MEASURES IMPLEMENTED FOR PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY



ACWICT Online Training  
Platform



Access to partners' materials for  
intermediate and advanced skills



Training materials for foundational  
and basic digital skills



Infrastructure and  
resources



Continued Access to  
Training Programs



Adequate Digital Skills  
Master Trainers



## 4.0 LESSONS LEARNT



### Adaptability

Essential for trainers and trainees to keep pace with digital trends and ensure relevant skill development.

### Psychological Well-Being

A holistic approach, addressing mental health and soft skills, enhances employability and success.

### Local Relevance

Tailoring digital content to cultural contexts boosts engagement and effectiveness.

### Strategic Partnerships

Collaborations with mentors and organizations enhance project impact and enrich learning experiences.

### Continuous Learning Loop

Ongoing training models and regular feedback improve program effectiveness and adapt to beneficiaries' needs.

### Linkage to Opportunities

Strategic planning is necessary to connect participants to quality online work and understand the job market.

### Financial Literacy

Equipping trainees with financial knowledge fosters economic independence and confidence in decision-making.

### Post-Training Support

Tackle challenges like computer access by establishing communal centers or shared resources for vulnerable women seeking digital jobs.

### Mobile-Centric Learning

Enhance learning through mobile-friendly content.



## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1

### Virtual Training Method

The project successfully employed virtual training to reach vulnerable women nationwide. By leveraging online platforms, we transcended geographical barriers and provided accessible training opportunities. This approach allowed us to engage a diverse group of women, including those in remote areas.

2

### Mobile Learning

A significant revelation was the effectiveness of mobile-based learning. Many trainees accessed training materials, modules, and mentorship through their mobile phones. The ubiquity of smartphones enabled seamless participation, empowering women who might not have had access to traditional computer-based training.

2

3

### Post-Training Challenges

However, we encountered a critical challenge post-training. Despite acquiring digital skills, many trainees lacked access to computers or laptops. Consequently, they faced limitations in pursuing meaningful digital jobs. Addressing this gap is crucial for ensuring sustained empowerment beyond the training period.





# Thank you

Email: [admin@acwict.org](mailto:admin@acwict.org)

Website: <https://www.acwict.org>

Tel: (254) 746 506518 / (254) 755 889889

Insights : <https://research.acwict.org/>

