Unitar Online Catalogue

Empowering Youth and Women amid Economic Instability: Enhancing Public-Private Partnership between Japan and Africa for Sub-Saharan African Countries, Addressing Urgent Challenges, and Promoting TICAD9

Prosperity

Deadline: 31 Aug 2026

Type:	Course
Location:	Hiroshima, Japan
Date:	27 Aug 2026 to 28 Feb 2027
Duration:	7 Months
Thematic Area:	Public Finance, Trade and Economic Governance, , Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Policy
Website:	http://www.unitar.org
Price:	$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	tftp-elearning@unitar.org
Partnership: (1937)	Government of Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs

BACKGROUND

Important Announcement: We have received an exceptionally high number of applications for this programme, far exceeding the number of participants we are able to accommodate. We sincerely appreciate the strong interest in the programme. Applications received from 17 August 2027 will be kept in consideration for similar future programmes and learning opportunities, where appropriate. We may also share information on other relevant UNITAR training opportunities that you may wish to consider. Thank you for your understanding and for your interest in the programme.

Sub-Saharan Africa is entering a period of significant transformation shaped by rapid demographic growth, digital disruption, evolving trade opportunities, climate pressures, food security challenges, and the urgent need for quality jobs and resilient livelihoods. Across the continent, youth and women are increasingly driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and community-based solutions. However, many promising ideas and initiatives struggle to progress beyond early stages due to limited access to networks, investment readiness, strategic partnerships, and market linkages.

At the same time, there is growing interest in strengthening practical and mutually beneficial collaboration between African and Japanese ecosystems in areas such as innovation, technology, sustainable industrialization, agribusiness, digital transformation, clean technologies, manufacturing, and human-centered economic development.

In this context, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research is launching a multi-phase capacity development programme under the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development 9 (TICAD9) to strengthen the capacity of African youth and women to transform innovative ideas into scalable, partnership-ready, and investment-oriented initiatives aligned with national and regional development priorities.

Implemented by the UNITAR with the **support of the Government and People of Japan**, the Programme is designed not only to strengthen entrepreneurial and leadership competencies, but also to support participants in formulating practical, financially viable, and implementation-oriented projects that can engage public institutions, financial actors, ecosystem partners, and responsible private-sector stakeholders. Through structured mentorship, applied learning, ecosystem exposure, and international engagement opportunities, participants will progressively develop projects that are credible, collaborative, and positioned for

operationalization and long-term impact.

The initiative contributes to building sustainable Africa–Japan relationships grounded in innovation, shared value creation, responsible investment, technology exchange, and inclusive economic transformation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the Programme, participants will be able to:

- Design innovative, inclusive, and sustainable business or development solutions aligned with national and regional priorities.
- Apply digital technologies, AI, and emerging innovation tools to address challenges related to food security, climate resilience, employment, trade, healthcare, industrialization, and service delivery.
- Develop operationally feasible and financially viable project concepts with clear implementation pathways and partnership strategies.
- Strengthen leadership, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, and cross-sector collaboration competencies.
- Integrate sustainability, gender equality, social impact, and SDG considerations into entrepreneurial and innovation initiatives.
- Formulate partnership-ready and investment-oriented proposals informed by market realities and public–private collaboration principles.
- Communicate project value propositions effectively to investors, development partners, public institutions, and private-sector stakeholders.
- Build long-term professional networks and collaboration opportunities across African and international innovation ecosystems.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The Programme will run from August 2026 to March 2027 through four progressive phases combining virtual learning, applied project development, mentorship, and international engagement opportunities.

Phase I – Foundations and Opportunity Development (August – October 2026)

Participants will receive foundational training in:

- Entrepreneurship and innovation
- AI and digital transformation
- Leadership and systems thinking
- Sustainable development and SDG integration
- Market analysis and customer discovery
- Business ecosystems and value chains
- Introduction to partnerships, investment readiness, and collaborative engagement

Focus: Strengthening participants' ability to identify real-world opportunities, understand market and development needs, and build solution-oriented concepts with practical relevance and growth potential.

Phase II – Applied Innovation and Project Development (Including ToT) (November – December 2026)

Selected participants will deepen their practical application skills through:

- Business model refinement
- Financial and operational planning
- Project structuring and implementation design
- Monitoring, evaluation, and impact measurement
- Pitch preparation and communication
- Partnership mapping and stakeholder engagement
- Training-of-Trainers (ToT) components to support local knowledge multiplication

Participants will progressively transform their ideas into implementation-oriented and partnership-ready project concepts.

Focus: Developing scalable, credible, and financially viable initiatives capable of attracting collaboration and operational support.

Phase III – Leadership and International Engagement (January – February 2027)

A limited number of high-performing participants will participate in an advanced hybrid engagement phase, which includes a short immersion program in Japan.

Activities may include:

- Mentorship sessions with industry and ecosystem experts
- Exposure to innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems

- Learning visits and institutional dialogue
- Networking and strategic engagement opportunities
- Project refinement and partnership discussions

Focus: Strengthening participants' readiness to engage with international partners, investors, industry actors, and ecosystem institutions while advancing investment-oriented and implementation-focused project strategies.

Phase IV – Africa–Japan Innovation and Partnership Round Table (February 2027)

The Programme will conclude with a high-level dialogue and engagement platform that brings together participants, ecosystem actors, development partners, mentors, investors, and representatives from both the public and private sectors.

Selected participants will showcase initiatives, exchange lessons learned, and explore practical collaboration pathways for implementation and scaling.

Focus: Facilitating strategic connections, visibility, ecosystem collaboration, and long-term partnership opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

The Programme is based on the adult learning and instructional design methodologies of UNITAR and combines:

- Competency-based and results-oriented learning,
- Project-based and experiential methodologies,
- Practical application and real-world problem solving,
- Peer learning and collaborative engagement,
- Mentorship and expert guidance,
- Continuous feedback and evidence-based evaluation, and
- Ecosystem exposure and partnership facilitation.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

The Programme is open to youth and women professionals aged 18–35 from the following Anglophone Sub-Saharan African countries: **Botswana, Ethiopia,**

Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Applicants may include:

- Aspiring or early-stage entrepreneurs
- SME founders and innovators
- Professionals and practitioners
- Researchers and technology innovators
- Social entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders
- Individuals developing scalable solutions with economic or social impact potential

Participants working in, or aspiring to contribute to, the following sectors are encouraged to apply:

- Agri-food Innovation and Bioeconomy
- Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Smart Digital Solutions
- Fintech and Financial Inclusion
- Clean Technologies and Strategic Resources
- Climate and Environmental Solutions
- Healthcare and MedTech
- Sustainable Cities and Mobility
- Blue Economy
- Creative Industries
- Light Manufacturing and Industrial Solutions
- Skills Development and the Future of Work
- Social Impact and Essential Services

Selection Criteria

The Programme seeks motivated individuals with strong potential to translate ideas into practical impact. Particular consideration will be given to applicants who demonstrate:

- Innovation and problem-solving capacity
- Leadership potential and commitment to community or economic development
- Clear project or business ideas with implementation potential
- Openness to collaboration and partnership development
- Commitment to learning, mentorship, and long-term engagement
- Potential for scalability, sustainability, and measurable impact

Progression to subsequent phases of the Programme will be competitive and based on performance, engagement, leadership, and the quality and feasibility of the proposed project or initiative. Due to the high volume of expected applications, UNITAR and its partners will carefully review all submissions and select candidates with the strongest profiles and applications.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Language: English
Delivery Mode: Primarily virtual, with a limited in-person component for selected participants during Phase III
Certification: Certificates of completion will be awarded to participants who complete each phase
Fees: None. Participation is funded by the Government and the People of Japan. Selected participants for the Japan immersion phase may be responsible for limited personal expenses

IMPORTANT - Selection for International Engagement: *Participation in the Japan immersion component will be determined through a competitive evaluation process based on implementation potential, practical feasibility, partnership readiness, and long-term impact potential. Due to the limited number of places available, not all programme participants will be selected for the in-person component. By applying to and participating in the programme, participants acknowledge and accept that all selection decisions made by UNITAR and its partners are final.*