

Panoptic Insights

The education market on the African continent is one of the fastest growing in the world: in the next five years, the number of learners will almost double to over 400 million. This is comparable to the population of the European Union.

General

By 2023, the African supplementary education market is estimated to be worth \$3-5 billion (including formal and non-formal sectors). It is expected to grow to \$7-10 billion by 2030 (CAGR 12-15%, African Development Bank data).

The size of the potential audience (aged 20-35, postgraduate and continuing education) on the continent is 221 million, or 14.6% of Africa's population. By 2030, this figure will rise to 419 million (+89.7%), almost doubling the audience. This will represent one in four people on the continent (24.3% of the population).

The investment climate for African EdTech startups remains weak amid global volumes. In 2022, startups raised ~\$200m (examples: uLesson, Andela, GetBucks), with 60% of this amount coming from international investors (EU, US; Partech Africa data).

More than 500 providers (online platforms, NGOs, government centres) are present in the market. The main players include:

- Andela (Nigeria)
- Eneza Education (Kenya)
- Coursera (international partnerships)

Challenges

One of the main problems in accessing additional education for African adults is the low income of the population. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the average annual income is about \$1,600. 40 per cent of adults cannot afford basic products and services, let alone tuition fees.

Another problem is the low quality of education, due to a lack of qualified teachers and uniform standards. According to the World Bank, only 15 per cent of courses meet the needs of the labour market.

Infrastructural constraints:

- 60% of the target population outside major cities do not have stable access to the internet;
- 45% of training centres operate intermittently due to power supply problems or fan failures (for more information, see the report 'Nigeria's Energy Infrastructure' in the Research section of our website).

Cultural barriers:

- Stigmatisation of adult education in renewable energy, especially in conservative patriarchal communities;
- Pressure exacerbated in small communities: in villages, further education is almost impossible to obtain;
- Language gap: dominance of English/French in education programmes, with low levels of proficiency in rural areas.

Triggers

Despite the many challenges facing the African education market, there are many catalysts on the continent that make education a promising area for investment.

Rising unemployment: Youth unemployment rates are as high as 35% and in some countries, such as South Africa, as high as 65%. In absolute terms, ~77.35 million young people aged 20-35 remain unemployed. If nothing changes, this number will rise to 146.65 million by 2030. The high unemployment rate is fuelling demand for retraining and new skills.

Digital revolution. The GSMA predicts that by the end of 2025, 70% of Africans will be mobile internet users, providing access to educational content from anywhere on the continent. Meanwhile, by 2023, ~25 million Africans will have used mobile education apps and completed at least one course.

Today's political leaders in many countries understand the importance of education and are actively launching programmes to support educational initiatives aimed at improving the skills of the population. One such global programme is the African Union's Agenda 2063. International organisations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and others are also funding education platforms.

Entrepreneurship boom. The continent's actively growing young population is seeking self-actualisation through start-ups and businesses, outpacing Europe and North America in terms of interest. 7 of the 10 countries with the highest interest in entrepreneurship are in Central and West Africa. As the demand for business initiatives grows, so does the need for courses in management, marketing and financial literacy.

Education requests

- After studying the requests, we have compiled a list of the most in-demand training topics on the African continent, categorised by key areas.
- Digital skills needed to work online and with data: programming, data analysis, digital marketing.
- Vocational training related to physical work (acquiring new skills or improving the efficiency of existing ones): agriculture, health, construction.
- Entrepreneurship: business management, financial literacy.
- Language courses: English, French, local languages.
- For reference, there are more than 200 nationalities in Africa, many with their own language and culture. Up to a dozen different cultures can coexist in one country, each with its own peculiarities. Learning their languages, rituals and traditions is a prerequisite for doing business with them.
- Sustainable development - necessary for companies that have moved beyond the small business stage and are preparing to enter neighbouring or European/US markets: ecology, 'green' technologies.
- Certification and licensing: compliance (e.g. tax courses for small businesses).

Overview of course fees

The cost of courses on the African continent can be divided into three groups in terms of composition and cost:

- Micro-courses: \$5-20 (platforms such as Moringa School)
- Certified programmes: \$50-500 (e.g. Coursera/Google through partnerships)
- Premium segment (MBA, technical specialities): \$1,000-5,000

Solutions for the African market

Mobile learning platforms.

Format: short courses via USSD/SMS or mobile applications (works even at low internet speeds) with highly specialised knowledge.

Example: Financial literacy micro-courses for farmers.

Advantage: reach rural areas and low-income groups.

Partnership programmes with companies.

Format: training requested by employers (e.g. for logistics companies or IT outsourcing), with guaranteed employment for graduates.

Example: certified courses in DevOps or digital marketing.

Hybrid training centres.

Format: offline hubs with access to online resources (in libraries, shopping centres) for practical skills.

Focus: agricultural machinery, solar energy, electronics repair.

Funding: grants from the World Bank and local authorities.

Training loans and subscriptions.

Model: Pay-as-you-go or micro-loans for training.

Example: platforms paying 10% of salary for 6 months after training.

Localised content for entrepreneurs.

Format: ready-made courses on business creation (agro-technology, e-commerce, recycling).

Speciality: videos in local languages + chatbot support.