



Digital Explorers II in Lagos

Digital Explorers – Talents seeking connection

In EU partner countries in Africa, Caucasus and the Middle East, the path to promising employment opportunities in the ICT sector is elusive for many youths. This is in part due to the fact that the ICT ecosystems in these regions are still emerging and many businesses are not yet competitive on the international market, whereas local education programmes face challenges in equipping students with globally relevant skills and competences. At the same time, the **ICT sector growth in many European countries, and specifically the Baltic States, is at times held back by a lack of locally available talent.** Digital Explorers is a series of projects pioneering skills partnerships that benefit home and host countries, companies, and, most importantly, the young professionals involved.

From training to global opportunities



Digital Explorer Hakeem in action

The second edition of Digital Explorers, ongoing from 2023, attracted over 3,300 applications from Nigeria, Kenya, and Armenia. **By its end, 150 selected participants will have received training and secured job or internship placements** in their home countries or the Baltics. Selected Explorers begin their journeys with hands-on training in fields like data analysis and software development, led by instructors with relevant academic and industry expertise. During this phase, the project team also matches them with reputable companies where their skills can be effectively utilised and facilitate access to training and industry events.

Hakeem joined the project in 2024 as a student at Kenya's Strathmore University. After completing a remote pre-training course, he was selected for a mobility programme in Estonia alongside 19 other students. There, he undertook a four-month traineeship on an ed-tech project, working with a software development team at Tallinn University. Hakeem describes his time in Estonia as a transformative experience that "shatters the borders in your head." It **motivated him to enrol in an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Programme in AI for Sustainable Societies.**

A catalyst for new ambitions

An alumna of the programme from Nigeria joined the first edition of Digital Explorers female entrepreneurship track in 2021 and has since established herself as a data scientist with globally applicable skills and confidence. **Placed in the course of the programme with an international tech firm in Vilnius, she quickly transitioned from intern to junior analyst, later securing a role at an international bank.** "I'm confident I can get a job almost anywhere now," she says.



Mindset changes

The Explorer attributes part of the success and her smooth transition from internship to employment to the matching prowess of the project managers - the OSMOS team. **Her Team Leader asked if she would stay on already at month two of the placement.** The freedom the working permit in an EU Member State allows - including to go between her home country and Lithuania where she now works - also helped. The experience "gives you opportunity to effect some change that would be beneficial for your company, country, wherever you want to work," she says. Talking about what she could bring to the work setting back home, she refers to mindset, the "flexible way of discussing ideas", inviting and acknowledging ideas from everyone in teams as equals.



Digital Explorers II Bootcamp in Nairobi

Unexpected connections

The project presents young talents with an opportunity to establish themselves as confident professionals and equips them with internationally sought-after skills. On a broader scale, it also builds bridges between the ICT industries of the countries involved, as alumni apply their newly acquired expertise, ideas and connections back home or in Europe.

About the MPF

This grant project was part of the EU-funded Migration Partnership Facility (MPF), managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) to support the external dimension of the EU's migration policy. MPF grants fund projects that promote dialogue and cooperation on migration and mobility between EU Member States and partner countries outside the EU.



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About the evaluation

Testimonies used in this document were gathered as part of a mid-term review of Digital Explorers II, conducted in 2024 while the project was ongoing. The mid-term review was led by Policy Impact Lab who makes part of a consortium of six consultancies and NGOs, namely Blomeyer & Sanz, Diversity Development Group, Migration Policy Group, Policy Impact Lab, Samuel Hall and Tandans.



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