

Citi Foundation

An overhead view of three people sitting around a white table, engaged in a study session. The table is cluttered with various items: several open books, spiral-bound notebooks, a laptop, a smartphone, and pens. One person on the left is pointing at a book, another in the center is writing in a notebook, and a third on the right is looking at a laptop. The background shows a wooden wall and white chairs.

Global Innovation Challenge: Accelerating Youth Employability

October 2025 | Meet the Grantees



Global Innovation Challenge: Youth Employability

Youth unemployment is an ongoing and pervasive issue. The International Labour Organization estimates that 65 million young people globally are unemployed, which presents a critical challenge to global economic progress.* Many face obstacles in their pursuit of employment, particularly a skills mismatch. 63% of employers identify this as a major barrier to securing a job and 39% of skill sets are expected to be outdated in the next five years.**

Citi and the Citi Foundation recognize that improving employment and economic opportunities for young people contributes to the stability and prosperity of their communities. This is why the 2025 Global Innovation Challenge focuses on accelerating youth

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“Philanthropy is an important part of driving global innovation and long-term progress — it can support exploring new ideas and it can be catalytic, bringing further attention and investments to particular issues and solutions,” said **Brandee McHale, President of the Citi Foundation and Head of Citi’s Community Investing and Development.** “With this 2025 Global Innovation Challenge, we are investing in young people around the world and equipping them with dynamic, community-oriented solutions, so that they may take charge of their economic futures and succeed in a changing job market.”

employability, building upon our commitment to young people and our belief that philanthropy can play a role as a driver of innovation and long-lasting solutions.

In addition to funding, grantees will also have access to a learning community of fellow grantees, where they will have the opportunity to build deeper connections, share lessons learned and exchange best practices.

50 community organizations | \$25MM committed

* Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024,” International Labour Organization, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/GET_2024_EN%20web.pdf
** “The Future of Jobs Report,” World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/>

Meet Our Grantees Working in Asia Pacific

Biji-biji Initiative is implementing a skills training and job placement program that prepares low-income Malaysian youth for higher-income sales careers, fostering economic mobility and serving as a model for youth development programs across Malaysia.

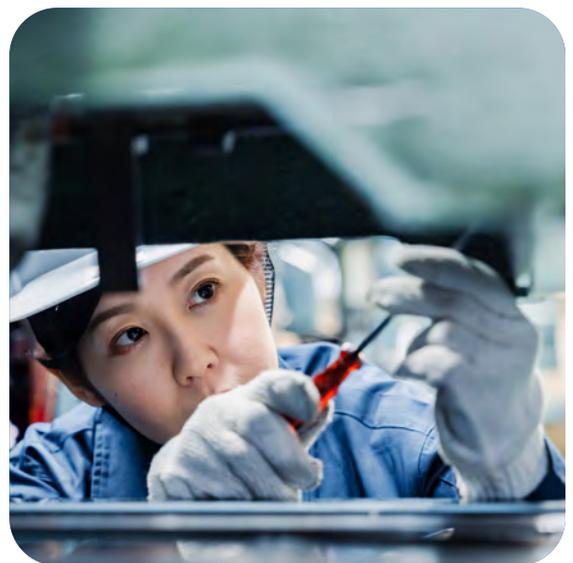
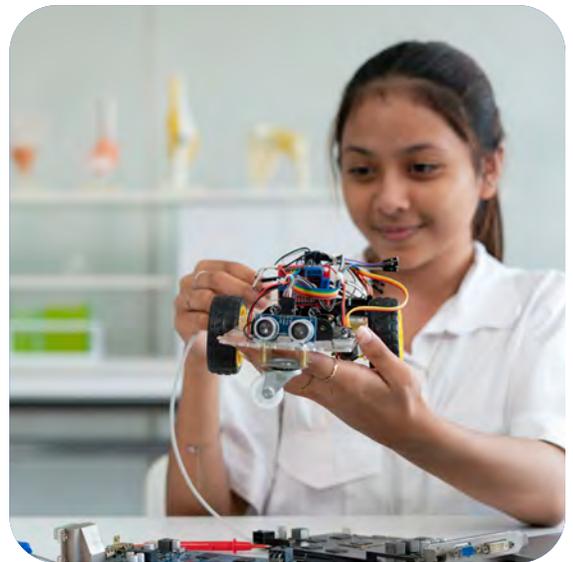
Changing Young Lives Foundation is upskilling low-income youth in Hong Kong and helping them obtain their first jobs in a hiring environment that is driven by AI, providing talent matching analysis, support for how to present themselves while job-hunting and teaching both in-person and digital communication skills.

JA Korea is supporting reintegration efforts for at-risk youth by providing pathways to career development, financial education, social integration skills and general education, such as writing and arithmetic.

Kenan Foundation Asia is enhancing youth employability in Thailand by leveraging AI-powered platforms to help young people set career goals, build skills, explore job opportunities and gain workplace experience.

NPO Sankakusha is providing safe and secure employment alternatives to at-risk youth in Japan by helping them gain practical work skills and strengthen their financial health.

One-Forty is supporting the employability and financial stability of migrant youth in Taiwan through mentorship and AI-powered platforms that support personalized career planning, job-matching and online learning.



Te Pou Theatre Trust is establishing a Māori-led, Indigenous performing arts industry training program for youth in Aotearoa New Zealand that will bridge and address gaps in formal education and cultivate industry-wide connections.

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence is supporting young Australians at risk of school avoidance and disengagement by embedding career coaching in low-income schools to advance educational and career pathways and improve their economic futures.

TOUCH Community Services Limited is providing mentorship and employability skills training for low-income youth in Singapore to help them build technical skills, discover their career aspirations, reduce school dropout rates and ready them for the workplace.

United Nations Development Programme Vietnam is launching a cross-sector national initiative for vocational training to bridge skills gaps and foster economic mobility for local youth.

World Vision Development Foundation is introducing out-of-school and low-income youth in the Philippines to the green job economy and helping them gain employment and entrepreneurial skills through a career readiness and enterprise startup program.

YCAB Foundation (Yayasan Cinta Anak Bangsa) is supporting low-income young women in Indonesia, including those with disabilities, gain access to living wage jobs or become entrepreneurs through technical, soft skills and digital skills training, financial literacy and job placement assistance.



Meet Our Grantees Working in Europe

CAPITAL vzw is leveraging virtual reality, augmented reality, AI and gamification to provide immersive experiences for low-income Belgian youth that help broaden their understanding of industries and career paths.

Centrepoint is helping young people in the UK experiencing homelessness secure housing and develop the skills and confidence they need to access jobs and education, including through coaching.

Fondazione Don Gino Rigoldi ETS is supporting low-income youth in Italy expand employability through vocational training, mentoring and financial education, and is conducting research to examine the gap between school curricula and in-demand skills.

Fundación A LA PAR is delivering a training initiative that provides accessible resources, innovative digital tools such as a unique online platform and vocational skills to youth in Spain with intellectual disabilities to cultivate employment opportunities, personal development and to build bridges with local companies.

Junior Achievement Romania is supporting low-income youth in Romania, Ireland, Portugal and Hungary to build skills for the retail sector through technical training, internships and job-shadowing as well as training in skills like communication and digital literacy.

National College of Ireland (NCI) is helping to bridge the gap between education and employment for low-income youth in Dublin, fostering career pathways in the technology and finance sectors that include mentorship, hands-on industry experience, training and internships.



New Agriculture New Generation is preparing youth in Greece for sustainable careers in the agrifood sector by providing vocational skills training, digital and financial education and apprenticeships.

NyföretagarCentrum Sverige is helping low-income youth in Sweden to become job creators by providing support and resources for entrepreneurship, enabling long-term employment and economic mobility.

Perspektywy Education Foundation is helping young people in Poland secure their first jobs and enhance their employability through workshops, internships, entrepreneurial opportunities, AI-powered learning and tailored development plans, and is conducting research to assess future labor market needs.

Positiv is using gamification, simulations of real-world challenges and AI-based coaching to help low-income youth in France enhance their digital skills and become empowered to set up businesses.

ThinkForward (UK) is combining long-term coaching, workplace exposures, mentoring and job creation to expand employment opportunities for low-income youth.



Meet Our Grantees Working in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ashoka Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay is strengthening its network of young entrepreneurs, including through regional, multi-stakeholder gatherings and through trainings on employment trends, entrepreneurship and changemaker skills, which encourage innovation and the use of technology.

CARE Guatemala promotes employment and self-employment opportunities for low-income youth in Guatemala and El Salvador by providing technical and vocational training in high-demand sectors, supporting entrepreneurship with seed capital and improving financial and digital literacy.

Cáritas del Perú is improving the employability and entrepreneurship of young people with disabilities by strengthening their technical, social, and financial capabilities, as well as providing access to seed capital and employment opportunities with companies and other local stakeholders

Fundación ProEmpleo is launching a digital platform that connects low-income youth in Mexico with soft and financial skills training, mentorship, mock interviews and real-time job opportunities, while building a collaborative ecosystem of individuals, schools and employers.



Generation is helping low-income youth in Mexico and Colombia gain access to living wage jobs in the technology sector through trainings on computer programming and information technology and a job placement program.

Instiglio is piloting results-based youth employment programs in Costa Rica through public-private partnerships that place and retain low-income youth in formal jobs in the country's high-growth industries.

Instituto da Oportunidade Social (IOS) is expanding employability for low-income youth in Brazil through free training in information and communication technology, financial literacy, communication skills and AI, while scaling access via online platforms and strengthening pathways to the job market.

The Organization of American States is improving access to jobs in cybersecurity for low-income youth across Latin America and the Caribbean through theoretical and practical technical training, skills development workshops and hands-on cyber challenges.

The Trust for the Americas is facilitating access to employment for youth in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Panama by providing skills training and pathways for entrepreneurship in partnership with local organizations.



Meet Our Grantees

Working in the Middle East & Africa

Asmae – Association Soeur Emmanuelle provides market-relevant vocational training and entrepreneurship support for low-income youth in Lebanon, where financial literacy and digital skills education are combined with community development activities.

Education Development Center – Senegal is supporting young people to improve employability and workforce readiness through community-based learning, financial literacy and training around soft skills and entrepreneurship.

Education For Employment is providing AI-enabled job matching support and upskilling youth across Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to help them navigate the digital economy.

FATE Foundation is providing access to information through cost-free platforms that support Nigerian youth in acquiring financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills and scaling youth-led enterprises.

Girl Effect is advancing job opportunities for unemployed youth in Kenya, with a focus on girls and young women, through certifications and vocational training, mentorship and testing centers in the creative and digital industries.

Hayal Ortaklari Denergi (Young Guru Academy) is equipping low-income young people in Türkiye with skills in AI, big data and financial technology to prepare for competitive jobs in the financial technology industry.



Humanitarian Action for Africa is fostering sustainable livelihoods for youth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through vocational training, entrepreneurship support, job placements, psychosocial support and mentorship.

International Rescue Committee is offering trainings on financial literacy, AI literacy and entrepreneurship for low-income youth in Jordan, and is working with a partner in the financial technology sector to pilot an alternative lending model to support youth-led enterprises.

Magdi Yacoub Heart Foundation is providing youth in Egypt with apprenticeship programs in fields such as nursing and biomedical operations and maintenance, where participants gain both classroom learning and on-the-job experience to improve their employability in these industries.

Seriti Institute is supporting youth in South Africa with technical, business and digital skills in sustainable agriculture, including hands-on training in regenerative farming, access to innovative farming practices and knowledge of digital solutions such as e-commerce platforms.

The British Asian Trust is providing youth-led microenterprises in Pakistan with structured support, mentorship and education on how to grow their businesses, as well as researching barriers to young people's access to financial services.

The Peres Center for Peace and Innovation is supporting low-income youth in Israel across cultures and geographies with training, mentorship and networking to expand their business development skills and promote their integration into the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.



Meet Our Grantees Working in the U.S. & Canada

MLT is providing career coaching to low-income and first-generation college freshmen, particularly from Chicago, Greater Washington, D.C. and New York to support their successful navigation to jobs that leverage their college degrees and provide economic mobility.

NPower is equipping young adults in California and New York from low-income communities with AI training, professional development and social support to increase the number of participants gaining access to high-quality tech careers and economic mobility.

NPower Canada is equipping low-income youth with in-demand digital skills, such as information technology and data analysis, soft skills and job placement support to foster economic mobility and sustainable careers in the technology sector.

One Stop Career Center of PR is expanding access to careers in the aerospace industry for youth in Puerto Rico by providing soft skills trainings, linking participants to technical trainings, partnering with employers in the industry, as well as providing job placement assistance, mentorship and access to continued education.



Per Scholas Inc. is enrolling young people looking for an alternative to traditional post-secondary education across the U.S., including in Chicago, Greater Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, New York and Orlando into information technology trainings that equip them with industry-recognized certifications and prepare them for full-time tech careers in fields like cloud, cybersecurity, data engineering, IT support and software engineering.

Year Up United is equipping young adults across the U.S., including California, Greater Washington, D.C., Florida, Illinois and New York with workforce readiness training and specialized skills development, preparing them for careers in fields such as information technology, banking, software development and business.



Learn more about the
Global Innovation Challenge at
www.citifoundation.com/challenge

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