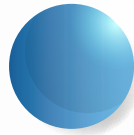




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URBANIZATION AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN AFRICA

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United Nations
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On-line Training

URBANIZATION AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN AFRICA

Call for Applications

Announcement in Brief

Type : Self-paced Course

Programme Area : Urbanization, Economic Affairs

Date : 8th July – 26th August 2021

Duration : 7 Weeks

Language : English

Location : Web Based E-Learning

Fee : No Fee

Application Deadline : 30th June 2021

Specific target audience : No

Website : <https://elearning.unidep.org>

Applications : <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>

PROGRAM RATIONALE

Urbanization is a mega-trend with profound implications for Africa's growth and transformation. In the past three decades since 1990, Africa has added nearly 400 million people to its cities, and over the next three decades to 2050, the continent will add an additional 900 million. In addition, the proportion of Africa's urban population is projected to reach 50.9% per cent in 2035 rising from today's 43.5 per cent. Africa's urban growth rate is the highest in the world, standing at 3.58 per cent currently and will remain high at an average of 3.3 per cent over the next 20 years. Africa's urban population doubled between 1995 and 2015 and will double again by 2035 reaching 966 million. Africa's urban population is likely to triple by 2050, with Africa and Asia accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the world's urban population growth. The urban transition is also taking place as the continent faces a demographic shift and a burgeoning youth population becoming located in urban areas.

Africa's rapid urban growth presents considerable demands for employment, services and infrastructure, but also creates opportunities for structural transformation, economic diversification, an increase in productivity and economic growth. Both historical and empirical evidence confirm the link between urban and economic growth. Cities, through agglomeration economies, make workers and firms more productive and drive wealth generation. Agglomeration enhance knowledge spill overs and therefore the skills, knowledge and technology. Agglomeration economies allow firms access to a wider and more educated pool of workers, proximity to markets and better infrastructure and therefore enable innovation and higher profit margins. Dynamic cities offer a competitive environment for firms to learn and innovate and economic structures to morph and adapt to changing global markets and technology.

While urbanization is necessary for structural transformation, it is not sufficient. The quality of cities can facilitate the growth of productive economic sectors or can constrict it. The quality of cities is based on their institutions, infrastructure and spatial layout. Well-functioning cities in these three areas convey productivity to firms operating there. It therefore becomes critical to plan and manage cities in a manner that optimizes their potential to drive economic growth and transformation in Africa.

Despite the importance of cities for Africa's inclusive growth agenda, there remain policy disconnects between spatial and economic planning. For instance, the links between urbanization and industrialization have generally been weak or absent in Africa, underlining the urgent need to connect urban and industrial development given their interdependence and growth impacts. In many African countries, the urbanization process has not been accompanied by job-rich economic growth. Often, rising GDP has been led by job-poor sectors including commodities, leaving rapidly growing urban populations without decent work, a concern especially for Africa's growing youth population. Yet urbanization offers opportunities to expand domestic manufacturing.

For instance, urban demand could be a driver of industrial development. As Africa's middle class and urban consumption are on the rise, and as patterns of consumption are changing, demand for manufactured and processed goods is increasing, presenting a major opportunity for industrialization. The urban demand for food is also rising and changing, with a growing number of urban residents beginning to buy groceries from supermarket chains. Furthermore, African cities are facing large unmet urban housing needs that could also provide opportunities to improve urban living conditions and generate construction and service jobs. Urban development also creates demand for public infrastructure, which could be leveraged through procurement policies and support to domestic firms in the construction industry.

The missing links between urbanization and industrialization are rooted mainly in the context of national institutional and policy frameworks for growth and transformation. Given the multi-dimensional implications of urbanization for industrialization and economic growth, strategic interventions prioritized and implemented under national development planning would benefit urban and industrial development. Rapid urbanization could be a powerful asset for Africa's economic growth provided it is harnessed through a strategic cross-sectoral policy framework anchored in national development planning.

Currently, African national development plans consider urban issues as a sectoral issue, with a limited role in economic transformation and industrialization. Urban goals in many national development plans of African countries are often expected to deal with poverty and informality, rather than to realize the economic opportunities that cities and urbanization represent. In the same vein, national development plans often place a priority on agriculture and rural development over urban economic productivity, even in countries where the population is approaching 50 per cent urban or beyond and GDP growth is driven by urban economic sectors. This results in urban underinvestment, with significant consequences for the economy in the long term.

Under national development planning, a cross-sectoral and strategic perspective is required to link urbanization and industrialization. Sectoral policies for industrial development need to factor in the implications of Africa's rapid urbanization, and urban policies have to better integrate job-rich industrial development for sustainable urbanization. In this way, urban and industrial strategies can be explicitly linked to broader national goals such as employment creation, poverty reduction and improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas. Planned urbanization is also crucial for local governments that are greatly dependent on transfers from the central government to raise domestic resources, including tax and non-tax revenue. African cities also have a huge potential for capturing yet underutilized property taxes such as land value capture.

Cities and local governments would also benefit from aligning their priorities and strategies with national development priorities. For instance, urban productivity could be enhanced by implementing local economic development strategies with an explicit focus on accelerating industrialization, mirroring national industrial policy and national urban policy, factoring in the competitive advantages of certain cities—including knowledge sharing in large, diverse cities and urban–rural linkages for smaller cities. Also, the planning and management of cities needs to be considered beyond service provision, as key foundation for achieving national development targets, and should more often be seen from the perspective of enhancing the productivity of cities particularly in generating jobs in sectors such as manufacturing and modern services.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, participants will have an enhanced understanding of the role of urbanization in Africa's transformation, in line with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Specifically, participants will be able to:

- Identify the key concepts, trends and conditions of urbanization in Africa and how they impact the regional economy;
- Identify the challenges and opportunities for Africa in terms of utilizing the continent's rapid urban growth for accelerating structural transformation;
- Understand the policy measures needed to take advantage of Africa's rapid urban growth can boost job creation in the manufacturing sector and modern tradeable services;

- Discuss the main barriers for African cities to be productive, competitive and job-rich and identify potential policy interventions to address them;
- Examine how deliberate planning can result in a balanced system of cities and adequate urban form in a manner that enables industrialization;
- Understand the potential of African cities to boost domestic resource mobilization, if they are well planned and managed;
- Discuss how African countries can strengthen the urban component of national development planning and visioning to harness urban growth for economic transformation;

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course consists of the following modules:

- Module 1 : Key concepts, trends and conditions of urbanization in Africa
- Module 2 : Urbanization and structural transformation in Africa
- Module 3 : Economic sector targeting to leverage urban potential
- Module 4 : Productive national urban systems for economic growth
- Module 5 : Productive cities for economic growth
- Module 6 : Financial policies to leverage urbanization
- Module 7 : Integrating Urbanization in National Development Planning

METHODOLOGY

The self-paced course will be opened for 7 weeks from 08th July 2021 to 26 August 2021 on the ground of one module per week. Each module has interactive lessons that provide the core content around the topic for that module. The lessons are designed in a way that allows learners to self-assess their understanding through built-in quizzes. Additional resources such as bibliographies, web links and optional readings are provided for participants who wish to deepen their knowledge of the course topic.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The course targets groups and individuals that are interested in obtaining a better understanding of how urbanization can serve as an instrument of accelerated industrialization and structural transformation in Africa. They include:

- Policymakers in National Ministries and Agencies responsible for industry, trade, agriculture and infrastructure, housing, urban development and local Government as well as Ministries of Finance, planning and Economic development
- Local governments and city authorities
- Officials from Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Professionals in private sector and civil society organizations
- Faculty, researchers, students and interested citizens

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Acceptance to the Course

Applicants to the course are expected to have, as a minimum, a bachelor's degree, preferably in urbanization or locational economics, local economic development, municipal finance and related areas in the context of Africa. In addition, two years of relevant work experience will be required. Women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Until the registration deadline, participants are accepted to the course on a rolling basis and subject to availability of slots. Applications must be completed exclusively on IDEP online application platform at <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>

Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion will be issued by IDEP to all participants who successfully complete the course-related self-assessments presented for each module.

Technical Requirements

Access to internet is an essential condition for participation. The following specifications, as a minimum in terms of hardware and software, are required to take this e-Learning course, please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

- Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; Linux
- Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
- Software:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
 - Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office
 - Browser: Google chrome Internet Explorer 7 or higher or Firefox 36 or higher
- Modem: 56 K
- Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Pop-ups must be enabled

CONTACT INFORMATION

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