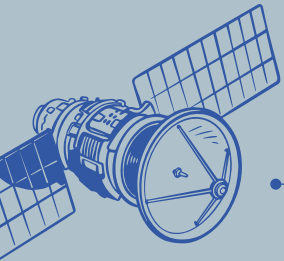


A stylized illustration of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt and white pants, sitting in a white office chair at a white desk. She is looking at a computer monitor that displays a geometric diagram of a circle with a square inscribed inside it. On the desk, there is a black mouse. To the left of the desk is a white pot with a green plant. On the wall behind her are several framed icons: a crescent moon, a star with a face, a sun with a face, and a whiteboard with three sticky notes. The background is a light blue color with some faint circuit-like lines on the right side.



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Gig Economy

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
2FA	Two-Factor Authentication
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DOT	Digital Opportunity Trust
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LMS	Learning Management System
MAR	Minimum Acceptable Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFT	Online Freelancer Training
Q&A	Question and Answer
ROI	Return on Investment
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SME	Subject Matter Expert
ToT	Training of Trainers
UI	User Interface
UX	User Experience

Table 0.1: List of Abbreviations

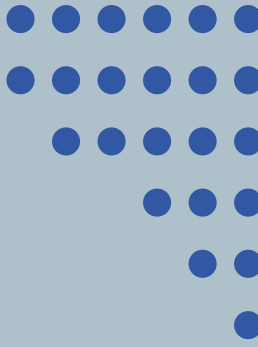
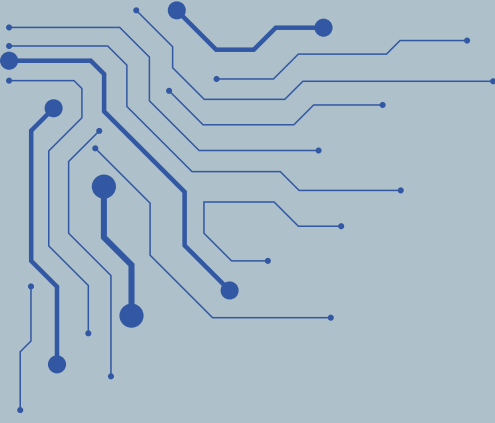
GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Cloud-based Work	Online freelancing or digital tasks performed remotely using a computer or smartphone, such as data entry, graphic design, or software development, typically found on freelancing platforms.
Contest-based Crowd-work	A platform work model where clients run contests for tasks, such as logo design or data analysis, with payment awarded only to the winning entry.
Decent and Fair Working Conditions	Working conditions that ensure fair pay, respect for workers' rights, timely payment, transparency, and protection from harassment or exploitation.
Digital Labour Platform	A company that mediates labour exchange between workers and customers, providing a platform for online and location-based gig work.
Digital Literacy	The ability to use digital devices, platforms, and applications effectively, safely, and responsibly for work and communication.
Digital Rights	Rights that ensure fair treatment, privacy, and protection for workers operating in online digital environments, including access to fair pay, safe working conditions, and grievance mechanisms.
Fairwork Principles	Five principles developed by the Fairwork Project for fair work in the platform economy: fair pay, fair conditions, fair contracts, fair representation, fair management. These principles set and measure fair standards for the future of work.
Freelance Marketplace	An online platform, such as Upwork or Fiverr that enables freelancers to create profiles and apply for online jobs by connecting with clients.
Gender Negative	Practices, policies, or systems that explicitly disadvantage or exclude individuals based on their gender, reinforcing gender inequality.
Gender Blind	An approach that ignores gender differences, challenges, and systemic inequalities, assuming that the same interventions or practices will work for everyone.
Gender Sensitive	An approach that acknowledges gender differences and specific barriers but does not systematically challenge or transform them.
Gender Responsive	An approach that actively considers and addresses the different needs, barriers, and circumstances of all genders, and adapts programme design and delivery accordingly.
Gender Transformative	An approach that seeks to challenge and change harmful gender norms, relationships, and systemic inequalities, promoting gender equity as part of the programme's core objective.
Gig Economy	A labour market characterised by short-term, temporary, and task-based work facilitated via digital platforms.

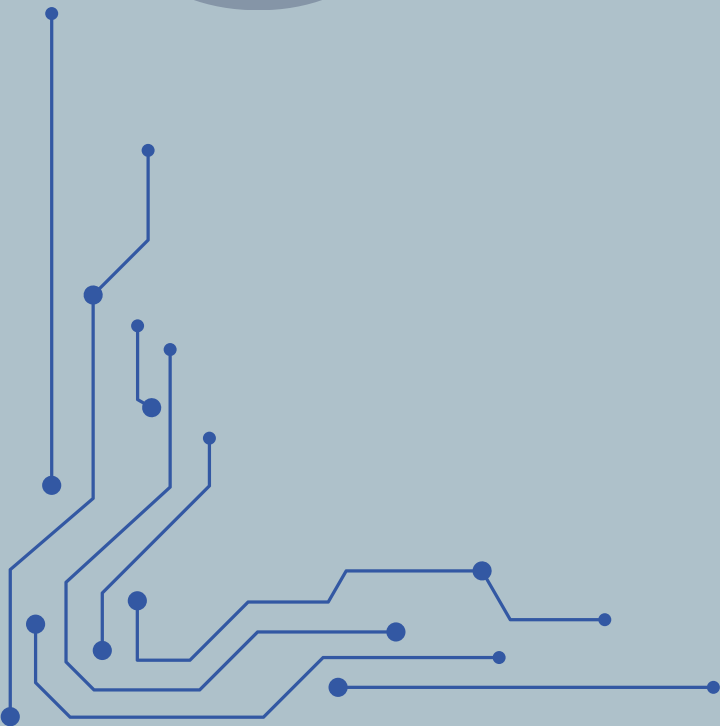
GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Gig Talk	A session during training where an experienced freelancer shares their real-life experiences, challenges, and lessons learnt, helping trainees relate more directly to platform work.
Inclusive Practice	Methods and strategies designed to ensure learning environments and content are accessible, relevant, and supportive of all genders and marginalised groups.
Informal Economy	Economic activities that are unregulated, untaxed, and often outside formal labour protections.
Living Tariffs	The amount of money that self-employed or gig workers need to earn per day to achieve a living wage. It includes not only daily living expenses, but also the cost of resources required for the work, such as work equipment costs, overhead costs, taxes, social security, and savings in case of illness and retirement.
Living Wages	The amount of money sufficient to cover food, accommodation, transportation, health, and education expenses together with a provision for unexpected events.
Location-based Platform Work	Platform work where tasks must be done in a specific location, such as food delivery, home care services, or ride-hailing services.
Micro-tasking Platforms	Platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk or Appen where workers perform small tasks, such as image classification or data entry, often requiring minimal skills or equipment.
Module	A self-contained unit of the training programme that covers a specific topic, such as “Managing a Competitive Profile” or “Decent and Fair Working Conditions”.
Not in Education, Employment or	Young people not engaged in employment, formal education, or training, including unemployed or inactive individuals.
Online Freelancing	A form of platform work where individuals offer services remotely via freelancing platforms, handling tasks like data labelling, writing, graphic design, and digital marketing.
Platform Economy	A digital economic model where intermediaries (platforms) connect clients and workers for task-based work, often with flexible schedules but limited job security.
Soft Skills	Non-technical skills such as communication, time management, adaptability, and problem-solving, important for succeeding as an online freelancer.
Stakeholder Mapping	A structured approach to identifying and categorising individuals, groups, or institutions involved in or affected by the programme.
Target Group Mapping	A process for profiling and understanding the core trainees (e.g., women, youth, or marginalised workers), their motivations, challenges, and digital readiness.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Education and training providing skills relevant to employment, often including work-based learning.

Table 0.2: Glossary of Definitions



O



INTRODUCTION

The Changing World of Work

Digitalisation has globally disrupted the world of work. Traditional jobs with fixed hours and secure contracts are giving way to more flexible, task-based, and new forms of work. Much of this new work happens online, mediated through platforms and mobile applications, and is known as “gig work”. The surge in mobile phones and access to internet has led to the rise of the digital labour economy and platform work.



Platform work offers flexible work options and easy access to jobs. Its low-entry barriers make it an attractive alternative for unemployed youth who otherwise might have limited access to formal and informal work. Women benefit particularly from the flexibility and autonomy to work from anywhere and at any time. They comprise a significant percentage of this digital workforce but are largely invisible. Around the world, especially in the technologically connected countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, more people are turning to online freelancing as their main source of income. Yet, this digital shift is not without challenges. It raises new risks for workers, such as unstable incomes, lack of job security, insufficient social protection, and increased vulnerability to exploitative working conditions. Women and marginalised groups

are seen to be even more vulnerable to risks of the gig economy.

Who are these gig workers? A World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) report identifies them to be typically below the age of 35, residing in an urban or suburban area, with access to the internet and a mobile device (International Labour Organisation 2021). The report also finds that over 60 per cent of people registered on online platforms are highly educated and turn to platform work due to lack of other employment opportunities in their local job market. Similar trends are observed for those who are not in education, employment, or training (known as “NEETs”), many of whom take up location-based jobs, such as riders, drivers, home-based service providers, or domestic workers, through digital platforms as a quick source of income.

Another feature of platform work is that workers operate as independent entities and are often called “partners”. As partners, they have limited rights to negotiate and restricted access to basic social protections. They also lack the professional support and networking opportunities available to typical office-based workers, whether white-collar or blue-collar. Unlike traditional employees, platform workers often work in isolation without peer networks. They must adapt quickly to new technologies and continuously upskill. They need continuous guidance on in-demand skills, pricing their services, self-marketing, customer acquisition, budgeting, and navigating platform algorithms.

Training providers, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes, colleges, and universities, as well as other job matching intermediaries, such as employment exchanges, job centres, and freelancing collectives are under-equipped to offer guidance on platform work and what it takes

to set up a successful freelancing career. This is where a dedicated **Online Freelancer Training (OFT)** programme comes in. The OFT programme can help institutions support their learners or members to find decent work as they move in and out of the platform economy.

This Replication Toolkit is based on the OFT programme that was piloted in four countries (Morocco, Kenya, India, and Ghana), between 2023 and 2025, by GIZ's Gig Economy Initiative. It addresses gaps arising out of rapid transitions within the platform economy by combining lessons learnt from pilot implementations with concrete experiences and tips of successful freelancers.

The key strength of this programme is that it has been developed in a way that it supports institutions and their trainers to customise, set up, and deliver OFT in their local context. It is particularly aimed at upskilling workers, vocational trainees, graduate students, or anyone who is an online freelancer, or wants to learn about online freelancing, in-demand skills, and fair working conditions.



The Toolkit serves as a practical guide for future-focused institutions on integrating digital work, digital skills, and digital rights as part of their existing curriculum, or to launch a short course on navigating the gig economy.

It prioritises doing so through a gender-responsive lens, recognising that women often face additional barriers, such as limited access to devices, constraints on time and mobility, lower digital confidence, and systemic bias. A gender-responsive approach ensures that the training actively identifies these barriers and adapts its content, facilitation methods, outreach methods, and support mechanisms to enable women to participate fully and benefit equally from platform work.



The Toolkit is also designed to serve as a go-to guide for development agencies with programmes at the intersection of sustainable economic development, new work, digital inclusion, and gender transformation. It provides ready-to-use materials for their implementation networks, including practical facilitation tools, training content, and outreach strategies. By using this Toolkit, implementing institutions can enhance the impact of their digital initiatives in a way that opens new income opportunities for participants.

Additionally, this Toolkit serves as a useful resource for digital platforms and intermediaries who wish to offer upskilling opportunities to their workers on growth pathways and fair working conditions.

How to Use the Toolkit

The Toolkit is modular, flexible, and designed to be adapted to your local context. It offers detailed curriculum on digital skills, soft skills, financial literacy, and other foundational knowledge needed for success in platform work.



The Toolkit provides a clear set of implementation phases designed to guide institutions step by step through setting up and delivering the Online Freelancer Training (OFT) programme.



For trainers, the Toolkit includes detailed Lesson Plans in Appendix 1, which they can review, adapt, and use to prepare their sessions in a way that is relevant to their local context and the needs of their trainees.

Our experience shows that this programme can be easily localised. Pilot implementations followed these four main phases:



1. Outreach and Promotion

- Map your key stakeholders using a structured stakeholder mapping tool.
- Apply specific outreach strategies tailored to each stakeholder group, such as women's groups, job centres, digital literacy centres, and community leaders.
- Identify and engage key partners who can amplify your reach and support programme sustainability.
- Actively engage the local network to build trust, ensure visibility, and promote the programme widely.
- Offer incentives, such as internet bundles, certification, or access to co-working spaces, to attract and retain both trainers and trainees.



2. Preparation

- Select the right mix of trainees and trainers based on their motivation, access to technology, and alignment with programme goals.

- Identify freelancing experts who can deliver “Gig Talks” and share practical, inspiring experiences with the trainees.
- Choose the most appropriate training format (online, in-person, blended, or low-bandwidth options) based on the context, connectivity, and the needs of your target group.



3. Implementation

- Conduct a dedicated Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop to familiarise trainers with the lesson plans, key facilitation practices, and gender-responsive teaching methods.
- Map out clear module delivery responsibilities to ensure each trainer knows their role and focus area.
- Support trainers on adapting content to be locally relevant, inclusive, and sensitive to the realities of women and marginalised groups.
- Embed Gig Talks and guest speaker sessions to enrich learning and bring real-world freelancing experiences into the classroom.



4. Evaluation and Learning

- Identify and apply appropriate data collection methods, mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture the programme's outcomes comprehensively.
- Ensure strong data management practices, including privacy protection, consent, and secure storage of trainee and trainer information.
- Track key outputs (e.g., trainee enrolment, completion rates, profiles created) and measure outcomes (e.g., jobs secured, income earned, digital rights awareness).
- Assess the broader impact at the family and community level, such as increased confidence, decision-making power, and new peer networks.
- Communicate and report impact in a structured way to stakeholders—highlighting both success stories and lessons learnt—to strengthen future training cycles and attract further support.

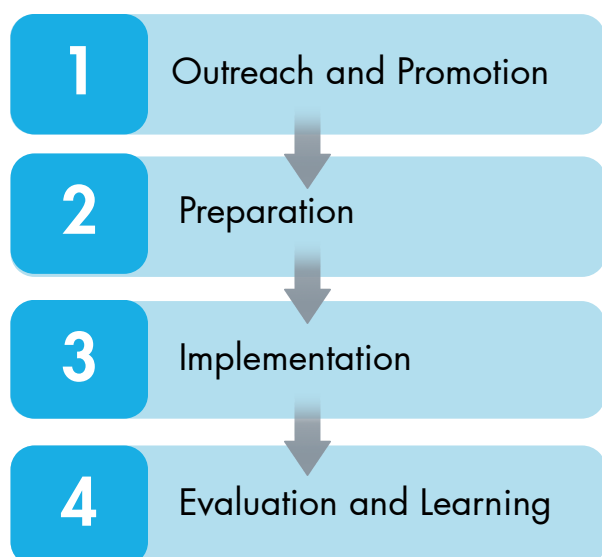


Figure 1.1: Toolkit Use from Mobilisation to Impact

Adapting the Toolkit Locally

This Toolkit is informed by local experiences from pilot countries and designed for a global audience. As such, its effective use requires adaptation to your specific target group and country context.



This symbol indicates places in the implementation framework where you are encouraged to insert local examples, case studies, or references from your institution's experience to make the training more practical and relatable.

Navigating the Toolkit Symbols

Throughout the Toolkit, you will find helpful symbols designed to guide you and highlight key content. Here's what each symbol means:



Checklists – Task lists to help you follow key steps.



Inclusive Practice Tips – Suggestions for gender-responsive approaches that address the diverse needs of all genders.



Lessons Learnt – Key observations and insights collected from previous implementation experiences.



Localisation Tips – Practical advice to help you adapt the Toolkit content to your local context.



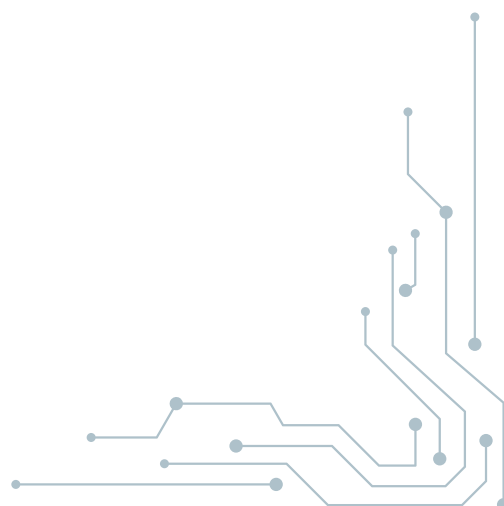
Quick Tips – Useful suggestions related to the overall programme.

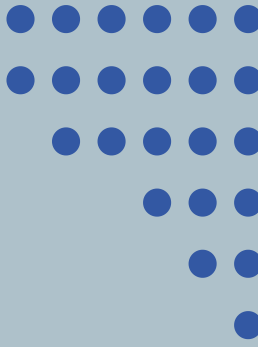
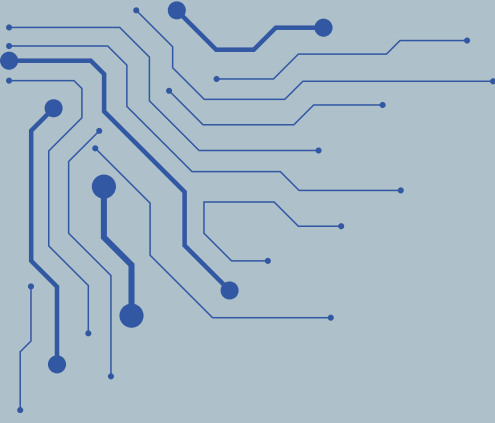


Resource Links – Online links connecting you to additional content, publications, or tools.

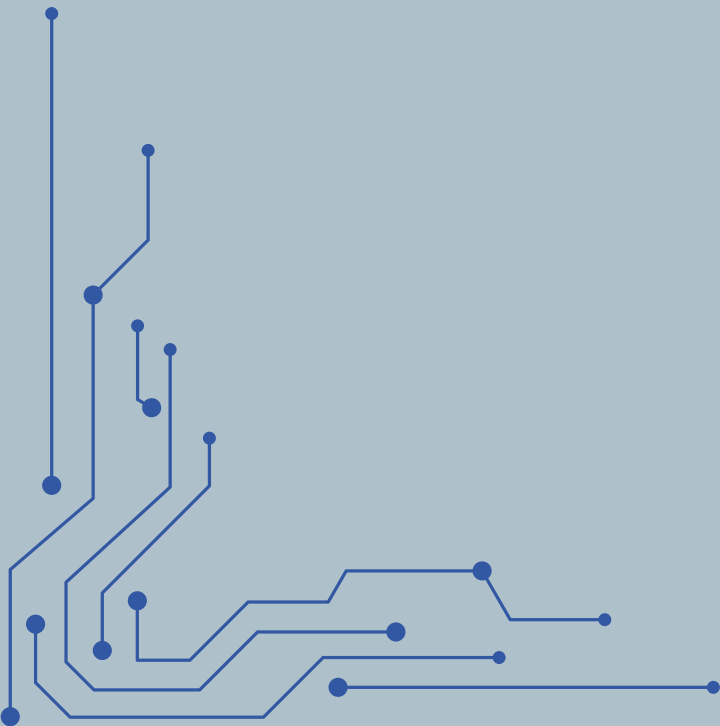


Video Resources – Links to relevant videos for further explanation, demonstration, or inspiration.





1



SECTION 01: BACKGROUND

What is Platform Economy?

The **platform economy** refers to work mediated through online marketplaces in the form of apps or websites that match workers to clients. This work is often temporary, task-based, and mostly infrequent; hence, the term “gig work” is used interchangeably with “platform work”.



There are **two main types of platform work**:

Location-based work: Tasks that are geographically tethered, meaning they must be done in a specific place, such as delivering food, driving passengers, providing home-based care, domestic work, or beauty and wellness services.

Cloud-based work: Tasks that are done remotely using a phone or computer and mainly focused on digital skills and services, such as virtual assistance, data entry, data labelling, online tutoring, translation, graphic design, software development, and coding.

Both types of platform work are part of a growing ecosystem of digital labour often located in urban and semi-urban centres. Location-based work is usually more visible; however, cloud-based work, also referred to as “**online freelancing**”, is equally prevalent and, in fact, far more global.

This Toolkit specifically focuses on online freelancing—cloud-based work—and preparing for the unique challenges and opportunities it offers.

Types of Online Freelancing

Services provided by online freelancers range from simple data annotation tasks, such as image selection, text classification, transcription, filling surveys, scoring, etc., to complex tasks, such as web designing, software development and coding, UX/UI design, data visualisation, technical writing, video production, online project management, etc.

Online freelancers find jobs on:

Freelance marketplaces, such as Freelancer, Upwork, or Fiverr, that allow workers to create profiles and bid for jobs. These tasks often require creativity or technical skill, such as writing, web development, or translation.

Micro-tasking platforms, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk, TaskRabbit, or Appen, that offer small tasks like categorising images or filling out forms. These jobs usually require basic literacy and digital navigation skills. They pay small amounts per task but can be done with minimal equipment.

Contest-based crowd-work platforms, such as Clickworker, that run contests for tasks like logo design or data analysis. Many workers submit their entries, but only one is selected and paid. These are competitive and less predictable but offer higher pay for winning entries.

Women comprise more than 40 per cent of the global online freelancing workforce (World Bank 2023). For many, platform work is the primary source of income, and they take on

jobs while navigating the demands of both work and home life. In addition to the challenges faced by most gig workers (unfair pay, algorithmic management, lack of social protections), women encounter unique barriers, including:

- Limited access to digital devices, the internet, and digital skills.
- Unsafe work environments and online gender-based violence.
- Inability to exercise control over their time and income.
- Gender-based algorithmic bias in visibility and work allocation.
- Lack of grievance mechanisms or protections against online harassment.



This limits their ability to participate fully in the digital economy or grow within or outside the gig economy. A gender-responsive approach is, therefore, necessary when building support systems for online freelancers.



Women gig workers in India face several systemic challenges. Women are 20 per cent less likely to own smartphones than men, and many struggle to navigate gig platforms, track payments, or resolve disputes. This leaves them at risk of exploitation. Unpaid domestic responsibilities, childcare, and limited mobility at night reduces the kinds of jobs women can take. Many women take on fewer than three assignments a day because of family obligations, which reduces their income potential. Platform algorithms and rating systems, often designed around the assumption of full availability and mobility, end up penalising women more severely for declining work or missing peak-hour shifts.

Kriti Agarwal

Coordinator, Skill Development, SEWA Bharat, India





LESSONS LEARNT

The OFT programme was implemented with partner organisations in Morocco, Kenya, India, and Ghana, where online freelancers entering the digital labour economy underwent an eight-to-twelve-week training on navigating the gig economy.

These key lessons drawn from the experience form the foundation for the sections that follow.

Boost Early Engagement

Trainees often drop off in the first few weeks. Build motivation early with short wins (e.g., completing a small paid task, opening a freelancer profile, earning feedback points).

Bridge the Device and Data Gap

Many trainees don't own laptops or have enough mobile data. Partner with local organisations to provide device access or offer stipends for internet costs.

Clarify Economic Pathways

Help trainees understand the long-term potential of freelancing—how it connects to future jobs, entrepreneurship, or further learning.

Include Expert Voices

Bring in platform workers, local digital entrepreneurs, or content creators to speak with trainees. This adds credibility and inspiration.

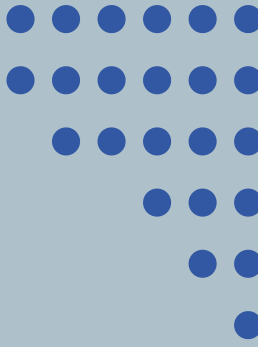
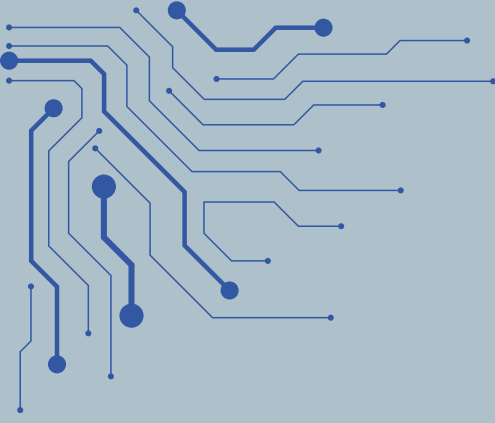
Plan for Post-training Support

Freelancers need continued support after training ends. Create alumni groups or online forums. Pair advanced trainees with mentors or peer leaders.

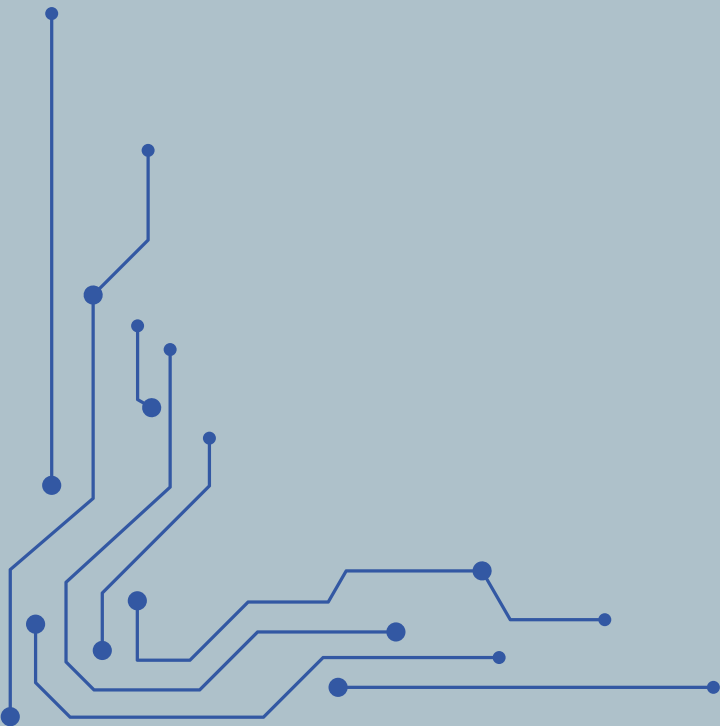
Impact Story

In Kenya, more than 2,600 gig workers took part in the OFT programme implemented by Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) under the umbrella of Digital Transformation Centre Kenya and GIZ Gig Economy Initiative. The programme offered free training, focusing on digital, financial, and soft skills for platform work. The programme placed a strong focus on establishing networks through peer learning and mentorship formats. The initiative showed that accessible training, combined with local mentorship, can help scale digital work opportunities for underserved groups.





2



SECTION 02:

OUTREACH AND PROMOTION



This section will help you kickstart the outreach process for your OFT programme in a way that is structured, inclusive, and tailored to your local context. You'll focus on building strong community networks and applying gender-responsive approaches from the very beginning. Drawing from real implementation experiences, this section will help you identify the right stakeholders, reach underrepresented groups, and set the foundation for effective programme partnerships.

This section will help you answer:



- How can you form communities in inclusive, equitable ways?
- Who are the key stakeholders and how can you map and engage with them effectively?
- What communication tools and materials will help you reach your audience?

Planning Outreach

Successful training not only contributes to the development of the learning ecosystem but also benefits from the local experiences and institutional expertise. Our previous implementation experiences demonstrate that engaging a wider spectrum of stakeholders leads to greater success. This included attracting and collaborating with a diversity of

stakeholders, and forging alliances with other like-minded partners that prioritise learner needs and decent work. Experience shows us that gender-responsive practices and ensuring that training content addresses gender-specific challenges and opportunities.



You can use the ***Building Pathways to Gig Work*** video to introduce the OFT programme to your institution, partners, and local networks. It explains why this toolkit matters and how easy it is to adopt and replicate.

Outreach Process

In our pilot implementations, the OFT outreach process followed three key steps:

- **Stakeholder Identification Framework** – to examine your network to find relevant actors for your programme and develop a stakeholder map.
- **Outreach and Promotions** – to develop strategies for reaching out to the actors identified during the stakeholder mapping exercise.
- **Local Network Engagement** – to leverage local network connections of actors to ensure maximum visibility of the programme and long-lasting relationships.

Let's take a close look at these processes.

Stakeholder Mapping

A **stakeholder identification framework** is a structured approach used to **identify, analyse, and categorise individuals, groups, or institutions** that have an interest in—or are affected by—the OFT programme. A successful stakeholder identification framework will:

- Ensure **no key voices are left out**, especially from marginalised groups.
- Help tailor **gender-responsive and inclusive** strategies.
- Support more **effective communication and buy-in** from diverse stakeholders.
- **Reduce the risks** of conflict, exclusion, or missed opportunities.

When we started to develop the outreach plan, we asked ourselves, “*What would our network of stakeholders for OFT implementation look like?*” In the initial phase, it seemed quite simple, but once we started conducting the focus group discussions, an intricate web of partners started to emerge. See the example below.

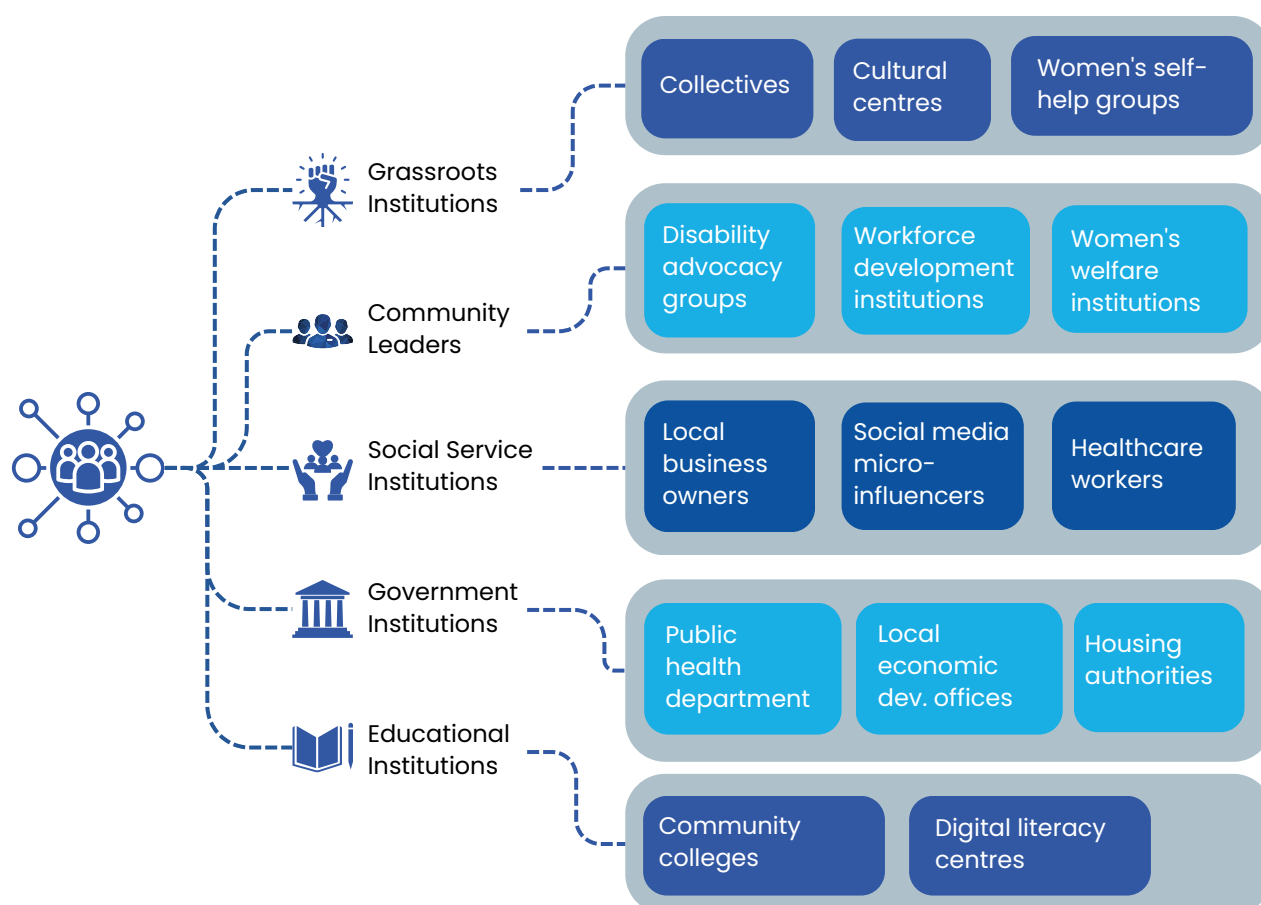


Figure 2.1: Network of Stakeholders for OFT Implementation



Which other stakeholders would you need to engage for piloting OFT at your institution?

Once your stakeholders have been identified, the next step involves onboarding and engagement. Naturally, each group requires a different outreach strategy to onboard and engage them. Here are some strategies that worked during the previous implementations:

Stakeholder Group	Outreach Strategies
Welfare Institutions (Family, Women)	- Participate in local events. - Share women's success stories from similar programmes. - Focus on long-term financial independence and career growth.
Women's Self-Help Groups	- Promote peer-to-peer communication. - Present the OFT materials in local languages.
Digital Literacy Centres	- Develop collaborative partnerships focused on upskilling. - Build the capacities of the centre facilitators on online freelancing.
Job Centres (Employment Exchanges)	- Align with the centre's employment goals. - Provide job placement statistics. - Offer to integrate the training programme with their existing ones.
Social Media Influencers	- Use a social media outreach strategy. - Involve micro-influencers that support social causes and request for reviews on the OFT programme. - Promote talks and informational sessions via social media.
Local Economic Development Offices	- Approach them with a formal proposal of the programme. - Provide job creation statistics. - Offer to participate in economic development initiatives.
Community Workers	- Approach them through professional associations and local institutions. - Offer micro incentives for promoting the programme with your target group.
Local Government Groups	- Attend local meetings and create proposals. - Provide data-driven presentations. - Create a public-private partnership model using facilities like libraries and community centres.
Public Health Departments	- Connect with them through community health initiatives and wellness programmes. - Provide evidence-based outcomes and community health impact data.
Community College Representatives	- Present detailed curriculum alignment. - Promote freelancing as a way to gain market experience.
Local Business Owners	- Discuss benefits, ROI for businesses. - Link growth of skilled freelancers to improved local businesses ecosystem.
Advocacy Groups (Special focus like disability)	- Promote the inclusivity and equal opportunity provided by online freelancing. - Provide trainees with access to materials in multiple formats. - Engage disability advocates in programme design feedback.
Cultural Centres	- Identify links between the goals of the centre and OFT. - Offer talks that focus on the challenges of gig workers.

Table 2.1: Outreach Strategy to Onboard and Engage Various Stakeholders

Before connecting with the stakeholders you've identified, it is important to organise their information in an agile format. A **stakeholder mapping sheet** will help you achieve just that. There can be several formats for this mapping. A simple template we used looks like this:

Stakeholder	Role / Institution	Interest in the Project	Level of Influence / Power	Potential Engagement	Gender & Inclusion Considerations	Engagement Strategy
Name or group (e.g., "Local women's cooperative")	Describe their role or affiliation	Why are they interested? What motivates them?	High / Medium / Low	Guest Speaker, outreach partner, technical inputs	Barriers, needs, or roles (e.g., limited mobility, digital access, voice in decision-making)	Inform / Consult / Involve / Collaborate / Empower

Table 2.2: Stakeholder Mapping Template

Key Messaging

The key messaging around your outreach activities should focus on the outcome of the training for the group. It is always beneficial to draft a key message that resonates with the needs and gaps of your groups. This could be communicated through various media channels, like a promotional flyer, an email, an instant message, or even a talk. Our experience shows that a key message helps attract the right stakeholders and participants to the OFT programme. Some examples include:

- Prepare your learners for the digital jobs of tomorrow.
- Support learners to work from home, earn online and know their rights.

While creating a strong outreach message is important, it is equally crucial to add a call to action to your message, which is often overlooked by implementation teams. A call to action guides the audience on what to do next, for examples: **Anchor your digital skills training in the future of work. Let's build digital careers—together.**

A vital aspect of outreach for a training programme like this is ensuring that your stakeholders not only understand what the programme offers but also how they can contribute to its success. Effective outreach initiatives treat engagement not as a one-time recruitment activity, but as an ongoing dialogue that strengthens both the programme and the communities it serves.



Share the ***What is the Online Freelancer Training (OFT) Programme and Toolkit?*** video with sponsors and decision-makers. It highlights the value of OFT, gives evidence of need and opportunity, and includes a call to action for partnerships and funding.

Engaging the Local Network

In many successful OFT programmes, impact grows when the ecosystem cooperates, when we tap into the strength of local networks—women’s groups, cultural institutions, business development hubs, and educational organisations. Through these connections, trust is built more naturally, cultural understanding deepens, and meaningful relationships with the target group begin to take shape.



Engaging with local networks opens up communication channels that may otherwise remain out of reach. For instance, women's organisations and community mentors can play a crucial role in amplifying awareness of your OFT programme, helping ensure that outreach effectively reaches women and marginalised gender groups. Refer to your stakeholder mapping to identify key potential partners to target your outreach.

What makes this different from other training programmes? Promoting online freelancing involves introducing an entirely new form of work—digital, platform-based—to individuals who may be more familiar with traditional digital skills or upskilling initiatives. Online freelancing offers more than just technical know-how; it introduces a new way of thinking about work. Many participants may be encountering the concept of earning through digital platforms for the first time.

Participants need more than information—they need the mindset, tools, and confidence to navigate the gig economy. Building understanding is just one part of the equation. Equally important are trust, networks, credibility, and the motivation to work independently. When done well, this approach fosters supportive communities that empower women and marginalised groups to challenge traditional gender roles and social norms, and to pursue economic independence through digital work.

In Kenya, we found that programmes succeed with a targeted outreach. You need to leverage grassroots networks, community-based organisations, and messaging groups where potential freelancers already interact.

LESSONS LEARNT



Local networks and cultural knowledge played a crucial role in the success of the OFT programme in India. Working with professors from the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in India helped identify the right participants, adapt the content to local contexts, and maintain engagement through mentorship and follow-up. For example, professors were able to recommend students who had the digital access and interest to benefit most from the training, and they helped translate key concepts into local languages to ensure better understanding. None of this would have been possible without the trust and networks they’ve built within the community over time.

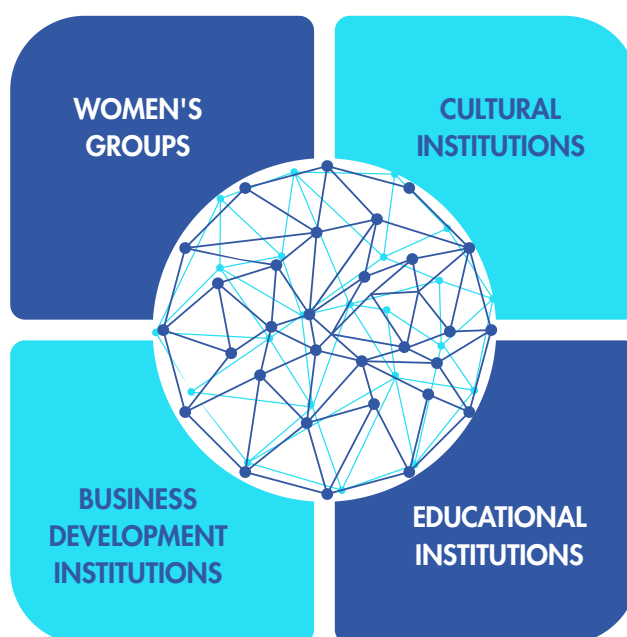


Figure 2.2: Connecting with Local Networks

Promoting the Programme

Before you begin designing the promotional materials, ask yourself this question: **What should be the goals of my outreach strategy and how can these materials help me convey it to my target audience?**

When promoting the OFT programme in Kenya, the Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) had the following goals for their programme:

- Mobilise the right target groups (women, youth, adult workers, other communities).
- Build trust with institutions, trainers, and communities.
- Inform trainees about online freelancing.
- Share success stories to build momentum.

This promotional strategy proved effective, but it wasn't without challenges. The key lessons learnt from this process are given below.



LESSONS LEARNT

- **Prioritise trust-building over transactional networking.** Sustainable partnerships come from building genuine relationships, not just quick exchanges.
- **Plan ahead.** Allow sufficient time to develop a strong outreach strategy and prepare promotional materials thoughtfully.
- **Use familiar communication channels.** Reach your target group through platforms they already use—such as social media or popular messaging apps—and tap into existing active groups rather than creating new ones from scratch.
- **Find local champions.** Identify individuals within your institution who are already involved in online freelancing and can share their experiences to inspire others in their community.



Use the ***What is Online Freelancing?*** video when promoting the programme to potential trainees. It introduces online freelancing in simple terms and sparks curiosity by showing how easy it is to get started.

Practical Strategies for Programme Promotions

Promoting a programme effectively requires more than just spreading the word; it involves building genuine, lasting relationships within the community. Below are practical steps that can help deepen engagement and foster long-term support.

- Invite stakeholder group leaders to help design programme components, provide input on curriculum relevance, and suggest culturally appropriate teaching methods.
- Integrate your programme's information into existing community meetings, workshops, or social gatherings.
- Involve community leaders in activities, such as hosting information sessions, providing testimonials, serving on advisory committees, and mentoring trainees throughout the programme.
- Create connections by introducing different stakeholder groups to each other to build a stronger, more collaborative ecosystem.
- Train emerging leaders within stakeholder networks to ensure ongoing programme promotion and ensure sustainability beyond the initial phase.

Keeping these tips in mind, begin building relationships with local communities through cross-institutional collaboration, joint marketing initiatives, press release strategies, and engagement with local publications. Below are some key strategies to help you move these initiatives forward:

- Identify partnerships by seeking institutions that serve similar demographics but are not direct competitors.
- Create co-branded training modules that leverage the strengths of each institution.
- Frame press releases to address local economic challenges or highlight how the programme fills specific skill gaps.
- Promote press releases as joint efforts from a group of local institutions, rather than from a single organisation.
- Ensure programme events are included in local publication calendars, community event listings, and business newsletters.
- Build relationships with key stakeholders from your target group.
- Create content that provides genuine value to readers.
- Develop consistent messaging about the programme and its intended outcomes.



Show the ***Bringing Women into the Gig Economy*** video to institutions, NGOs, and workforce partners to emphasise why and how to design gender-responsive outreach and recruitment strategies.

Promotional Materials

From our experience with online freelancing programmes, we've seen that the most effective marketing messages are those that genuinely resonate with the audience and inspire them to participate. Integrating gender-inclusive messaging has also proven key to reaching marginalised communities who can benefit the most. In addition to the materials provided, you're encouraged to create your own.

Below are some sample promotional materials from previous implementations of GIZ's Online Freelancer Training (OFT) programme. They can be used as templates or adapted to suit your local context when designing your own outreach materials.

The templates include placeholders for the session date and institutional logos, allowing you to tailor the materials for local outreach. Logos can be added to all promotional items to reflect your partnerships and increase community recognition.

You can download the editable templates from www.bmz-digital.global/en/online-freelancers-training-toolkit-gig-workers. The default print size for these materials is A4.



Tips for developing marketing materials

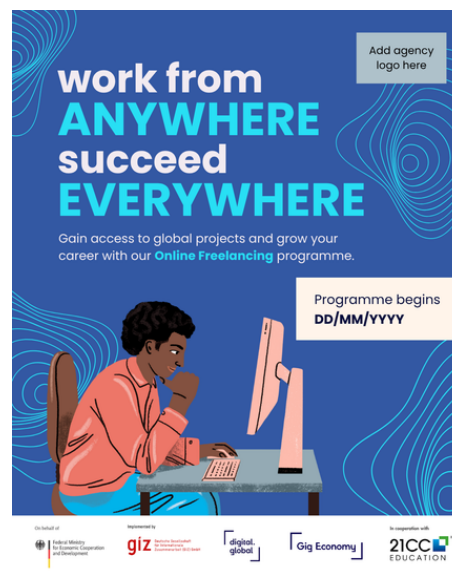
The following tips can support you in crafting clear, relevant messaging for your campaign:

- Acknowledge the unique challenges faced by your audience. For example, women may find the flexibility of freelancing difficult to manage while balancing family responsibilities and career growth. Marginalised communities often encounter traditional hiring barriers and limited access to opportunities due to geographic location or connectivity issues.
- Present freelancing as a pathway to supplementary income and an opportunity to earn while you learn.
- Share success stories of women and individuals from marginalised backgrounds who have built sustainable careers through freelancing.
- Offer basic digital literacy guidance and recommend low-cost equipment options to help address technology access barriers.

Social Media Materials

Social media is a powerful tool to draw trainees into your programme and expand its reach. Platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp each offer unique ways to connect with your audience and boost community engagement.

Here are some examples of social media posts from our previous implementations of the programme:



Incentives

Shared purpose and social impact can spark interest, but keeping participants engaged—especially when they are digitally dispersed or need to adapt to new ways of working—requires effort. In such cases, practical incentives often make all the difference.

Offered when promoting the programme, these incentives, whether tangible or intangible, can:

- Acknowledge the time and expertise of trainers and mentors.
- Encourage attendance and active participation.
- Help reduce barriers like internet costs, lack of devices, or caregiving responsibilities.
- Most importantly, signal that participants' involvement is genuinely valued.

There are several creative and cost-effective ways to make the programme more attractive. Let's explore some of these from our implementation experience.

Which incentives have worked for trainers before?

- Provide certifications as part of continuous professional development (CPD).
- Encourage participation in specialised trainings or events to enhance their knowledge.
- Provide data bundles to support online class participation.
- Compensate trainers for their time and resources through payments or stipends.
- Promote internal recognition programmes, like Trainer of the Month, to boost motivation.
- Provide high-quality teaching materials; future-focused trainers are often drawn to updated tools and technology.

Which incentives have worked for trainees before?

- Provide data bundles to support online class participation.
- Offer certifications or open badges that can be showcased on social media.
- Gamify the training experience—for example, using a milestone-based system that celebrates progress, not just final completion.
- Promote participation in innovation challenges, such as hackathons.
- Celebrate training completion and trainee performance in group chats and/or during class sessions.
- Provide support for creating professional profiles on freelancing platforms, including free access to tools for portfolio creation, graphic design, and building an online presence.
- Connect trainees to open-source software licenses or facilitate technology upgrades through partnerships with local firms.

From our experience, youth and women in Kenya responded best to rewards that are both immediately useful and support career growth. These include internet bundles, access to co-working spaces, short-term platform subscriptions, projects that connect them with local SMEs, and equipment support, such as laptops and headsets.



Stipends have a substantial effect on the ability of participants to show up, and they go a long way in ensuring their ability to participate. Alongside this, a primary concern is childcare. That's why we have a creche in the office space.

Faiz Muhammad

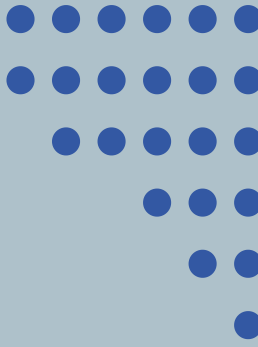
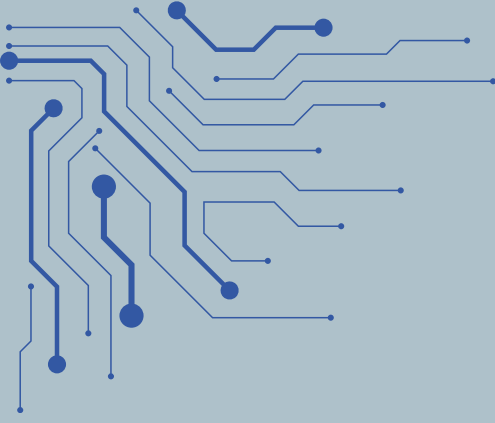
Executive Director, Blue Sapphire Hub, Nigeria

In our skilling and livelihood programmes at SEWA Bharat, even modest forms of support to women, such as providing hyperlocal training spaces, flexible training hours, or access to digital tools, make a substantial difference in the participation rates. When digital and financial literacy were embedded into micro-entrepreneurship training, women who initially struggled to navigate smartphones began using digital tools to run their businesses. Many of these women later became *agewans* (community change leaders), supporting other women within their communities.

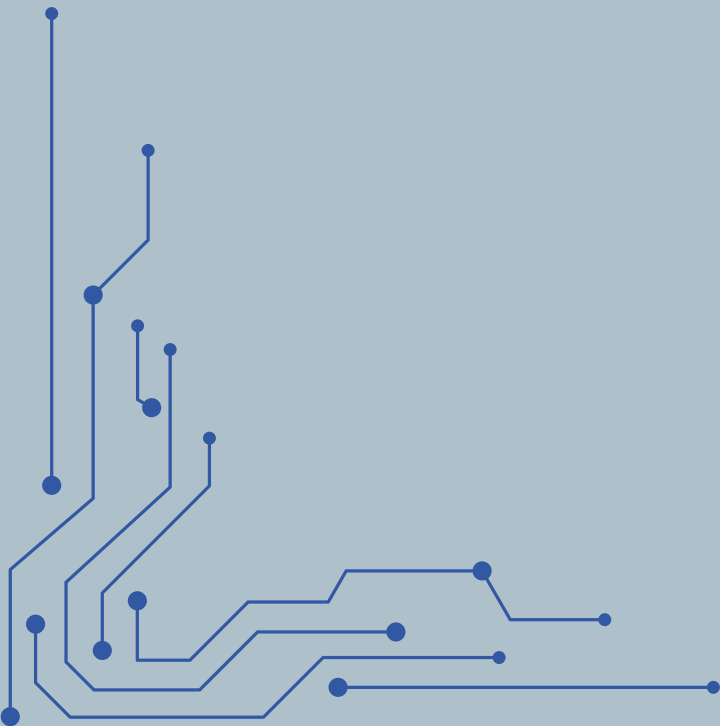
Kriti Agarwal

Coordinator, Skill Development, SEWA Bharat, India





3



SECTION 03: PREPARATION



Now that you have an outreach and promotion strategy in place, this section will help you prepare for the implementation of the OFT programme at your institution. This section will guide you in mapping the target group of trainees who can benefit from the training, choosing the right format to deliver it, and selecting the trainers and expert speakers who will support the learning journey. You'll learn how to design a programme that is inclusive, relevant, and aligned with your institution's existing learning structures and partnerships.

This section will help you answer:



- How can you identify your core trainee groups and design a training that responds to their needs?
- What are the key steps to selecting trainers and preparing for the Training of Trainers (ToT)?
- How can you align the OFT modules with your institution's existing activities and networks?

Target Group Mapping

One key lesson from implementing OFT programmes across countries is that understanding your target groups is critical. While many assume OFT is mainly for those seeking side income or experience, it often

serves as an alternate career pathway that may evolve into a full-time career. This is particularly true for women, entrepreneurs, unemployed youth seeking work experience, and adults returning to work. Mapping these groups goes beyond matching training to job outcomes; it enables more tailored career guidance, connects trainees to relevant platforms, and supports the creation of peer-learning communities that reduce isolation, particularly for women. Engagement improves significantly when the programme reflects learners' motivations, challenges, and goals—insights that can be captured early through focus groups, surveys, interviews, and job market data.

Trainee Selection

To design a relevant and impactful OFT programme, it's important to start with a clear understanding of your trainees.

Here are a few guiding questions we asked to shape our trainee profiles:

- How familiar are they with platform work and online freelancing?
- Have they done any freelance work before, online or offline?
- What skills do they already have that could match opportunities on platforms?
- Are they aware of their rights as gig workers? Do they know where to access this information?
- What are their expectations from online freelancing—is it a side hustle or a full-time income source?
- Are they familiar with the tools, legal requirements, or tax obligations involved in freelancing?

You don't need complicated tools to gather information. A few practical tools can go a long way.

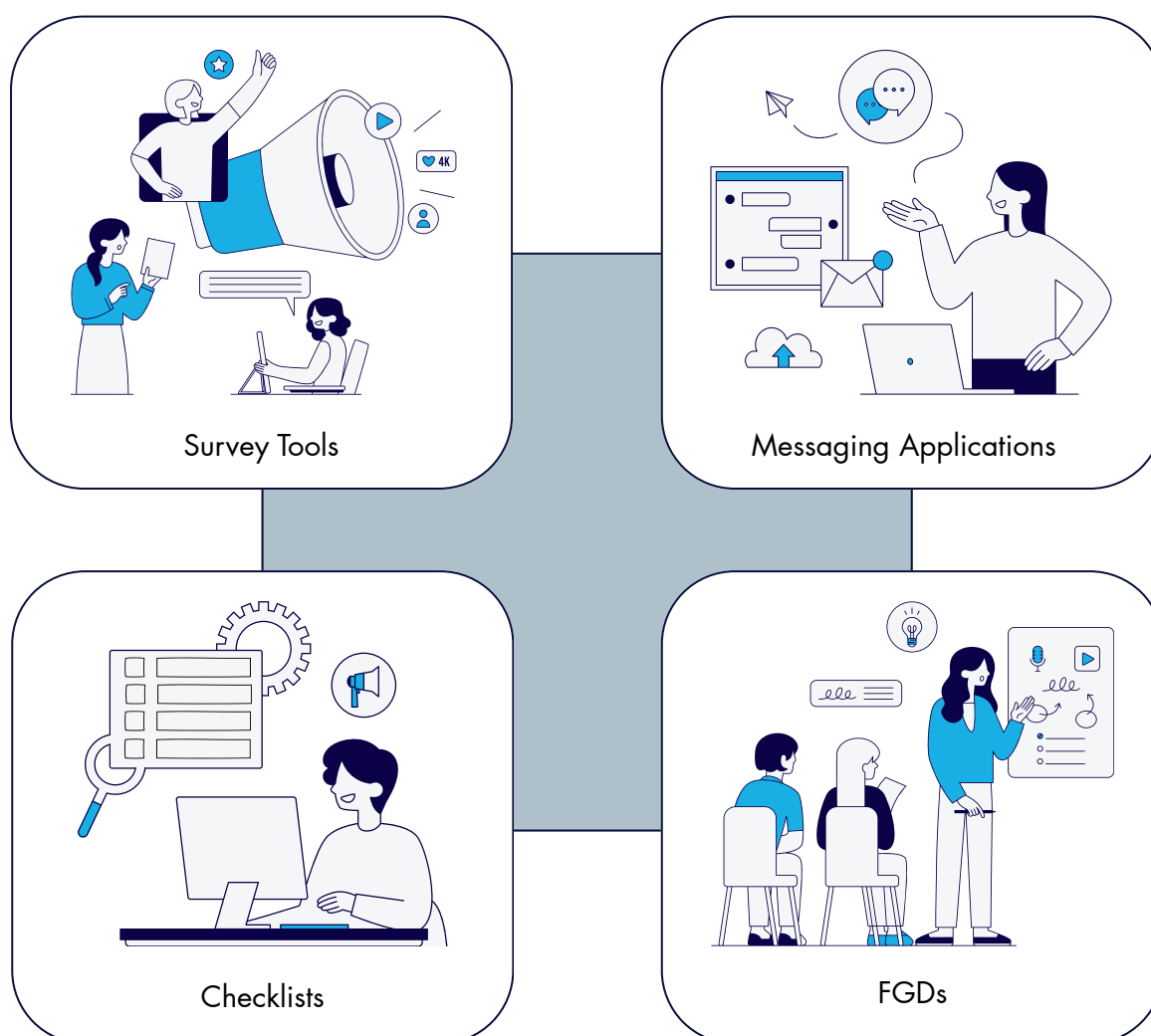


Figure 3.1: Practical Tools for Trainee Mapping

It is equally important to ensure that any data collected—especially personal or sensitive information—is handled responsibly and in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations, such as the GDPR. Protecting trainees' privacy, particularly those from underrepresented or vulnerable groups, is also essential for building trust. You can learn more on the official [GDPR](#) website.

Here are some tips from our implementation experience:

- **Collect only what you need.** Avoid unnecessary personal data. For example, if mapping digital skills, ask about access to devices—not full addresses or ID numbers.
- **Be transparent.** Clearly explain why data is being collected, how it will be used, and who will access it—especially for underrepresented gender groups. For example, add a short note at the start of surveys: "This survey helps us improve training relevance. Your responses will be kept confidential."
- **Get consent.** Always request informed, voluntary consent, particularly when collecting identifiable data from vulnerable groups. For example, before a focus group, ask participants to sign or verbally agree to a simple consent form.

- **Secure the data.** Use password-protected tools and limit access to essential personnel only.
- **Allow opt-out.** Let participants skip questions or withdraw their data later.
- **Anonymise where possible.** Remove names or identifiers in group analysis. For example, when quoting from a chat group, refer generally: “One trainee noted [...]”

Trainer Selection

Trainers play a central role in making any training programme meaningful and inspiring. Beyond delivering content, they help trainees, especially women, build the confidence to navigate a fast-changing digital world. A strong trainer fosters a learning environment that is inclusive, engaging, and safe for trainees to experiment, ask questions, and learn from failure.

Even without prior platform experience, trainers should be curious about digital opportunities for women and marginalised groups, willing to explore relevant platforms, open to trying freelancing themselves, and comfortable learning through trial and error. A diverse, gender-balanced trainer pool helps create a more inclusive space where trainees feel safe to take risks, speak up, and grow.

Use the following guiding questions to support trainer selection or self-assessment:

- How familiar are they with online freelancing or platform work as a source of income?
- Have they personally tried any platform work?
- What relevant digital or technical skills do they already possess?
- Do they follow any digital influencers or platform workers? What do they know about their journeys?
- Can they connect training content to real-world online jobs that appeal to diverse groups, including women?
- What challenges do they anticipate for themselves or their trainees?
- What outcomes do they envision for trainees after completing the programme?



To deliver the OFT training effectively, a trainer must have experience and understanding of each step in the freelancer's digital workflow, in order to have the ability to lead participants through the process.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, *Online Freelancer Training*, AfriConsult, Ghana





LESSONS LEARNT

Our experience shows that careful mapping of trainees and trainers is critical to delivering training that is relevant, inclusive, and effective.

Don't assume motivation—ask

Many online freelancers aren't just seeking side income; for women, youth, and career returners, freelancing can be a primary source of earnings.

Map your trainers and trainees

Understanding the background, expectations, and teaching styles of both trainers and trainees is crucial. Effective mapping helps reduce dropouts, match trainees to the right platforms and skill pathways and create peer-learning groups that reduce isolation.

Promote equity and inclusion

Mapping identifies barriers faced by women and marginalised groups, allowing you to design training that is relevant, safe, and accessible.

Plan for long-term impact

Knowing your target groups deeply enables you to provide relevant post-training support, mentorship and connections to real work opportunities.

Expert Inputs – Gig Talks

Guest speakers can play a powerful role in making the training practical and relatable. Through short, focused “Gig Talks”, experienced online freelancers share their real stories—what worked, what did not and what they've learnt along the way. These sessions offer trainees, especially those from underrepresented groups, a realistic view of platform work and the confidence to explore it themselves.

When choosing who to invite, look for experts who:

- Have relevant and current experience working on online freelancing platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer, or regional equivalents.
- Are clear communicators and able to speak in simple, relatable language.
- Show a positive, encouraging attitude and are open to answering questions.
- Understand the realities of online freelancing—including the ups and downs—and are honest about both.
- Represent a range of profiles, experiences, and backgrounds (consider inviting women experts, part-time freelancers, or workers from lower-tech job categories to broaden perspectives).

Before confirming an expert, ask yourself:

- Have they spent at least two years working actively on online freelancing platforms?
- Can they explain their journey and insights in a way that will motivate trainees, especially women?
- Are they willing to interact with the group and answer questions honestly?
- Can they speak clearly and share their experience in the language of your training?
- Do they have a strong online portfolio or a visible track record?
- Will their story resonate with your trainees' aspirations and realities?



You can tap into your existing networks, such as alumni, industry partners, or local employers, to invite guest speakers. Well-chosen experts can inspire the trainees and help bridge the gap between theory and the real world of gig work.

LESSON LEARNT



Gig Talks are a wealth of knowledge that can be used for future purposes. You can record these sessions and repurpose them for outreach, promotion, or integration into your existing curriculum.

Below are some recordings of Gig Talks by Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) in Kenya.



[Understanding the Gig Economy](#)



[Essential Skills for Success in the Gig Economy](#)



[Enhancing Learning Access Through Digital Platforms](#)



[Exploring Pathways for Gig Workers to Advance Their Careers](#)



[How Platform Cooperatives Can Help Gig Workers Thrive](#)

Selecting the Training Format

Not all training needs to be delivered the same way. Your choice, whether online, in-person, or blended, should depend on your trainees' needs, access to devices and internet, your team's facilitation capacity, and the training objectives. This section will help you decide the best format for your OFT sessions and give you tools to plan them effectively.

Use this guide to decide what format works best for your trainees.



Ask Yourself...	If Yes	Consider this format
Do most trainees have access to smartphones or computers and stable internet?	☐ Yes	Online
Is your organisation able to bring trainees together in one physical space?	☐ Yes	In-Person
Do some trainees have limited access to devices, but others can join remotely?	☐ Yes	Blended
Do your trainers need flexibility due to time, geography, or resources?	☐ Yes	Online or Blended
Are you reaching rural areas or low-bandwidth regions?	☐ Yes	In-Person or Low-tech Online (low-data messaging tools, voice notes, PDFs)

Table 3.1: Checklist for Choosing the Best Training Format

You don't need to stick to just one format. If possible, blend methods to make the training more inclusive, flexible, and responsive to local realities.



[Our] sessions were 100 per cent online via Zoom. [...] Participants did not get online on time [...] They took a while to warm up [...] Others were not able to interact because they were at work, or in places where they were unable to speak. About 60 per cent of the participants were consistent in attending the classes on time. Participants kept logging in and out of the meeting because of unstable internet connections. Some participants chose to text in the chat box instead of talking [...] The majority of the participants did not check their emails [...], hence they needed to be reached by phone and reminded of the schedule for the meetings.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, *Online Freelancer Training*, AfriConsult, Ghana



Online and In-Person Training Checklists



Phase	Online Training	In-Person Training
Before the Session	☐ Share invite or welcome email. ☐ Share agenda via email or group chat. ☐ Select the meeting platform which is easiest for the participants. ☐ Prepare slide deck based on lesson plans. ☐ Use interactive tools (e.g., digital boards, forms).	☐ Clarify the session goal on a poster or slide. ☐ Distribute the agenda in advance. ☐ Plan warm-up activities (e.g., pair introductions, icebreaker games).
During the Session	☐ Start with an icebreaker (emoji check-in, quick poll). ☐ Present the objective clearly; refer back after activities. ☐ Keep sessions short (10–15 min segments). ☐ Use polls, chat, or ask direct questions to engage. Assign roles (facilitator, timekeeper, note-taker).	☐ Revisit the session goal regularly. ☐ Alternate between input and group activities. ☐ Use flipcharts, sticky notes, or handouts. ☐ Use in-person training methods like roleplay, client pitch, peer-feedback, time management, barrier mapping, simulating freelance marketplaces, etc.
Practice and Feedback	☐ Assign one task (e.g., write a profile headline). ☐ Use tools like shared documents or digital boards for group work. ☐ Share instant feedback via online survey tools.	☐ Include practice tasks (e.g., roleplays, worksheets). ☐ Use feedback forms or suggestion boxes. ☐ Create visual feedback tools (e.g., sticker boards).
Documentation	☐ Track attendance. ☐ Capture screenshots (with permission). ☐ Save recordings if needed.	☐ Record attendance and collect quotes (with consent). ☐ Take photos and document key insights/challenges.
Low-Bandwidth Tip	☐ Use messaging app groups for updates, tasks, and video sharing. ☐ Allow voice notes or image-based responses.	<i>Not applicable</i>

Table 3.2: Checklists for Online and In-Person Training

Blended Training Checklist



Consideration	Done?
Have you aligned the schedule to fit both formats? (e.g., self-paced module before in-person workshop)	☐
Can trainees switch between formats smoothly?	☐
Are learning objectives clear across both formats?	☐
Have you planned for connectivity or travel disruptions?	☐
Are tools and materials compatible with both settings?	☐

Table 3.3: Checklist for Blended Training



Use messaging apps to link online and offline experiences. For example, trainees can receive session reminders, ask questions between in-person meetings, or submit tasks digitally.

Inclusive Formats

Consider formats that make the programme accessible for women. We've learned from experience that when you intentionally create spaces that support women, such as offering childcare, flexible hours, or safe and inclusive environments, you see the difference immediately. Participation grows, energy shifts, and the room begins to reflect the diversity of the community.





One of the most striking distinctions was the level of confidence and engagement demonstrated by the participants. In mixed-gender trainings before, I noticed that women were often hesitant to ask questions, express their opinions, or take leadership roles in group projects. However, in women-only settings, the atmosphere was noticeably more supportive, collaborative, and engaging. Participants were more open to sharing their ideas, seeking clarification, and actively contributing to discussions without fear of judgement. This created a strong learning community where peer support and mentorship thrived, enabling the women to develop both technical skills and professional confidence.

Huza Labs,

AI and Data Science Bootcamp for Women and Minoritised Groups,
Rwanda, Partner Fair Forward GIZ

One example of impactful incentives is SEWA's Sangini Childcare Cooperative, which provides affordable, community-run childcare to informal women workers in Ahmedabad. Since its launch, 64 per cent of women have reported that access to childcare has allowed them to increase their working days and nearly double their income. This has also deepened women's participation in collective decision-making, as many mothers have become shareholders in the cooperative. This demonstrates that removing one critical barrier can enable women not only to work more, but also to engage in peer networks and leadership roles.

Kriti Agarwal

Coordinator, Skill Development, SEWA Bharat, India



Localising Content

Localisation helps break down barriers and facilitates effective communication between trainers and trainees, making the learning experience more relevant and engaging. Here are some key pointers that worked for our implementation partners.

Adapt Beyond Translation

Localisation involves more than translating text. Adapt the entire learning experience to reflect the cultural realities, communication styles, and specific challenges of your target audience.

Ensure Cultural Sensitivity

Consider cultural norms, values, and sensitivities to avoid unintentional offence, or confusion. For example, avoid using colours, phrases, or symbols that might have negative meanings locally.

Integrate Local Examples

Use the results from your outreach activities to enrich your materials with local examples, such as platforms, associations, recent laws, taxation requirements, opportunities, and events. Make the training relatable by drawing on local realities only you know best.



LESSONS LEARNT

- Trainers found that when local success stories of women freelancers were shared during the course, participants felt inspired and saw freelancing as an alternate career option.
- In several locations, tailoring examples to local taxation rules helped demystify fears around legal compliance, encouraging participants to explore freelancing more confidently.
- When trainers incorporated local associations and support networks into the material, participants became more aware of where to seek help, reducing feelings of isolation.



[Using] local slang [helped], e.g., calling gig work “galamsey”, (meaning “side gig”, or “side hustle”), or “kpa kpa kpa” (meaning “fast gig”). In some sessions, participants were [also] asked to greet and, at the end, say goodbye in their local languages.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, Online Freelancers' Training, AfriConsult, Ghana



Training in Fragile Contexts

In fragile or crisis-affected settings, traditional job opportunities are scarce, unstable, and inaccessible—especially to women, youth, and displaced people. In some contexts, rehabilitation efforts include providing training for flexible, remote work that can be done from home, a mobile phone, and on one's own terms.

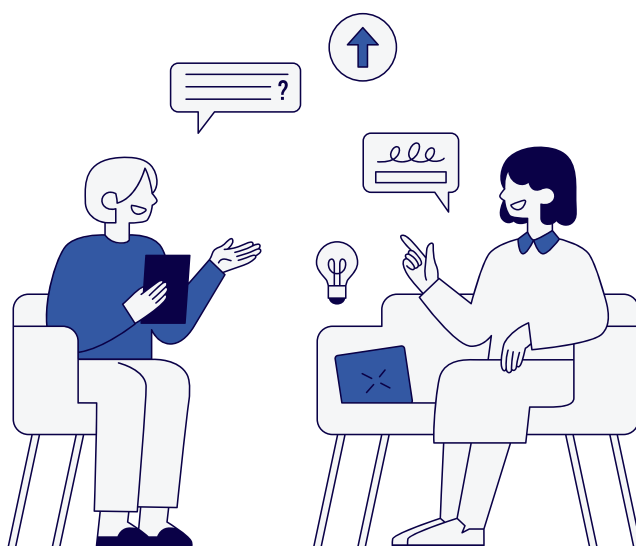
Choosing how to deliver your training is just as important as what you deliver. It's about making sure people aren't excluded simply because of where they live, the limits of their internet access, or the instability around them.

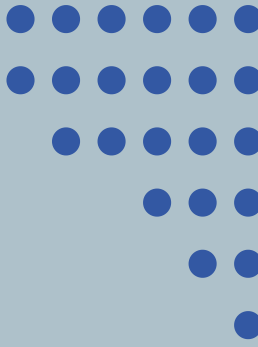
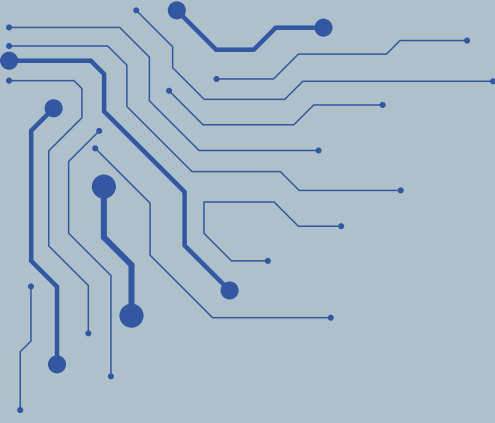
The most important question to ask is: **Can people benefit from learning about freelancing? And what access do they need to work safely and meaningfully?**

What to Keep in Mind in Fragile Contexts:

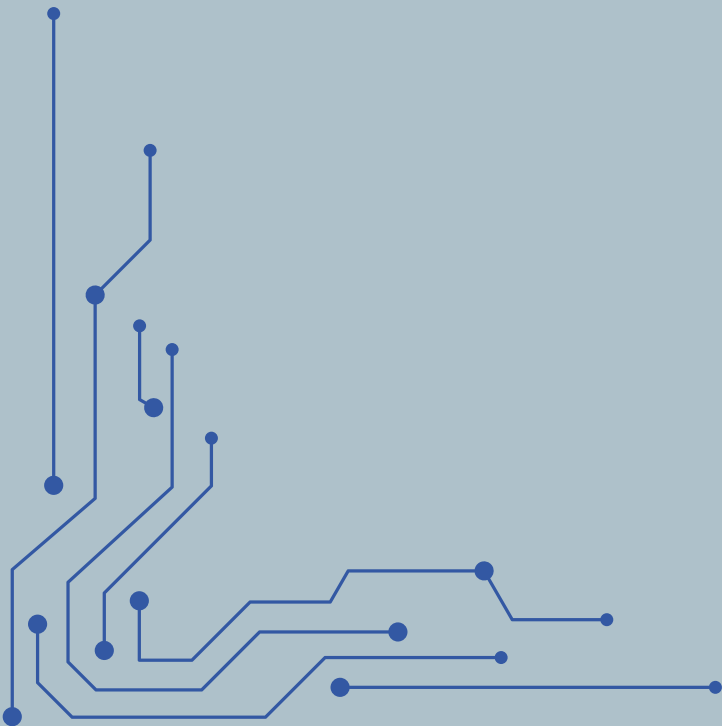
- Plan for low-bandwidth-friendly training formats.
- Blend training with mentorship and peer learning where you can.
- Lean on local networks to partner with community leaders or women's groups—they're the bridge to trust, safety, and continuity.
- Design lessons in a flexible and learner-centred way. Trainees may need to pause and return. Offer learning in small chunks that they can access anytime.
- Be trauma-aware. Many people are carrying invisible weight. Your training space should be paced gently and feel safe and respectful.

In fragile contexts, there's no one perfect format. But when you centre accessibility, empathy, and local voices, the training becomes more than just a programme—it becomes a lifeline.





4



SECTION 04: IMPLEMENTATION



Training of Trainers

Once the preparation for the training is done, content aligned, trainees selected, and trainers identified—it is time to bring the programme to life. This section will provide you with pointers for working with the trainers to deliver the OFT programme with confidence and clarity.

A strong Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop is the foundation as it creates a ripple effect—equipping trainers to confidently support trainees, adapt to local contexts, and foster peer-led learning communities long after the training ends. Through a dedicated ToT workshop, you build their capacity to understand the content, improve their awareness about platform work, and engage trainees effectively. This section guides you on how you can help trainers strengthen their digital, facilitation, and gender-responsive skills before leading the sessions.

This section will help you answer:



- How can you equip trainers with the knowledge and skills to deliver the OFT programme?
- What core facilitation practices make the training inclusive, engaging, and impactful?
- How can trainers adapt and localise content to reflect the realities of their trainees?

Workshop Structure

Before trainers can deliver lessons effectively, institutions should organise a dedicated ToT workshop. This is a non-negotiable step as it ensures that trainers are not only familiar with the content but are also confident in delivery methodology, facilitation style, and localisation techniques. This ToT not only prepares trainers for immediate delivery but also builds a pool of facilitators who can adapt the programme for new cohorts long after the first roll-out.

Workshop Duration

We suggest a workshop duration of two days for in-person delivery, or three to four half-day sessions for online delivery, depending on the number of trainers and the depth of content to be covered.

Video Resources in the Workshop

You can enrich your trainer orientation and capacity-building sessions with these short video resources from the OFT package:



What is Online Freelancing?

– Use this video at the start of the workshop to give trainers a simple and engaging overview of online freelancing. It helps them understand how to introduce the concept to trainees in their own sessions.



What is the Online Freelancer Training (OFT) Programme and Toolkit?

– Show this video to highlight the overall value and design of the OFT programme. It provides trainers with the bigger picture—why the programme exists, who it supports, and how it connects to wider opportunities for digital livelihoods.



Bringing Women into the Gig Economy – Use this video to spark discussion on gender-responsive training practices. It reinforces the importance of designing inclusive sessions and supporting women to advocate for themselves as they enter gig work.

Key Components of the Workshop

Understanding the Toolkit Implementation Structure

Begin with a guided walkthrough of the [Lesson Plans](#), covering the five modules and their Connect–Relate–Learn–Reflect–Summarise session flow. Highlight where Inclusive Practice Tips and Localisation Tips are integrated and explain why they are important. Share concrete examples of adaptations made in different countries—such as Moroccan trainers translating platform walkthroughs into French and Kenyan trainers replacing high-bandwidth videos with offline case studies—to show how flexibility improves delivery.

Trainer Mindset and Role

Shift trainers' perspectives from the traditional "skills-to-work" model toward recognising platform work as a viable, evolving career pathway. Facilitate discussions about the opportunities and risks of online freelancing, encouraging trainers to explore platforms relevant to their trainees and even try freelancing themselves. In India, for instance, one trainer took on a short programming gig to better understand the process, later using that real experience as a teaching example. Include exercises on managing mixed-gender groups, supporting women's participation, and adapting to different literacy levels or device access.

Exercise: Building Trainee Profiles

Have trainers work in groups to create detailed trainee personas, such as a rural woman with only basic smartphone skills, a university graduate fluent in English but with no online work experience, or an informal worker looking to add income through micro-tasks. Discuss how to adapt examples, language, and delivery methods for each persona. In Ghana, a trainer supporting young women adapted the content by replacing generic case studies with local success stories and visuals, making the training more relevant and easier to connect with.



I was always puzzled [about how] to add value to the impactful skills these young women have. Although we [introduced] the gig economy [...] after our digital trainings, [it wasn't] as extensive as what we did in partnership with DOT Kenya. This opportunity empowered me to give impactful gig economy skills to our young women, who direly need it for their economic sustainability.

Joan Nabusoba

Trainer, Online Freelancer Training, Programme Director, Pwani Teknowgalz, Kenya



Module Familiarisation

Assign each group a module to explore in detail and ask them to prepare a short 10–15 minute micro-teach session for their peers, integrating inclusive practices and localisation tips into the delivery. This peer-coaching approach allows trainers to test facilitation styles and receive constructive feedback before working with actual trainees. In Morocco, micro-teach sessions revealed where trainers relied too heavily on lecture-style delivery, prompting them to incorporate more roleplay and group exercises.



We have been able to train our trainers to deliver this programme again and again. Every session was a learning experience for them, and it also helped put our name out there as one of the pioneers of OFT training. That alone is very exciting for us.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, Online Freelancer Training, AfriConsult, Ghana



Using Gig Talks and Expert Speakers

Show trainers how to identify, invite, and brief experienced freelancers to deliver short “Gig Talks” during modules. These talks make freelancing real for trainees by sharing both successes and mistakes. For example, expert freelancers can share how they overcome payment delays or talk about the importance of building a repeat client base to smooth income fluctuations. Trainers should also practise creating pre- and post-talk engagement questions to make these sessions interactive.

Technical Setup and Tools

Review all tools needed for training, including projectors, internet connections, and presentation materials. Provide examples of how trainers have adapted in low-resource environments, such as sending materials via low-data messaging tools, printing worksheets in advance, or sharing voice notes instead of video lectures. In Kenya, a trainer recorded short audio lessons that could be downloaded on basic smartphones, while in Morocco, printed slides were distributed ahead of time so trainees could follow along without relying on live streaming.

Final Planning

Conclude the workshop by co-developing a delivery schedule that fits your institution’s context. This is the moment to map module delivery responsibilities, set peer check-in dates, and agree on preparatory actions like sourcing locally relevant case studies, translating key terms, or conducting pre-training market scans to identify in-demand skills. Trainers should leave the ToT with clear commitments to their assigned modules and an understanding of how they will support each other throughout the roll-out.



Online freelancing is a great way for our students to explore the market. The tips provided by the [master] trainers on building online profiles and making them attractive to potential clients will be very beneficial to our students.

Nabin Khara

Trainer, Online Freelancer Training, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, India



LESSONS LEARNT

Our experience in Morocco, Kenya, India, and Ghana has shown that ToT success depends on three things: grounding the content in local realities, encouraging trainer curiosity, and building communities of practice.

From Morocco: Trainers benefited from roleplaying common freelancing challenges, such as negotiating payment, or handling client feedback. This practical approach boosted their confidence to address such issues with trainees, helping them move beyond theory to actionable advice. As a result, trainers felt more prepared to support trainees in real-life freelancing situations.

From Kenya: In regions with unstable internet, dividing the ToT into shorter, focused sessions prevented fatigue and high data costs from becoming barriers to participation. Trainers also relied heavily on group chat on a low-data messaging tool for ongoing peer support, sharing practical solutions, encouragement, and experiences beyond the structured sessions. This helped build a supportive learning community.

From India: Having a diverse pool of trainers—by gender, age, and professional background—created a safe, relatable learning environment for trainees. Trainers who had tried freelancing themselves were far more persuasive and confident in their delivery, sharing personal stories, and practical insights. This diversity also helped trainees see multiple pathways into gig work.

From Ghana: Trainers' varied backgrounds, ranging from gig work to innovation, artificial intelligence, and finance, created a rich learning environment where trainers could learn from one another and deliver more engaging sessions. The novelty of the programme in the local context also attracted wider interest, as people called in to understand gig work and how they could get involved.

What works for offline ToT:

- Building more opportunities for hands-on practice and peer coaching.
- Kickstarting group discussions to adapt Toolkit activities to local idioms and examples.
- Creating space for networking and forming peer mentor groups among trainers.

What works for online ToT:

- Keeping sessions short, (no more than 90 minutes) and focused.
- Using collaborative tools to co-create trainee profiles and session plans.
- Providing recordings for those who cannot attend live due to connectivity issues.

Across all contexts, the most effective ToT workshops ended with a clear action plan for each trainer: which module they would lead, how they would adapt content, and what ongoing peer check-ins they would commit to.

Organising the Training

From our implementation experience, we have developed ready-to-use lesson plans and practical tips to help trainers lead the five core modules of the OFT programme. Each module packs information from real implementation experiences across different regions and target groups, and is designed to be flexible and modular, so you can adapt it based on the needs, backgrounds, and goals of your trainees. Typically, it takes six-to-eight-weeks for the curriculum to be completed. You can also embed the modules within your existing curricula and combine them with the overall training objectives.

In the lesson plans, you'll also find guidance on timing, flow, and facilitation methods to help you create a supportive learning environment—whether you're teaching online, in person, or using a blended approach. Refer to [Appendix 1](#) of this Toolkit for the detailed lesson plans.

When reviewing the lesson plans, ask yourself:

- How can you structure and deliver each module in a way that's engaging and easy to follow?
- What sequence, timing, and materials will help your training run smoothly?
- How can you adapt each session to match the needs, skills, and contexts of your trainees?



The manual was used to guide the development of the agenda and slides for the programme. We just ensured that we followed the online freelance workflow. It was therefore used as a baseline for building the training deck for the presentation.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, Online Freelancer Training, AfriConsult, Ghana

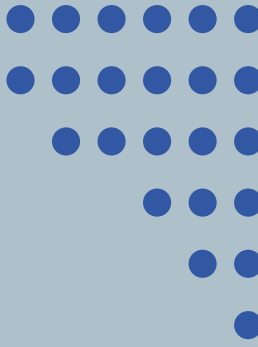
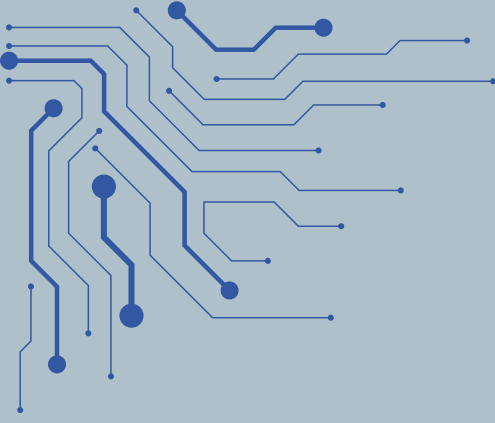


Curriculum Overview

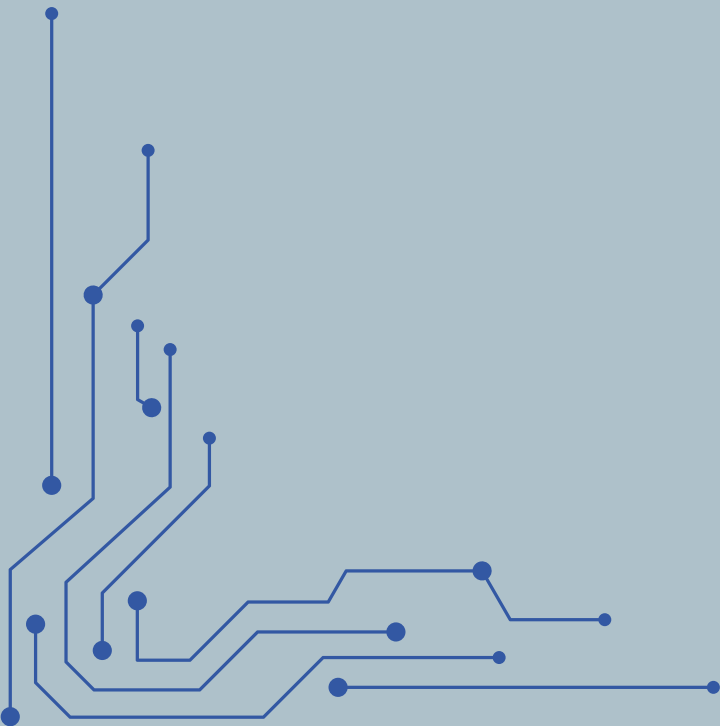
The OFT is structured into five core modules, each focusing on a key area of online freelancing. The table below provides a simplified overview of the full curriculum, including the main topics and sub-topics covered in each module.

Module	Topic	Sub-Topics
Module 1 <i>What is Online Freelancing?</i>	Understanding Digital Labour Platforms	Types of digital labour: location-based and cloud-based; introduction to platforms
	What to Expect as an Online Freelancer	Pros and cons; real-world insights into gig work
	Types of Work in Digital Labour Platforms	Overview of online work types and tasks on different platforms
Module 2 <i>Getting Started – Essential How-Tos</i>	Navigating Online Freelancing Platforms	Signing up, setting up profiles, understanding platform features
	Applying for an Online Freelancing Opportunity	Writing proposals, choosing tasks, setting fair pricing
	Landing an Online Freelancing Opportunity	Communicating with clients, managing tasks, understanding contracts
Module 3 <i>Key Skills for Online Freelancers</i>	Essential Soft Skills	Communication, time management, adaptability, negotiation
	Financial Skills	Budgeting, Minimum Acceptable Rate (MAR), saving, taxes
	Digital Skills and Tools	Tools for remote work, online safety, intellectual property
Module 4 <i>Managing a Competitive Profile</i>	Personal Branding – Creating a Competitive Profile	Building a strong freelancer profile; showcasing expertise
	Building and Leveraging Your Network: Ratings, Referrals and Reviews	Ratings, referrals, and maintaining platform credibility
	Building a Successful Online Freelancing Career	Setting long-term goals and transitioning to entrepreneurship or formal jobs
	Gig Talk	Interactive session with experienced freelancers
Module 5 <i>Decent and Fair Working Conditions</i>	Introduction to Decent and Fair Working Conditions	Principles of fair work, decent working conditions, grievance mechanisms
	Fair Compensation and Payment Practices	Knowing value, negotiating pay, understanding platform deductions

Table A.1: Overview of the Online Freelancer Training Curriculum



5



SECTION 05: EVALUATION AND LEARNING



We've learned that many trainees, especially women and first-time freelancers, often need continued encouragement and support after the training to fully enter the digital workspace. Evaluation gives insight into what landed well, what was missed, and where extra guidance is needed. It ensures that learning moves beyond the classroom and becomes part of everyday practice.

This section will guide you in measuring intended and unintended results and impact. What truly matters is how this six-to-eight-week training can improve the learning and earning potential of its participants, both trainers and trainees.

This section will help you answer:



- What outcomes and indicators should you track to assess the programme's real-world impact?
- How can you spot challenges early and make improvements during the programme?
- How can you document and share success in a way that strengthens future training and funding?

You'll learn how to turn your programme goals into measurable outcomes. With the help of an impact evaluation framework, you can track progress, address challenges early, and tell a clear story about what's working and why, whether you're working with small groups or across multiple centres.

You'll also explore ways to track broader changes: how this training affects a trainee's voice, confidence, position in their household, and ability to participate in decisions. These shifts may be harder to measure, but they're just as important.



The figure below outlines the key steps followed during the pilot implementations of the OFT programme to develop an effective evaluation framework. This framework focuses on collecting data, analysing it, and reporting impact.

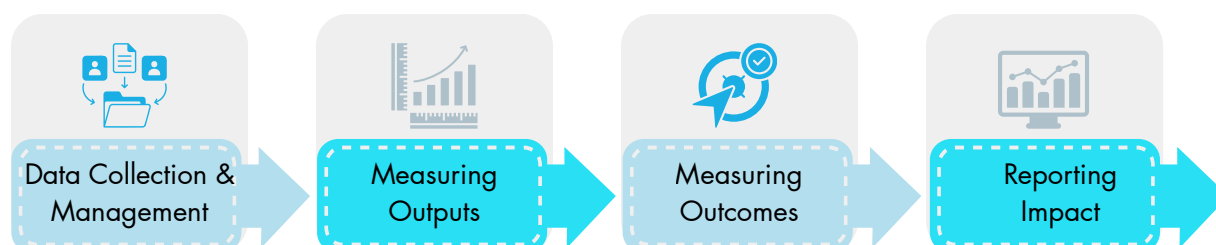


Figure 5.1: Evaluation and Anchoring Framework

Understanding the Data Requirements

The first step in building a strong impact evaluation framework is to collect accurate, reliable, and inclusive data. To do this well, you need to choose the right methods.

For example, if your goal is to train 30 participants over three months, start by understanding the results framework. Identify expected completion rates and other key indicators from the pilot. Use these indicators to establish a clear data baseline.

In the case of the OFT, we found that qualitative data is just as important as quantitative data. For instance, your results matrix might track tangible outcomes, such as 75% of participants completing the programme and 30% securing their first online job. But it should also capture intangible outcomes, such as increased awareness of fair work practices and digital rights. These insights help you understand long-term and unintended effects.

Collecting this kind of data strengthens your case with leadership, sponsors, members, and the wider community.

Gender and Intersectional Data

Strong OFT programme evaluations begin with a clear focus on **gender and intersectionality**, ensuring these dimensions shape both design and analysis.

The 2021 World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) report, *The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work*, highlights that women's outcomes on digital labour platforms differ sharply from men's, not only in earnings, but also in platform access, task types, and working hours (International Labour Organisation 2021). The report underscores the structural and algorithmic biases that further constrain women's opportunities on these platforms (ILO 2021).

At the same time, the United Nations Women’s Guidance Note on Gender Analysis in Digital Inclusion emphasises that digital inclusion must be understood through a gender lens: it is not enough to provide connectivity or devices; we must also capture changes in confidence, agency, and voice. This guidance argues that data disaggregated by gender (and intersecting axes such as disability, socioeconomic status, rural/urban location) are essential to reveal who is truly included, and who remains excluded. It also recommends gathering qualitative insights into social norms, time burdens, and intra-household power dynamics to contextualise numerical trends (UN Women 2022).

Likewise, the World Bank’s toolkit *Using Digital Solutions to Address Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship* provides a practical menu of gender-responsive indicators and diagnostic tools. It explicitly recommends pairing quantitative metrics, such as programme completion, participant earnings, and frequency of gig applications, with qualitative feedback on shifts in confidence, decision-making, and barriers encountered (World Bank 2021). The toolkit further highlights the need to analyse gendered constraints across four dimensions: legal/regulatory, access to finance, training/information, and access to markets; while also layering in horizontal themes, such as social norms and technology access (World Bank 2021).

The lessons above lead to several key practices:

- Disaggregate data across gender, age, location, disability, and socioeconomic status to identify who is benefiting—and who is being left behind.
- Incorporate qualitative feedback to understand barriers and enablers drawn from lived experience, such as cultural norms and caregiving burdens, not just technical or attendance metrics.
- Track intermediate outcomes beyond simple completion: greater confidence in using digital platforms, frequency of applying for or securing gigs, and retention in peer or support networks.
- Where feasible, track long-term outcomes: changes in income, sustainability of freelance work, and shifts in household decision-making or gender norms.
- Embed an intersectional gender lens into monitoring and evaluation so that programmes remain accountable to equity goals, surface hidden inequalities, and adapt their design over time.



By combining the empirical insights from ILO with the normative and diagnostic frameworks of UN Women and the World Bank, we can strengthen the OFT programme’s capacity to go beyond surface metrics, and ensure that digital training truly advances gender equity, not merely inclusion on paper.

Data Collection Methods

The figure below highlights a range of data collection tools you can use to gather reliable, useful information.



Figure 5.2: Data Collection Methods

These methods must be a mix of quantitative (e.g., conducting surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data) and qualitative methods (e.g., organising focus groups or interviews), so that you can detect both measurable and very subtle impacts on different trainee groups, such as women, men, and marginalised trainee groups.

You can use participatory methods to incorporate the voices of women and marginalised groups. For example, conduct household surveys that interview female and male trainees separately when needed, recognising that women may not feel free to express themselves in mixed-gender settings.



The key challenge is motivating participants to complete the survey. Since 60 per cent of them did not check their email for update[s], [many] were not even aware [that] surveys [were] being conducted. We explored alternative communication strategies, such as using messaging apps and reaching out through trainers, to improve response rates and ensure participants were aware of the surveys.

Gidean Agyeman

Project Administrator, Online Freelancer Training, AfriConsult, Ghana



Data Management and Protection

From the start of the programme to its close, you'll be collecting all kinds of information—names, phone numbers, addresses, and other details from trainees, trainers, and stakeholders. This is sensitive data and it's your responsibility to handle it with care. Good data management is just as important as data collection, especially when it comes to protecting people's privacy.

To keep this information safe from misuse, theft, or breaches, most countries have clear rules about how personal data should be collected, stored, and used. These regulations vary by location. One widely known example is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which outlines how to handle the personal data of European Union (EU) citizens responsibly. You can use the GDPR as a helpful reference, but make sure you also understand and follow your own country's data protection laws. Countries like India and Kenya have also formulated regulations to protect the digital and personal data of their citizens.

Once you've set up safe, ethical systems for handling data, you'll be ready to move forward with collection using the methods described earlier. During this process, keep asking yourself the following benchmark questions:

- How is this data used?
- Where and how is this data stored?
- Is the data storage secured and encrypted?
- Who can access this data?
- How is access to this data controlled?
- Is this data up to date?
- Who can edit this data?
- For how long will this data be retained?
- What are the data backup and recovery methods in case of data theft and corruption?
- Am I following the data protection rules of my area/region/country?

Additionally, ask yourself the following key questions to ensure the evaluation framework is gender-responsive.

- Have I ensured equal participation of both women and men in the data collection strategy?
- Am I collecting, organising, and analysing the data in a sex-disaggregated and inclusive manner?



Tracking Outputs

Now that you've learnt about data methods, let's see how you can track the output. The output is the first level of result you will require to achieve the desired outcome. It is a direct, tangible result of this OFT programme—a numerical count of training actions delivered. This includes quantifiable metrics, such as the trainees' enrolment rate, engagement rate, completion rate, etc. Let's look at how you can effectively track output using a table.

Quantitative Metrics

Goal									
Output	Indicator	Definition How is it calculated?	Disaggregated By (Gender/Age/Community)	Baseline Value	Target (What is the target value?)	Actual (What is the actual value?)	Date Source (How will it be measured?)	Frequency (How often will it be measured?)	Person Responsible (Who will measure it?)
Enrolment	Trainee Enrolment Count	Number of trainees registered for the programme	[e.g., Male, Female]	0	[e.g., 100]	[e.g., 70]	Enrolment record using classroom register, online and offline admission	Start of the programme	[e.g., Trainer]
Engagement	Session Attendance Rate	Average attendance rate across all sessions	[e.g., Male, Female]	0	[e.g., 100]	[e.g., 90]	Classroom register or meeting logs of video conferencing tools	At the start of each session	[e.g., Trainer]
Completion	Programme Completion Rate	% of trainees who complete the programme	[e.g., Male, Female]	0	[e.g., 100]	[e.g., 85]	Number of certificates issued (online, offline)	Programme end	[e.g., Trainer]

*Table 5.1: Tracking Output Using Key Quantitative Metrics

From the above, you can derive a tangible output, which will help you in arriving at a gender-responsive output. Instead of just measuring the female-to-male ratio, assess whether the programme enabled women trainees to translate their skills into economic opportunity. For example, "100 trainees enrolled for Online Freelancer Training. Of these, 75 graduates found a client and were paid within the first four weeks of the training completion, with 55 of the trainees being women and from marginalised communities."

You can add more indicators to make the table more comprehensive. For example:

Output	Online Training	Indicators
Objective Setting	Objective Setting Rate	% of trainees who defined their objectives during the programme
Objective-Achievement	Objective-Achievement Rate	% of trainees who achieved at least one of their objectives during the programme
Outreach	Outreach Rate	The number of trainees who contacted the programme
Pass Rate	Pass Rate	% of trainees passing job skill competency exams on initial attempt after completing the programme

*Table 5.2: Output Indicator Examples

You should also be aware of trainees' expertise levels, such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced (see Table 5.3). Based on this, you can segment indicators for better data analysis and visualisation.

Measuring Outcomes

Once you've identified the outputs, you can focus on the outcomes to gauge the programme's intended and unintended outcomes. These could be short-, medium-, or long-term and can be tracked at primary (direct), secondary (community), and tertiary (wider society) levels, including impacts on gender.

This can be achieved through pre- and post-training assessments and surveys. You can use self-assessment (see Table 5.3) at the beginning and end of the programme to compare results.



Based on these, you can track trainees' progress in skill levels and identify gaps across different groups, disaggregated by gender, age, community, and more.

Trainee Name:	
Self-Assessment	Rate from 1 to 5 (1 = Not at all, 5 = Extremely well)
How well do you know the types of freelance work available?	
How well can you apply for freelance opportunities?	
How confident do you feel while writing a freelance proposal to a client?	
How good are your communication, problem-solving, negotiation, and client-dealing skills?	
How good are your financial skills, such as budgeting, pricing, taxation, and risk management?	
How effectively can you create a competitive profile that attracts customers?	
Expertise Level (To be filled by the trainer)	(Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)

*Table 5.3: Self-Assessment Using Qualitative Metrics

After this, use qualitative indicators instead of quantitative indicators to quantify the outcome. Here are some indicators for your reference.

Outcome	Indicators	Definition
Self-Confidence and Motivation	Increased Self-Confidence	% of trainees who reported increased self-confidence due to the programme
	Increased Motivation	% of trainees who reported increased motivation in improving their skills
Increased Decision-Making & Self-Efficacy	Increased Decision-Making	% of trainees who reported improved clarity on deciding their next steps
	Increased Self-Efficacy	% of trainees who reported increased belief in completing tasks

*Table 5.4: Outcome Indicator Examples

Additionally, gauge the post-training outcomes using specific indicators. For example:

Post-Training Outcome	Indicators	Definition
Employment	Increased Employment Options	Number of project interviews per trainee
		Number of projects offered per trainee after [X] months of the training programme
		Number of trainees who accepted a freelance project offer
	Increased Job Placement	% of trainees doing [X] type of freelance project
Wages	Increased Wages	% of trainees who reported an increase in their wages
Trainee Satisfaction	Trainee Satisfaction Rate	% of trainees who reported being satisfied with the training
		% of trainees who credited OFT with helping them find work
Alumni Engagement	Alumni Engagement Rate	% of alumni providing career guidance to trainees
		% of alumni acting as promoters, bringing in new trainees
	Alumni Absorption Rate	% of alumni acting as trainers for the OFT programme
		% of alumni acting as training consultants for the OFT programme

*Table 5.5: Post-Training Outcome Indicator Examples

Note: The [X]-month timeframe can be 1, 3, 6, or 12 months, depending on the tracking system and sponsor requirements.

*These indicators are suggestions—you may adapt them based on factors such as trainees' needs, training content, delivery mode, and location. However, all indicators must be reported with gender disaggregation.

These tables measure outcomes at the individual level. For example, your outcome statement might read: "Seventy per cent of trainees improved their skill level from beginner to intermediate, with half of the female trainees reporting increased self-confidence and motivation by the end of the programme. Of these, 80 per cent secured a job within one month of completing the training, and 20 per cent were hired as consultants or trainers within the OFT programme."

Assessing Impact at the Family and Community Level

Map the outcomes to assess how the training programme is making a meaningful difference in the lives of trainees—not only individually, but also within their families and communities (see Table 5.6). Understanding this broader impact is essential for demonstrating the programme’s value, guiding improvements, and securing ongoing support.

Household and Community Level Assessment	Rate from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)
My family has a positive perception of online freelance work.	
My community has a positive perception of online freelance work.	
My family has sufficient digital literacy and access to digital devices.	
My mother or sister would be open to pursuing online freelance work.	
Women in my community are open to exploring online freelance work.	
My family is aware of online freelancing as a viable career path.	
My community is aware of online freelancing as a viable career path.	

Table 5.6: Household and Community Level Assessment Survey

LESSONS LEARNT



Pre- and post-training assessments are critical.

Measure change by conducting assessments at both the start and end of the programme using Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) indicators across individual, family, and community levels.

Establish gender-responsive baselines.

Set clear baseline and target values—ideally agreed upon by stakeholders—to track progress, with attention to gender-specific outcomes.

Periodic monitoring works best.

Regular assessments (e.g., weekly or monthly) help track progress, identify issues early, and improve programme responsiveness.

Use data triangulation for accuracy.

Combine multiple data sources and methods—both quantitative and qualitative—to ensure reliable, gender-transformative results.

Use simple survey tools.

Trainers can implement assessments using accessible survey tools (see [Data Collection Methods](#) section).

Baseline comparisons reveal impact.

Comparing pre- and post-training data to baseline metrics is a clear way to measure progress and identify areas of improvement.

Visualise and reflect on findings.

Summarise results in tables or charts and include challenges, successes, and key contributing factors to inform future programmes.

Track planned vs. actual outcomes.

Regularly compare what was planned (e.g., enrolment targets) against what was achieved (e.g., completion rates).

Monitor individual progress over time.

Track each trainee's development by comparing their skills and confidence levels before and after the programme (use self-assessment tools).



It was an amazing opportunity to learn more about online freelancing and how to navigate different freelancing sites to earn money. Some key takeaways from the sessions included: communicating effectively with clients, prioritising self-care, using a professional tone when interacting with clients, conducting market research when setting rates, and identifying your niche.

Lina Mwakitawa

Trainee, *Fit4Mentorship Programme*, Pwani Teknowgalz, Kenya



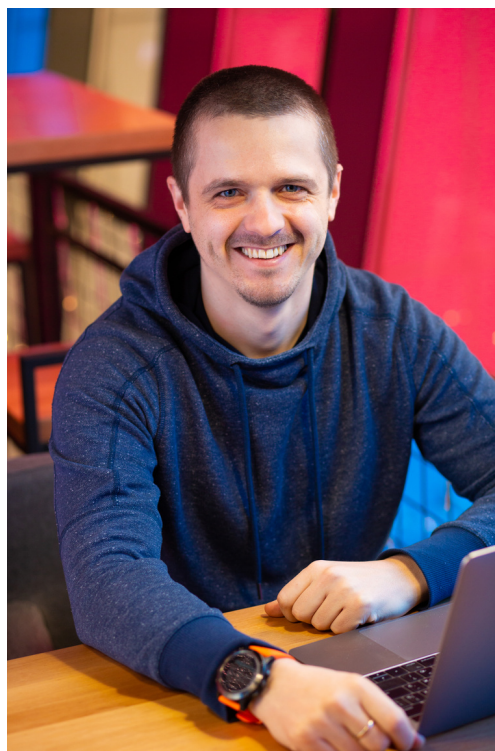
Spotting Challenges Early and Making Course Corrections

Monitoring your programme in real time helps you catch issues before they grow. Whether it's a drop in attendance, confusion about a module, or accessibility issues for certain groups, spotting these signs early gives you a chance to quickly adjust your strategy and keep the training effective.

Here are a few ways to integrate this into your process:

- Track participation and engagement regularly: Use attendance sheets, short weekly check-ins, or quick polls after sessions to see how trainees are responding.
- Ask for feedback early and often: Don't wait until the end. Use simple tools like anonymous messaging tools, online forms, or live discussions to understand what's working and what's not.
- Involve trainers in reflection: Encourage trainers to note what parts of the lesson plan worked well or fell flat and why. These small insights can lead to useful improvements in delivery.
- Monitor different groups closely: Keep an eye on the experience of women, first-time freelancers, and trainees with low digital confidence. Are they participating equally? If not, adjust your support.
- Make changes visible and shared: Let trainees know their feedback led to a change. It builds trust and increases their willingness to share openly.

This kind of responsive monitoring helps ensure that your programme stays relevant, inclusive, and engaging throughout.



Reporting and Communicating Impact

Communicating the impact of your OFT programme is an important final step, as it can determine the continuation of the programme. Once you have tracked the outputs and outcomes, prepare reports to communicate the impact to all the stakeholders involved. This increases the programme's visibility and promotes accountability and transparency. Reporting is essential, especially if the training is funded, and is a valuable way to generate interest in sustaining the programme.

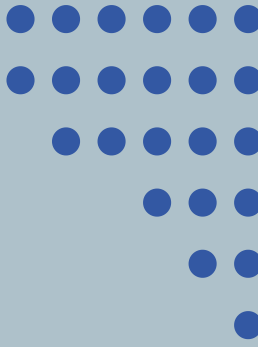
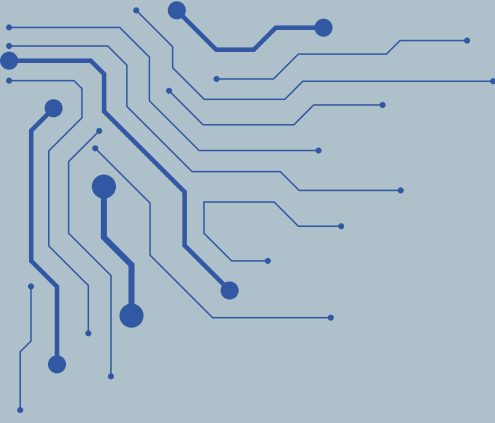
To communicate impact effectively, synthesise evidence of change, along with gender-related performance and findings. Include a timeline of changes, indicating the time trajectory over which the gender transformation is measured sustainably.

Analyse the individual, community, and systemic-level impacts to provide a thorough picture of the training programme, with the process of empowerment and transformation clearly articulated. Combine qualitative and quantitative findings to provide a holistic view of the programme's impact. Identify key pathways through which change occurs, highlighting both desired and unexpected outcomes.

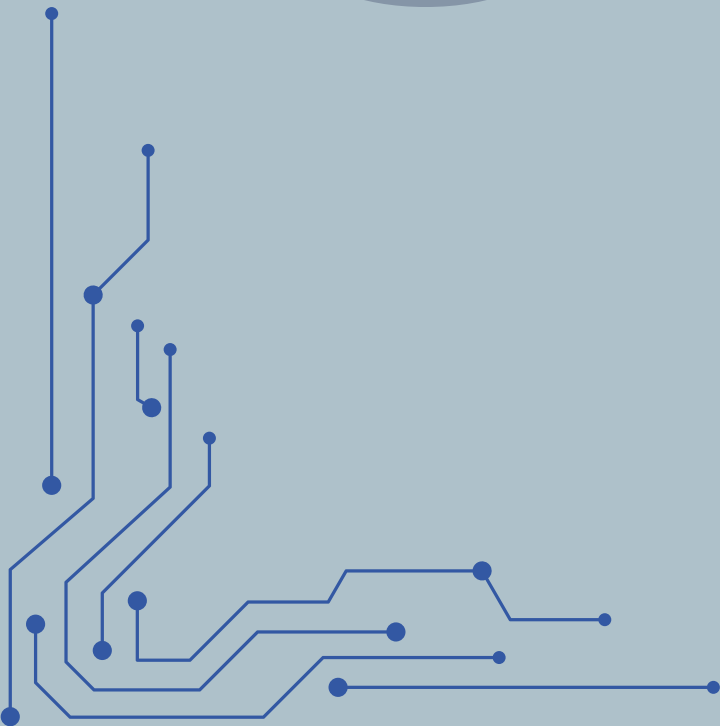
While there's no strict template, here's a simple one you can follow while making a report to communicate the impact of your OFT programme.

Overall Performance	<i>Provide a narrative summary of the overall performance and key achievements of the project.</i>
Results	<i>Describe the outputs and outcomes (use Table 5.1) and results achieved, assessing progress against the targets identified for each indicator in the programme, using sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive language.</i>
Trainees' Data	<i>Provide the number of trainees enrolled in the project, disaggregated by gender, age, and other guidance. The best practice standard is to present this data quantitatively as a table.</i>
Lessons Learnt	<i>Describe which aspects were the strongest or weakest, or what project elements or strategies most contributed to the success or failure of the project, and explain how these have contributed to the development of gender-responsive lessons learnt and recommendations for future projects.</i>
Impact Story	<i>Include success stories, anecdotes, and testimonials from trainees, their families, and the community.</i>
Visuals	<i>Use a range of images, such as pie charts and graphs, to break up lengthy passages of text and keep your readers interested. These are excellent methods for presenting facts in an engaging and understandable manner.</i>
Visibility	<i>Describe how the support for this project was made public. Refer to the Outreach and Promotion section of the Toolkit.</i>
Exit Strategy and Sustainability	<i>Provide a brief description of the project's exit strategy and closure stages, along with proposed next steps and an assessment of the sustainability of the results.</i>
Closing	<i>Close the report by thanking the stakeholders for their support. End the report by mentioning your name and contact details.</i>

Table 5.7: Programme Impact Reporting Template



6



SECTION 06: ANCHORING IMPACT



The world of online freelancing can be complex to navigate. In contexts where traditional employment pathways are narrowing—due to economic shifts, geopolitical uncertainty, or social barriers—this opportunity becomes even more vital. This Toolkit is designed to help organisations and institutions unlock that potential—for individuals, communities, and economies—through structured, inclusive, and locally relevant training programmes.

By equipping trainers with actionable lesson plans and guiding institutions through mobilisation, preparation, implementation, and impact measurement, this resource aims to lay the groundwork for something far larger than the training itself. It provides not just a curriculum, but a mindset—one that treats digital livelihoods as a pathway to long-term resilience, not just a temporary project.

Anchoring for Sustained Impact

With the help of this Toolkit, institutions will be better positioned to:

- Offer accessible, practical, and gender-responsive training on online freelancing.
- Reach underserved communities, including women, youth, and those outside formal education systems.
- Support trainees beyond technical skills—building confidence, financial awareness, and resilience.
- Use modular, low-bandwidth, and adaptable approaches for different environments.
- Monitor progress through an outcomes-focused evaluation framework.
- Advocate for better policies and protections for digital workers in their contexts.



From early pilots, we have already seen how institutions in as diverse contexts as Morocco, Kenya, India, and Ghana have adapted these approaches in creative ways. In India, a college for tribal students embedded peer-led sessions into their training and translated content into local languages. While in Kenya, an AI training institute applied collaborative learning methods and organised on-demand Gig Talks. These experiences show that flexibility and cultural relevance are as important as the technical curriculum itself.

We hope that such adaptations **open doors for new kinds of economic participation**, enabling people to define their own paths on their own terms.

Nurturing a Practitioner's Circle

While this Toolkit is a starting point, its real power lies in how it is used—and reused—across contexts and communities. The long-term success of this effort depends on anchoring it not only within institutions, but also within **communities of practice**.

Once a training cycle is complete, trainers and trainees remain in contact, discover platform work as part of continuous learning, evolve other peer-learning mechanisms. This informal continuation—where knowledge is passed along through peers, mentoring, and local examples— is where the sustainability of such efforts lies. Even in the absence of formal mechanisms, such localised dissemination of skills and insights can keep the impact of the programme alive and expanding.



Anchoring the training programme in local innovation hubs was important, as the hubs have a motivation to keep the communities established alive beyond just the programme implementation. The communication channels (e.g., social media chats, and pages) created continued to be filled with incoming cohorts of other trainings, ensuring a new flow of participants, which increased the size and knowledge of the existing group.

Niall Ardill

Advisor, Five One Labs, *Female Founders Fellowship*, GIZ Digital Transformation Centre, Iraq



This version of the Toolkit does not prescribe a single model for how this should happen. Instead, it encourages implementing organisations to **recognise and support this cyclical nature**:

- Invite former trainees to co-facilitate future sessions or serve as mentors.
- Create online alumni groups or digital forums for ongoing peer learning.
- Document and share local success stories to inspire future trainees.
- Encourage trainers to adapt and build on the modules over time.
- Keep listening; new challenges, platforms, and opportunities will emerge.

One key lesson from previous rollouts is that this informal network often becomes a safe space to share failures as well as successes, allowing others to avoid pitfalls. Another is the 'unexpected multiplier effect'—trainees who go on to teach their own networks, from neighbourhood groups to local women's associations, without any formal arrangement. Such ripple effects are proof that the model works best when ownership is shared.

Looking Ahead

As the digital landscape evolves, so too will the needs of online freelancers. The Toolkit is intended as a living resource—something that can be updated, localised, and enriched over time. Institutions are encouraged to build on this version, to share back improvements and to explore new collaborations that keep the training grounded in lived realities.

In future iterations, we aim to deepen the gender lens, expand examples from fragile and remote contexts, and integrate emerging platform categories so that the training stays ahead of the curve. We also see opportunities for stronger partnerships—with civil society, local governments and private sector actors—to embed online freelancing pathways into wider economic development strategies.



From concept to implementation, these are the key recommendations that have emerged:

Embed localisation loops.

The online freelancing marketplace is dynamic and constantly evolving. This calls for an ongoing process of validating assumptions, resources, and curriculum. Resources, such as platform engagement guides, surveys, and learning modules, can support this continuous localisation effort.

Adopt modular and stackable learning.

Design training in short, stackable modules (micro-credentials) so that trainees can progressively build their expertise and accumulate verifiable digital credentials.

Use blended learning formats.

Combine self-paced e-learning with live mentorship, peer coaching, and interactive sessions for doubt clearing. This mix enhances engagement and learning outcomes.

Partner with local intermediaries and platforms.

Collaborating with local digital platforms can create significant value. Refer to your country's Fairwork Ratings to assess platform strengths, where available. Build on these strengths to expand post-training job opportunities for trainees and strengthen the programme's credibility.

Prioritise digital inclusion.

Acknowledge connectivity, device access, language, and accessibility challenges openly. Explore creative solutions to bridge these gaps and leverage support from local networks.

Integrate fair work, rights literacy, and financial resilience.

Our goal is not just to help trainees secure their next gig, but to enable them to build sustainable careers. Embedding modules on freelancing ethics, contract negotiation, pricing, living tariffs, and social protections ensures that trainees understand the precarious nature of platform work and know where to find support to navigate it effectively.

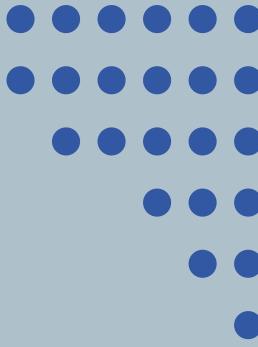
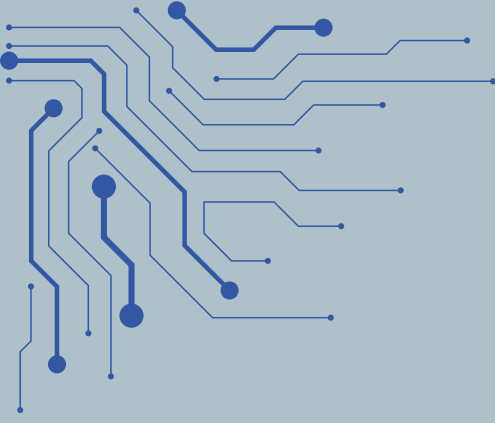
Foster a robust learning culture.

Simply institutionalising monitoring and evaluation is not enough. The digital economy demands continuous learning, which in turn requires a mindset shift—constantly refining delivery approaches and deepening impact.

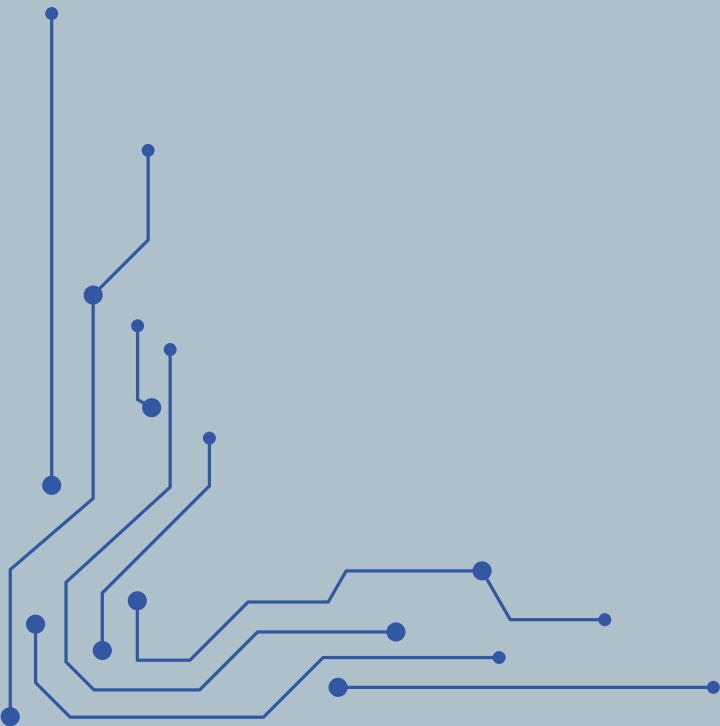
We invite you to take this Toolkit forward—not just as a manual or how-to guide, but as the seed of a larger movement for digital inclusion and fair, meaningful work. Whether you are an institution, a trainer, or a former trainee, you can help keep this circle of knowledge growing—by adapting it, adding to it, and passing it on. The more it is used, shared, and reimagined, the more powerful it becomes.

Now is the time to act—start where you are, use what you have, and connect with others who share the vision.





Appendices



Appendix 1: Online Freelancer Training (OFT) Lesson Plans



Based on our experience of implementing the Online Freelancer Training (OFT) programme in four countries, we have developed ready-to-use lesson plans and practical tips to help you lead the five core modules of the OFT programme. Each module packs information from real implementation experiences across different regions and target groups, and is designed to be flexible and modular, so you can adapt it based on the needs, backgrounds, and goals of your trainees.

You'll also find guidance on timing, flow, and facilitation methods to help you create a supportive learning environment—whether you're teaching online, in person, or using a blended approach.

When reviewing the lesson plans, ask yourself:

1. How can you structure and deliver each module in a way that's engaging and easy to follow?
2. What sequence, timing, and materials will help your training run smoothly?
3. How can you adapt each session to match the needs, skills, and contexts of your trainees?

Curriculum Overview

The OFT is structured into five core modules, each focusing on a key area of online freelancing. The table below provides a simplified overview of the full curriculum, including the main topics and sub-topics covered in each module.

Module	Topic	Sub-Topics
Module 1 <i>What is Online Freelancing?</i>	Understanding Digital Labour Platforms	Types of digital labour: location-based and cloud-based; introduction to platforms
	What to Expect as an Online Freelancer	Pros and cons; real-world insights into gig work
	Types of Work in Digital Labour Platforms	Overview of online work types and tasks on different platforms
Module 2 <i>Getting Started — Essential How-Tos</i>	Navigating Online Freelancing Platforms	Signing up, setting up profiles, understanding platform features
	Applying for an Online Freelancing Opportunity	Writing proposals, choosing tasks, setting fair pricing
	Landing an Online Freelancing Opportunity	Communicating with clients, managing tasks, understanding contracts
Module 3 <i>Key Skills for Online Freelancers</i>	Essential Soft Skills	Communication, time management, adaptability, negotiation
	Financial Skills	Budgeting, Minimum Acceptable Rate (MAR), saving, taxes
	Digital Skills and Tools	Tools for remote work, online safety, intellectual property
Module 4 <i>Managing a Competitive Profile</i>	Personal Branding – Creating a Competitive Profile	Building a strong freelancer profile; showcasing expertise
	Building and Leveraging Your Network: Ratings, Referrals and Reviews	Ratings, referrals, and maintaining platform credibility
	Building a Successful Online Freelancing Career	Setting long-term goals and transitioning to entrepreneurship or formal jobs
	Gig Talk	Interactive session with experienced freelancers
Module 5 <i>Decent and Fair Working Conditions</i>	Introduction to Decent and Fair Working Conditions	Principles of fair work, decent working conditions, grievance mechanisms
	Fair Compensation and Payment Practices	Knowing value, negotiating pay, understanding platform deductions

Table A.1: Overview of the Online Freelancer Training Curriculum



The manual was used to guide the development of the agenda and slides for the programme. We just ensured that we followed the online freelance workflow. It was therefore used as a baseline for building the training deck for the presentation.

Martin Atta-Fynn

Lead Trainer, *Online Freelancer Training*, AfriConsult, Ghana



Approach

The training modules are designed to introduce trainees to key concepts in online freelancing, digital work readiness, and fair working conditions. Each session follows a consistent structure—**Connect, Relate, Learn, Reflect, and Summarise**—to promote engagement, critical thinking, and personal application.

Connect opens the session with a familiar hook, or prompt that draws on trainees' experiences and sets the tone.

Relate introduces new ideas, or challenges by linking them to real-world stories, or contexts relevant to online freelancing.

Learn delivers key content through examples, tools, and actionable insights.

Reflect gives trainees space to internalise the content through discussions, activities, or personal goal setting.

Summarise reinforces the session's takeaways and prepares trainees for the next steps.

As a trainer, your role is to create a safe, inclusive, and interactive learning environment. Trainees may come from diverse educational, linguistic, and gender backgrounds, so use examples that reflect both high-tech and low-tech freelancing tasks. Invite discussion on how access, safety, or opportunity might differ by gender, location, or experience.

Inclusive practice tips are integrated throughout the sessions to help you actively encourage all trainees—especially women—to share their thoughts, express concerns, and assert their professional value. Make space for empathy-driven discussions around barriers, such as unequal pay, online safety, or cultural expectations.

Use the **localisation tips** to research and add local examples—platforms, associations, laws, taxation rules, opportunities, or events—where relevant. This will make the training more relatable and practical for your audience.

This approach centres on participation, self-awareness, and agency—equipping trainees not only with skills but also with the confidence to navigate digital workspaces fairly and successfully.

Module 01: What is Online Freelancing?



Objective

Introduce trainees—anyone interested in pursuing a career in online freelancing—to the concept of digital labour platforms and the various kinds of work available on them. Through this module, trainees will gain an initial understanding of platform-based gig work, its benefits and challenges, and begin to position themselves within the online freelancing ecosystem.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the classroom sessions, trainees will be able to:

- Understand key terms, such as *Digital Labour Platforms*, *Platform-Based Gig Work*, *Online Freelancing*, and *Cloudworkers*.
- Recognise the various types of web-based platforms and the categories of work offered through them.
- Reflect on their personal expectations and assess the pros and cons of becoming an online freelancer.
- Identify how and where they can fit into the platform economy, based on their current or potential skills.
- Use the internet to search for and explore digital labour platforms that match their competencies.

Module Outline

Session Topic	Activities	Materials Needed	Duration
Session 0: Icebreaker	- Trainer introduction - Trainee introductions and motivations - Group-building and trust-building activity	None	20 min
Session 1: Understanding Digital Labour Platforms	- Group brainstorming of known digital platforms - Clarifying two types of digital labour: location-based vs. online - Discuss what trainees need to know to begin freelancing	Papers and pens (or whiteboard in online sessions)	40 min
Mindfulness Break	Short reflection or quiet task (e.g., listing platforms to explore)	None	10 min
Session 2: What to Expect as an Online Freelancer	- Sharing and discussing expectations of freelancing - Compare with real-world pros and cons Watch or summarise ILO/Atingi freelancer stories	Projector or screen for video (offline sessions)	40 min
Mindfulness Break	Quiet activity (e.g., write down three freelance expectations)	None	10 min
Session 3: Types of Work in Digital Labour Platforms	- Brainstorm types of online work - - Introduction to four types of web-based platforms - Discuss how platforms function (profiles, ratings, commissions)	Whiteboard or slides (optional)	40 min
Total Duration			2 h 40 min

Table A.2: Outline of Module 1: What is Online Freelancing?

Session 0: Welcome and Icebreaker

Objective: Build rapport and introduce course objectives.

CONNECT (20 min)

Briefly introduce yourself and the purpose of the course: to help trainees explore economic opportunities through online freelancing.

Invite each trainee to share their name, background, and what they hope to learn.

Use one of your preferred short icebreakers (e.g., “Two Truths and a Lie”) to create a friendly atmosphere.



Encourage women trainees to speak early and openly. Ask what unique challenges or motivations they may have in entering the freelance space.

Session 1: Understanding Digital Labour Platforms

Objective: Identify and categorise digital platforms and understand the concept of online freelancing.

CONNECT (10 min)

Distribute paper slips and ask trainees to list known digital labour platforms (e.g., Upwork, Fiverr, Uber) and what services they offer.

If trainees struggle, prompt with examples: “Think of platforms for food delivery, transport, or online design.”

Online/Hybrid Version: Use an online whiteboard, through Canva, Miro, or Figma.

RELATE (5 min)

Group responses and visually sort platforms into two categories:

Location-based work (e.g., Uber, Glovo)

Online freelancing (e.g., Fiverr, Upwork)

LEARN (10 min)

Explain the two broad categories:

Location-based: Physical presence needed (e.g., ridesharing, delivery)

Online freelancing: Work done entirely online (e.g., content writing, coding)

Highlight online freelancing as the focus of this course.

REFLECT (10 min)

Peer activity: Trainees list 5 questions they'd need answers to before starting as freelancers. Pairs exchange questions and discuss.

A sample list of questions is given below:

- What skills should I acquire?
- How can I get my first project?
- How can I navigate the platforms and understand them?
- How can I stay self-motivated?
- How can I reach out to potential clients?
- How can I build a portfolio?
- How can I understand pricing and contracts?
- How can I keep up with industry trends?
- How to manage finances and taxes?
- How to network with peers?



Ask trainees to reflect if their questions or needs might differ based on gender (e.g., time flexibility, care responsibilities, access to devices).

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Assign a short mindfulness task: "List 5 freelancing platforms you want to explore."

Session 2: Types of Work in Digital Labour Platforms

Objective: Explore the types of platforms and common freelance roles.

CONNECT (5 min)

Recap trainee lists from the previous task. Write a consolidated list of platforms on the board.

RELATE (10 min)

Share a day-in-the-life example of a freelancer. Show video  [A Day in the Life of a Freelance Web Developer](#) by Upwork. Ask trainees to describe what their own day might look like in 5-6 lines.

Sample: "I start my day checking Fiverr for new app or website testing jobs. I work in the morning, attend to my children mid-day, then resume with client emails by evening."

LEARN (10 min)

Introduce four platform types:

1. Freelance platforms (e.g., Upwork)
2. Contest-based (e.g., 99designs)
3. Competitive programming (e.g., Topcoder)
4. Microtasking (e.g., Clickworker)

Fold in top skills in demand like content writing, graphic design, coding, data entry, digital marketing, and virtual assistance. Emphasise that online freelancing offers opportunities across all skill levels—from basic data entry to advanced programming.



Highlight how certain tasks (e.g., content writing, virtual assistance) often attract more women. Ask trainees to discuss why and whether this affects how work is valued or paid.

REFLECT (10 min)

In groups, trainees share:

- One type of online work they're interested in.
- Three skills they think are essential for that role.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Assign a mindfulness task: Ask trainees to jot down three expectations they have as a freelancer (e.g., income, flexible hours, working from home).

Session 3: What to Expect as an Online Freelancer?

Objective: Set realistic expectations for freelancing life.

CONNECT (10 min)

Ask volunteers to share their three expectations. Collect and write a master list on the board.



As a fresher in online freelancing, my expectations were to learn about getting things started from scratch, such as making a compelling profile to attract high-value clients. This OFT programme addressed all my needs as a fresher and I feel very confident and aware.

Bipin Majhi

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, India



RELATE and LEARN (15 min)

Compare the shared expectations with this list:

- Flexible work hours.
- Global job access.
- Autonomy.
- Quick income (sometimes irregular).
- Skill growth opportunities.

Risks: lack of job security, wage theft, isolation.

Show selected short videos (or summarise) from Atingi and ILO: freelancers talk about flexibility, fair work, and challenges.

Ask if women might face unique barriers (e.g., unfair pay, lack of safe workspaces at home, or balancing care duties). Invite discussion.

REFLECT (10 min)

Class brainstorm: List pros and cons of platform work.

Examples:

Pros: flexible hours, diverse clients, independence.

Cons: no benefits, unpaid time, stress.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Share key elements of how most freelancing platforms operate:

- Profile screening
- Task matching
- Commission structures
- Use of algorithms and reviews

Module 2: Getting Started — Essential How-Tos



Objective

This module equips trainees with the practical knowledge needed to navigate online freelancing platforms. It guides them through setting up a strong profile, identifying relevant job opportunities, and submitting effective proposals. It also helps trainees understand how to manage pricing, communicate with clients, and handle the initial stages of freelance work. Trainees will explore common challenges freelancers face and discuss strategies to overcome them.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, trainees will be able to:

- Create a profile on an online freelancing platform of their choice.
- Understand how to price their services, including how to set a Minimum Acceptable Rate (MAR).
- Use the platform's search tools to identify relevant job opportunities.
- Write professional, tailored proposals for online freelancing tasks.
- Understand the workflow after being selected for a job, including communication and contracts.
- Identify common challenges faced by online freelancers and ways to manage them.

Module Outline

Session Topic	Activities	Materials Needed	Duration
Session 1: Navigating Online Freelancing Platforms	- Reflect on trainees' target work type and platform - Lecture on profile creation and platform navigation - Discuss data sharing and platform algorithms	Projector (for videos in offline sessions)	40 min
Mindfulness Break	Quiet or reflective activity	None	10 min
Session 2: Applying for an Online Freelancing Opportunity	- Reflect on job descriptions and reasons to be selected - Guidance on writing winning proposals and pricing services - Self-reflection on MAR and pricing strategy	Handouts or notebooks	40 min
Mindfulness Break	Self-paced activity (e.g., journaling)	None	10 min
Session 3: Landing an Online Freelancing Opportunity	- Share challenges and best practices for landing first jobs - Learn about communicating with clients, interviews, and contracts - Discuss contract types and finding the first client	Whiteboard or flipchart (optional)	40 min
Total Duration			2 h 20 min

Table A.3: Outline of Module 2: Getting Started — Essential How-Tos

Session 1: Navigating Online Freelancing Platforms

Objective: To help trainees understand how to choose a suitable platform and navigate its basic features, including registration and setting up a profile.

CONNECT (5 min)

Welcome trainees and address any open questions from Module 1.

Start a discussion: What kind of online work are trainees interested in? Which platforms have they explored? Are they aligned with their skills and goals?



Freelancing could be a major source of work and income, if taken seriously. Just like traditional jobs, in freelancing, you need to be abreast of soft skills and digital skills.

Herbert Bimpong

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, Imperial General Assurance, Ghana



RELATE and LEARN (15 min)

Introduce common platforms and their elements. Walk trainees through these steps.

- Step 1: Understanding the platform structure
- Step 2: Signing up and exploring basic navigation



Identify and introduce locally relevant freelancing platforms popular in your region. This ensures trainees focus on platforms with the most opportunity and demand in their country.

REFLECT (15 min)

Facilitate a discussion on personal data sharing:

- What information do platforms typically ask for?
- What are trainees comfortable sharing?
- How do platforms use this data?

Use the [Data, algorithms and gig work](#) course by Atingi, [GDPR and privacy issues: the case of digital labour platforms and contact-tracing apps](#) by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), and [The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work](#) by the ILO to deepen understanding.



Consider how gender-related privacy concerns might affect comfort in sharing personal information. Some may prefer limiting visible details to avoid bias or harassment.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Summarise key takeaways:

- How to identify suitable platforms.
- How to register and explore features.

Prep Work: Ask trainees to search for jobs on a platform that matches their interests.

Session 2: Applying for an Online Freelancing Opportunity

Objective: To equip trainees with the ability to identify relevant opportunities, write strong proposals, and determine how to price their services effectively.

CONNECT (10 min)

Have trainees choose a job listing that suits them and write down their top 3 reasons they would be a good fit. This builds confidence and clarity.

RELATE and LEARN (15 min)

Introduce the next step.

- Step 3: Applying for jobs via proposals or bids

Explain key aspects:

- Writing winning proposals (see examples on platforms like Upwork).
- Pricing strategies and calculating one's Minimum Acceptable Rate (MAR).
- Using tools like the [Living Tariff Tool](#) by WageIndicator to estimate the minimum daily income needed to meet a basic standard of living, and to also identify hidden costs often associated with gig work, such as platform fees, internet costs, or software subscriptions. (Additional tips on setting freelancer rates and managing money are covered in Module 3 – Session 2: Financial Skills.)
- Factors influencing pricing (level of experience, estimated time, complexity of task).

Use resources such as:

- [How To Create a Proposal That Wins Jobs](#) by Upwork.
- [How To Set Your Freelance Rate and Project Pricing](#) by Upwork.



Be mindful that women freelancers often face undervaluation in pricing. Encourage confidence in setting rates that reflect your skills and market worth, overcoming societal undervaluing.

REFLECT (10 min)

Facilitate a self-reflection:

- What factors affect their MAR?
Ask trainees to reflect on any personal or societal factors, including gender expectations, that might influence their pricing decisions.
- What is their initial pricing point?
Encourage trainees to document this in a pricing sheet.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Summarise by revisiting trainees' top 3 reasons for selection and transitioning into an online freelancing task.

Prep Work: Draft a résumé or profile and a proposal template or email to introduce themselves to potential clients.

Session 3: Landing an Online Freelancing Opportunity

Objective: To help trainees understand what happens after a proposal is selected, including client communication, project onboarding, and contract basics.

CONNECT (10 min)

Recap the first three steps. Ask trainees to share:

- Any jobs they applied for.
- Challenges they faced.

RELATE (10 min)

Draw on group experiences:

- What are the common difficulties in landing the first job?
- What worked well for others?

Create a list of best practices for landing the first freelancing project. Note that gender bias or stereotypes may impact client perceptions or hiring decisions. Developing strategies to highlight your strengths and professionalism can help counteract these biases.

LEARN (15 min)

Introduce the next steps.

- Step 4: Communicating with clients (emails, interviews)



Discuss how effective communication includes confidently asserting your rights and expectations, which can be especially important for women to ensure fair treatment and avoid exploitation.

- Step 5: Understanding project scope and setting expectations

Explain:

- Types of contracts: fixed vs. hourly.
- Payment terms and platform policies.
- What happens after winning a job (onboarding steps).

Resources for reference:

- Contracts:  [Understanding fair working conditions](#) course on Atingi and  [Using a Contract and Protecting Your Work](#) by Fiverr.
- Understand Your Market:  [How to Research Markets & Sales Channels](#) course on Atingi.
- Rate-Setting and Proposal Tips:  [How to Create Freelance Quotes and Proposals](#) by GoDaddy.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Recap the session and prepare trainees for what's next.

Prep Work: Ask trainees to create a list of non-technical skills they think are important for success as an online freelancer (e.g., communication, time management, digital literacy).

Module 3: Key Skills for Online Freelancers

Objective

To equip trainees with the essential soft skills, financial skills, and digital competencies needed to thrive as online freelancers and succeed in platform work.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, trainees will be able to:

- Understand the importance of soft skills, financial literacy, and digital skills in the context of online freelancing.
- Identify relevant soft skills, such as communication, time management, adaptability, and client relationship management.
- Apply key financial concepts, such as budgeting, pricing, saving, and understanding taxation.
- Recognise commonly used digital tools and platforms for freelance work.
- Understand basic online safety, privacy practices, and intellectual property rights relevant to digital workspaces.

Module Outline

Session Topic	Activities	Materials Needed	Duration
Session 1: Essential Soft Skills	- Skills brainstorm, self-assessment, application to freelancing	Paper and pens (or whiteboard in online sessions)	55 min
Session 2: Financial Skills	- Income/expense reflection, budgeting, goal setting, pricing discussion	Paper and pens (or whiteboard in online sessions)	50 min
Session 3: Digital Skills and Tools	- Digital tool mapping, use cases, safety and privacy practices	Paper and pens (or whiteboard in online sessions), projector (for videos in offline sessions)	45 min
Total Duration			2 h 30 min

Table A.4: Outline of Module 3: Key Skills for Online Freelancers

Session 1: Essential Soft Skills

Objective: Trainees identify key soft skills needed for online freelancing and assess their current strengths and areas for growth.

CONNECT (10 min)

- Ask trainees: “What are the most important skills a freelancer needs to succeed?”
- Give trainees post-its or use an online whiteboard. They each write one skill.
- Group them as “soft skills” (like communication, adaptability) or “technical skills”.



Be aware that women may undervalue soft skills they already use (e.g., multitasking, empathy). Encourage them to see these as professional assets.

- Ask: “Which of these are harder to learn online?” to prompt discussion on soft skills.

RELATE (5 min)

- Trainees reflect on a time when soft skills helped them succeed or when a lack of them caused challenges.
- Encourage sharing: “Have you ever had a misunderstanding with a client or coworker? What helped resolve it?”

LEARN (20 min)

- Introduce key soft skills for freelancers:
 - Communication (writing clear emails, chatting with clients)
 - Time management (balancing projects, meeting deadlines)
 - Adaptability (handling changing client needs or platforms)
 - Client relationship building
 - Negotiation
 - Growth mindset



Highlight that gender can affect how assertiveness or negotiation is perceived. Reframe these skills as strategies for self-advocacy and fair treatment.

- Share concrete examples:
 - A writer adjusting tone for different audiences.
 - A virtual assistant switching between tools based on client preference.
- Show brief clips or use examples from this video,  [Tips for Managing Your Focus and Productivity](#) by Upwork, to illustrate good habits.

REFLECT (10 min)

- Trainees complete a soft skills self-rating sheet (1–5 scale).
- They choose one skill to improve and write one action they can take in the next month (e.g. "Practise time-blocking").



Trainers were very intentional in talking about [gender-specific issues], allowing the entire class to give their ideas on them, especially through the opinions of the [women] in the meeting.

Georgette Martha

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, Self-employed, Ghana



Some trainees, especially women, may rate themselves lower due to confidence gaps. Encourage honest reflection but also affirm growth potential.

SUMMARISE (10 min)

- Recap: "Your soft skills are often what clients remember most."
- Encourage free resources like LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, and YouTube for ongoing soft skills development.

Session 2: Financial Skills

Objective: Trainees gain awareness of key financial concepts—budgeting, setting rates, saving, and preparing for taxes—as freelancers.

CONNECT (5 min)

Ask: "When you get paid for freelance work, what happens next? Do you track it or spend it?"
Let trainees share habits or challenges—e.g., irregular pay, not knowing how to save.



Women may face greater pressure to prioritise family spending or may lack access to financial literacy. Validate diverse experiences openly.

RELATE (10 min)

In groups or pairs, trainees list 3 financial challenges freelancers face.

Expected responses:

- Variable income
- Unpredictable expenses
- Not knowing how much to charge
- Difficulty saving or paying tax

Ask: “Which of these have you faced, or seen others face?”

LEARN (20 min)

- Walk through a simple budgeting tool using a sample monthly income.
 - Introduce the [Monthly budget tracker](#) by Microsoft (print or show sample).
 - Trainees complete their own budget estimates (income, fixed costs, savings).
- Discuss how to set freelance rates:
 - Hourly vs. project based.
 - Research market rates using sites like [WageIndicator](#).
 - Consider costs (internet, software), time, and skills.



Women freelancers often underprice due to societal conditioning. Emphasise valuing time and skills fairly and show how to benchmark with confidence.

- Briefly introduce:
 - Importance of saving during “good months”.
 - Taxes—depending on your country’s regulations, freelancers may need to set aside tax payments.



Before the session, research the latest national tax rules and freelance income guidelines in your country. Use this information to explain local requirements clearly to your trainees.

- Share [Labour Law around the World in Maps](#) by WageIndicator as a visual tool.

REFLECT (10 min)

Trainees fill out a simple financial goal-setting handout:

- One short-term savings goal.
- One income goal.
- One change they will make this week (e.g., “track expenses daily”).

Optionally, share free tools like Money Manager apps or Google Sheets templates.



Ensure trainees know their goals are valid, even if they seem small. Encourage goals that enhance autonomy and financial resilience.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

- Reiterate: “Freelancers who manage money well stay in the game longer.”
- Encourage trainees to continue learning via free content on YouTube or community finance groups.

Session 3: Digital Skills and Tools

Objective: Trainees explore essential tools for freelancing, identify gaps in their digital skills, and understand basic online safety and professionalism.

CONNECT (5 min)

- Ask: “What digital tool do you use the most for work or learning?”
- Create a quick poll or word cloud to show variety—email, YouTube, Canva, Zoom, etc.

RELATE (10 min)

- Ask trainees: “What do freelancers need digital skills for?”
 - Finding gigs
 - Communicating
 - Organising files
 - Submitting work
 - Upskilling
- Use icons or a mindmap to visualise the freelance digital workflow.



Consider that access to devices or digital spaces may be unequal, especially for women managing household roles. Invite discussion without judgment.

LEARN (20 min)

- Introduce common tools used by freelancers:
 - Communication: Gmail, WhatsApp, Zoom
 - File sharing and planning: Google Docs, Sheets, Trello
 - Portfolio building: Canva, LinkedIn, Behance
 - Learning and upskilling: YouTube, Coursera, Atingi.org ([🔗 Digital skills for gig workers](#))
- Demo or show screenshots of one or two tools in use.
- Cover digital safety essentials:
 - Strong passwords and 2FA
 - Identifying phishing emails
 - Not sharing banking info on unknown platforms
 - Understanding copyrights—don't reuse others' work without permission
 - Knowing what personal data is shared and how to control it



Women are more likely to face online harassment or scams. Emphasise safety practices like guarding personal information and reporting abuse.



Identify low-bandwidth alternatives that trainees can use in regions with limited internet access.

REFLECT (10 min)

- Trainees use a self-check sheet to rate their comfort with different tools.
- Each chooses one digital tool they want to improve in and finds a free resource to start.

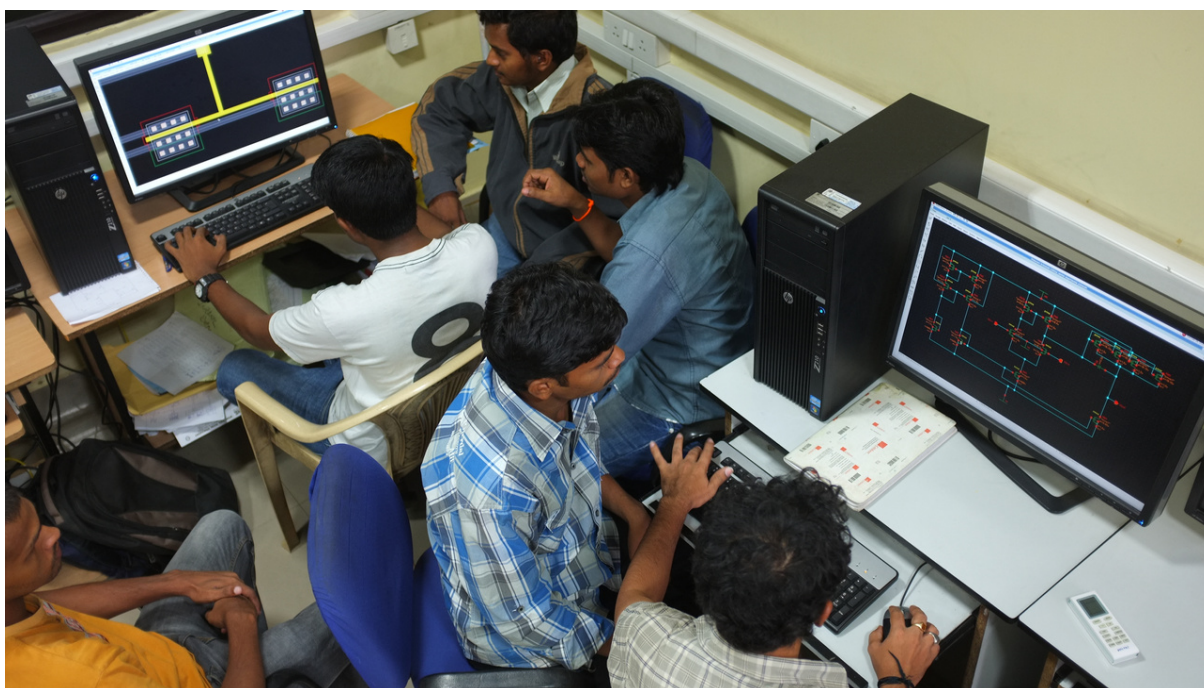


Some may downplay their existing skills due to confidence gaps. Frame digital growth as a learning curve, not a test of ability.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

- Recap: “You don’t have to be a tech expert—but you need to be digitally confident.”
- Encourage online peer learning groups to exchange tips.
- Reassure trainees that improvement is ongoing—pick one tool and grow from there.

Module 4: Managing a Competitive Profile



Objective

This module helps trainees build compelling online profiles, increase their value proposition, and compete successfully in the online freelancing market. It also guides them in developing a strong reputation and credibility through personal branding, networking, and effective use of platform features like ratings and reviews. Furthermore, it helps trainees explore the possibilities of transitioning from online freelancing into formal employment or entrepreneurship, using the principles of a growth mindset to guide decision-making, goal-setting, and long-term career planning.

As this part of the curriculum brings theory into practice, we recommend inviting an experienced online freelancer to join as a guest speaker during this module. Their real-life insights will enrich the learning experience and anchor the session in the realities of gig work. See the sub-section on [Expert Inputs – Gig Talks](#) for guidance on identifying experts for "Gig Talks"—brief, focused conversations with practitioners to make the programme more relatable and applied.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, trainees will be able to:

- Build an online profile that highlights their skills and strengths.
- List and market themselves effectively on digital labour platforms.
- Explore and prepare for a long-term freelancing career.
- Leverage their network and platform features (like reviews and ratings) to build a strong reputation.
- Learn from the experiences of a practising freelancer through a live "Gig Talk" and apply practical tips to their own freelancing journey.

Module Outline

Session Topic	Activities	Materials Needed	Duration
Session 1: Personal Branding – Creating a Competitive Profile	Group discussion, short lecture, peer reflection using a mind map	Paper and pens or online whiteboarding tool	60 min
Session 2: Building and Leveraging Your Network: Ratings, Referrals, and Reviews	Lecture, individual action list creation, class discussion	Paper and pens	35 min
Session 3: Building a Successful Online Freelancing Career	Group discussion, lecture, peer and self-reflection	None	45 min
Session 4: Transitioning to the Formal Workforce and Entrepreneurship – A Growth Mindset Approach	Group discussion, short lecture, goal-setting exercise	Reflection worksheets or blank paper	45 min
Session 5: Gig Talk	Guest talk, Q&A	Projector	45 min
Total Duration			4 h 10 min

Table A.5: Outline of Module 4: Managing a Competitive Profile

Session 1: Personal Branding — Creating a Competitive Profile

CONNECT (5 min)

Ask trainees to name individuals who are well-known personal brands (e.g., Oprah Winfrey, David Beckham). Encourage them to reflect on what makes these individuals stand out. You can include regional figures for stronger relevance.



Include a balanced mix of male and female public figures across industries to challenge gender stereotypes about success.

RELATE (10 min)

Introduce the concept of personal branding—the deliberate effort to create and influence public perception of an individual by positioning them as an authority in their industry. Discuss its importance for freelancers competing globally. Introduce the 5 As of personal branding:

- **Awareness:** Know your strengths and values.
- **Authenticity:** Be genuine in your representation.
- **Articulation:** Communicate clearly.
- **Appearance:** Present yourself professionally.
- **Association:** Build and be part of meaningful networks.

LEARN (15 min)

Walk through the essential parts of a standout freelancer profile:

- **Headline:** Keep it concise and skills-focused (e.g., “Detail-Orientated Data Labeller with 3+ Years of Experience”).
- **Profile Picture:** A clear, friendly headshot with a neutral background (tip: smile and dress professionally).



Acknowledge that women may feel vulnerable showing their faces online—discuss optionality and strategies for safe, professional representation.

- **Intro Video (optional):** A 30-60 second clip introducing yourself and your skills.
- **Profile Bio:** Highlight your background, experience, and the value you offer.
- **Portfolio:** Showcase work samples with descriptions and outcomes.
- **Skills and Certifications:** Match these with what’s in demand on the platform.

REFLECT (20 min)

Ask trainees to create a personal branding mind map. It should include traits, skills, goals, strengths, and unique selling points. In pairs or small groups, they present their mind maps and offer feedback. For virtual settings, trainees can use tools like miro.com or share handwritten maps on screen.



Some trainees, especially women, may struggle to ‘sell themselves’. Encourage them to reframe it as communicating value, not boasting.

SUMMARISE (10 min)

Summarise how personal branding elements feed into building a profile on platforms like LinkedIn, Upwork, or Fiverr. Trainees can use their mind maps to draft their actual profiles after the session.

Session 2: Building and Leveraging Your Network: Ratings, Referrals and Reviews

CONNECT (5 min)

Recall earlier discussions on platform structures. Prompt trainees to name features they've seen related to community and reputation (e.g., reviews, badges, rating stars).

RELATE (10 min)

Discuss how networking in the digital space differs from traditional environments. Ask:

- How do freelancers connect with others online?
- How do they present themselves in conversations and collaborations?
- What are the benefits of referrals and community engagement?

LEARN (20 min)

Explain how ratings and reviews influence a freelancer's visibility and credibility. Algorithms on platforms often favour profiles with high ratings and consistent feedback.

- Share strategies to gain strong reviews: meeting deadlines, clear communication, and quality work.
- Emphasise joining freelancing communities or forums where trainees can exchange advice and find job leads.
- Encourage trainees to start building a small support network—former classmates, colleagues, or clients—who may become first endorsers or clients.



Discuss how unconscious bias can affect reviews. Encourage trainees to focus on building consistent quality and asking trusted clients for feedback. Share articles like [Approaching clients about feedback](#) by Upwork with them.



Research and share region-specific digital networking communities to help trainees build a peer support system.

REFLECT (10 min)

Have each trainee write 5 actionable steps to boost their ratings and network. For example:

1. Respond quickly to messages.
2. Ask for feedback after each job.

3. Participate in platform forums.
4. Connect with 3 peers weekly.
5. Share learnings regularly on LinkedIn.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Recap key points and assign trainees to define the word “algorithm”, preparing them for Session 3.

Session 3: Building a Successful Online Freelancing Career

CONNECT (5 min)

Start by discussing trainees’ definitions of “algorithm” and how it might apply to online work.

LEARN (20 min)

Explain how platforms function behind the scenes:

- **User Management:** Where freelancers register, create profiles, and manage accounts.
- **Matching Algorithms:** Systems that pair freelancers with job posts based on skills, past performance, and ratings.
- **Payments:** Secure systems for invoicing and transactions.
- **Ratings and Reviews:** Key trust signals used to evaluate performance.

Discuss tips for success as an online freelancer:

- Stay responsive and professional.
- Deliver quality work consistently.
- Continuously upskill through short online courses.
- Understand platform algorithms (e.g., frequent logins, keyword-rich profiles).
- Track your metrics—views, click-throughs, and conversions on your profile.

Point out how algorithms may reflect real-world biases, e.g., favouring those with early traction or certain demographics. Reinforce the importance of persistence and profile optimisation.

REFLECT (15 min)

Ask trainees to summarise all that they have learnt so far—about the freelancing world, setting up a profile, and managing work online. This can be done as a group reflection or by writing individual notes.

SUMMARISE (10 min)

Facilitate a final self-reflection:

- How confident do you feel about pursuing freelancing?
- What areas would you like more guidance in?
- What next steps will you take after the training?



Encourage trainees to set goals that match their values and context—not just industry expectations or popular advice.

Session 4: Transitioning to the Formal Workforce and Entrepreneurship – A Growth Mindset Approach

CONNECT (5 min)

Start with a quick brainstorm:

Ask trainees, “What could online freelancing lead to in the long term?” Capture answers like formal jobs, business ventures, consulting, mentoring others, etc.

Prompt: “Have you ever thought of freelancing as a stepping stone?”



Actively include examples of women in diverse roles—like tech entrepreneurs, creative freelancers, or female mentors—to broaden trainees’ vision of what’s possible.

RELATE (10 min)

Introduce the concept of the growth mindset—the belief that skills and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence.

Contrast with a fixed mindset, where people believe talents are innate and unchangeable.



Before joining this OFT programme, I considered myself somebody who sought work, waiting for employers to hire me. After this programme, I realised that I am not just selling my skills but rather running my own business and solving different problems for my clients.

Sukadev Mallick

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, India



Discuss how a growth mindset is essential for:

- Adapting to new challenges.
- Scaling up as a freelancer or entrepreneur.
- Transitioning into formal job roles, especially those requiring collaboration and leadership.
- Embracing lifelong learning and professional development.



Acknowledge that women may internalise negative feedback more deeply due to social conditioning. Emphasise that abilities grow with effort, regardless of gender.

Share a few real-life examples of freelancers who went on to:

- Launch their own small businesses.
- Get recruited into formal roles by long-term clients.
- Offer coaching or start agencies of their own.

LEARN (15 min)

Explain possible pathways beyond freelancing:

- **Formal Workforce:** Clients offering long-term contracts, full-time positions, or referrals.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Setting up a small business, digital agency, or selling digital products.
- **Hybrid Careers:** Mixing freelancing with employment or education.



Mention that women often balance multiple roles (e.g., caregiving), so hybrid or entrepreneurial paths may offer flexibility—frame this as a strength, not a limitation.

Introduce mindset strategies to support this transition:

- Set long-term career goals and review them every 6 months.
- Seek feedback and use it constructively.
- Celebrate small wins and track progress.
- Embrace new challenges as learning opportunities.

REFLECT (10 min)

Distribute a simple goal setting/reflection worksheet (or ask trainees to fold a paper into four quadrants). Have them fill in:

1. Where am I now (skills, work habits, mindset)?
2. Where do I want to go (career goals)?
3. What skills or mindset shifts do I need to get there?
4. One action I'll take this month.

Trainees can share in pairs or with the group.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Conclude by affirming that online freelancing is not an end point but a flexible platform for future success. Whether trainees aim for job security, independence, or impact, adopting a growth mindset will help them navigate each step. Reinforce that there's no single 'right' path—celebrate different aspirations, including those centred on autonomy, impact, or stability, which may resonate more with women.

Session 5: Gig Talk

This is a suggested structure for organising a Gig Talk session, where an experienced freelancer shares practical insights with trainees. You can organise one or two of these sessions as part of your training programme to inspire and inform your group.

WELCOME AND SET-UP (5 min)

Introduce the guest speaker and outline the objectives of the session.

GUEST TALK (15 min)

The speaker shares their journey, how they built a competitive profile, key lessons, challenges, and strategies.

Q&A SESSION (15 min)

Trainees ask questions about platform use, pricing, negotiation, red flags, etc.

PRACTICAL TIPS RECAP (5 min)

Ask the guest speaker to summarise the top 3 profile-building or proposal-writing tips.

REFLECTION (5 min)

Ask trainees to write down one insight or action they'll apply to their own profiles.

Module 5: Decent and Fair Working Conditions

Objective

To understand the rights and protections for online freelancers under labour law and what decent and fair working conditions mean. Trainees will get familiar with the Fairwork project, which promotes fairer work for digital platform workers.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, trainees will be able to:

- Define decent work and identify its key indicators, such as fair pay, transparency, and decent working conditions.
- Explain the five principles of the Fairwork project that guide fair treatment of freelancers.
- Research and know the minimum wage in their country.
- Identify common challenges freelancers face regarding payment and apply strategies to address them.
- Describe labour laws relevant to online freelancers in their country.

Module Outline

Session Topic	Activities	Materials Needed	Duration
Introduction to Decent and Fair Working Conditions	Brainstorm decent work conditions; watch a Fairwork video; discuss key indicators and five Fairwork principles; group scenario work; session summary	Paper and pens (or whiteboard in online sessions), projector (for videos in offline sessions)	65 min
Mindfulness Break	Short mindfulness or stretch break	None	10 min
Fair Compensation and Payment Practices	List payment challenges; discuss unpaid work and wage theft; share tips for negotiating pay; gather trainee feedback; session summary	Paper and pens	55 min
Total Duration			2 h 10 min

Table A.6: Outline of Module 5: Decent and Fair Working Conditions

Session 1: Introduction to Decent and Fair Working Conditions

CONNECT (5 min)

Start with a brainstorming activity: Ask trainees to list what they consider decent and fair working conditions for online freelancers. Examples could include fair pay, clear contracts, safe work environments, timely payments and the ability to raise concerns.



Prompt trainees to include gender-equal pay, protection from harassment, and inclusive language in their definitions of decent work.

RELATE (10 min)

Show the video  [How fair are freelance and remote work platforms?](#) by Fairwork. This introduces real-world working conditions on digital platforms and sets the stage for deeper discussion.

LEARN (20 min)

Discuss the key indicators of decent work:

- Fair pay that reflects the true value of work.
- Transparent terms and conditions.
- Safe, healthy, and reasonable working conditions.
- Support and mechanisms to resolve disputes.
- Equal opportunities and treatment regardless of gender or background.



Stress how women, especially in male-dominated sectors, may face barriers like lower rates, biased hiring, or safety concerns.

Introduce the Fairwork project, which evaluates platforms based on fairness principles and advocates for better treatment of digital workers worldwide. The five Fairwork principles are:

- **Fair Pay:** Workers should earn at least the local minimum wage after costs.
- **Fair Conditions:** Work conditions must not expose workers to unnecessary risks or hardship.
- **Fair Contracts:** Contract terms should be clear, accessible, and transparent.
- **Fair Management:** Platforms should provide due process and mechanisms for workers to contest decisions.
- **Fair Representation:** Workers should be able to organise and voice their concerns.

Trainees can explore platform rankings on the Fairwork website to see how platforms score against these principles.



Include country-specific data or headlines related to labour laws for freelancers, such as recent policy updates, minimum wage laws, or protections under the gig economy.



I learnt about clear contracts, intellectual property, work-life balance and recognition of freelancers as professionals.

Evans Kofi

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, MJ Group Ltd., Ghana



REFLECT (20 min)

Divide trainees into small groups and provide each group with a scenario describing common freelancer challenges. Encourage trainees to reflect on how they would feel in these situations, and what strategies could help overcome them. Invite empathy-based discussion, especially around gender-related dynamics.

- **Scenario 1 (Gender Pay Gap):** A female data entry freelancer finds out a male peer is charging nearly double for the same kind of work. She realises she's hesitant to raise her rates, fearing she might lose clients.
Discussion prompt: Why do you think this happens? How can she assert her value and negotiate fairly?
- **Scenario 2 (Undervaluing Work):** A survey-filling freelancer completes all assigned tasks accurately and on time. When she asks for her payment, the client claims the work wasn't "high quality enough" and offers half the agreed amount.
Discussion prompt: What could she do differently next time? What systems or platforms can protect her from such situations?
- **Scenario 3 (Wage Theft):** A data labeller works on a long job with clear instructions. After delivery, the client deletes their profile and disappears without paying.
Discussion prompt: How can freelancers reduce the risk of this happening? What support systems or community strategies might help?

Groups identify issues and suggest strategies to handle these, such as negotiating better, ensuring contracts, or using platform dispute processes (like Upwork's resolution centre).

SUMMARISE (10 min)

Summarise the key points of decent work, highlighting the importance of fair pay, clear contracts, and support mechanisms. Reiterate that fairness includes addressing systemic gender bias and ensuring women feel empowered to negotiate and report unfair treatment. Emphasise that while labour protections for freelancers are still developing, awareness of these principles and fair practices helps protect their rights.

Session 2: Fair Compensation and Payment Practices

CONNECT (10 min)

Facilitate a discussion listing payment challenges freelancers commonly face:

- Competing with low-priced freelancers.
- Difficulty estimating correct pricing.
- Fraud or wage theft by clients.
- Hidden fees, such as platform commissions, currency conversion costs, or internet expenses.



Ask whether women face specific pricing challenges—like feeling less confident to negotiate—or if they’ve seen gender-based underbidding.

LEARN (20 min)

Explain unpaid working time—time spent on unpaid tasks like applying for jobs or maintaining profiles. Discuss wage theft, which includes non-payment, late payments, or underpayments. Reference definitions and prevalence from trusted sources like WageIndicator.

Highlight that women may experience additional unpaid labour (e.g., emotional labour, over-delivering to prove worth). Normalise charging fairly for all professional input.

Offer practical tips for freelancers:

- Always discuss and confirm payment terms upfront and in writing.
- Negotiate confidently for what you’re worth—don’t let gender bias influence pay.
- Stay informed about your country’s minimum wage (e.g., WageIndicator’s database).
- Understand local taxation rules for freelancers.
- Use platform rating systems and freelancer communities to screen clients.

REFLECT (30 min)

Collect feedback on the training experience, and confidence level through questions, such as:

- Rate the training and your confidence applying it (scale 1–10).
- List key insights and skills you gained.

- Describe how you plan to apply what you learnt.
- Do you feel confident asserting your value and negotiating fair compensation regardless of gender? Why or why not?
- Are there any cultural or personal barriers that make this more difficult for you?
- Request any additional support or topics of interest for future training.

SUMMARISE (5 min)

Recap the main payment challenges and reinforce key strategies for ensuring fair compensation, such as clear communication and awareness of legal protections and minimum wages. Reinforce that knowing one's worth includes recognising—and pushing back against—any gender bias that undervalues one's work.



Before, I didn't have the full knowledge of the power of [...] the gig economy [...], but [...] now I am aware of the rights of an online worker and how to navigate [...] my activities as a gig worker.

Peter Rawlings

Trainee, *Online Freelancer Training*, Digital Opportunity Trust, Kenya



Appendix 2: The Living Tariff Tool



Gig workers may find it difficult to accurately assess their wages due to a lack of knowledge and access to reliable tools. This challenge is particularly pronounced for those in location-based sectors, where hidden and indirect costs, such as long waiting times for taxi drivers, last-minute cancellations, or non-payment by clients for additional tasks, often go unaccounted for.

This is where the concept of a **Living Tariff** becomes essential.

Since 2014, **WageIndicator** has been developing its **Living Wage** and **Living Income** benchmarks, supported by a comprehensive cost-of-living database covering over 164 countries. The Living Wage model assumes a “normal” working week, helping to ensure that workers do not rely on excessive overtime or multiple jobs to make ends meet.

To better support gig workers, particularly those providing low-skilled, low-complexity location-based and online services, **GIZ** has partnered with the **WageIndicator Foundation** to develop a web-based **Living Tariff Tool**, grounded in the Living Tariff concept.

About the Living Tariff Tool

The Living Tariff Tool builds on WageIndicator’s methodology for calculating a Living Tariff, using its Living Wage database and factoring in variable costs. These include additional allowances, such as laptops and high-speed internet for online freelancers; mobile phones and extra data for location-based workers; work-related expenses like vehicles, fuel, and maintenance for riders and couriers; as well as waiting time and time spent acquiring paid gigs.

Currently in its prototype phase, the tool is being tested in **Pakistan, Indonesia, and Kenya**. Virtual consultations are being conducted in these countries to gather feedback on the concept. Representatives from employer associations, trade unions, labour platforms, and, most importantly, gig workers themselves are participating in these testing workshops.

Try the tool here: [Living Tariff Tool - Calculate your tariffs - WageIndicator.org.](https://www.wageindicator.org/living-tariff-tool)

Appendix 3: Fairwork Principles



Fairwork is a research project that aims to establish and measure fair standards for the future of work. A key focus of the project is assessing working conditions in the platform economy, using a framework based on five principles of fair platform work.

These five principles were developed through an extensive literature review on job quality, stakeholder meetings in Geneva (involving platform operators, policymakers, trade unions, and academics), and in-country consultations with local stakeholders.

Principle 1. Fair Pay	Workers, irrespective of their employment classification, should earn a decent income in their home jurisdiction after taking account of work-related costs and active hours worked. They should be paid on time, and for all work completed.
Principle 2. Fair Conditions	Platforms should have policies in place to protect workers from foundational risks arising from the processes of work and should take proactive measures to protect and promote the health and safety of workers.
Principle 3. Fair Contracts	Terms and conditions should be transparent, concise, and always accessible to workers. The party contracting with the worker must be subject to local law and must be identified in the contract. Workers are notified of proposed changes in a reasonable timeframe before changes come into effect. The contract is free of clauses, which unreasonably exclude liability on the part of the platform, and which prevent workers from seeking redress for grievances. Contracts should be consistent with the terms of workers' engagement on the platform.
Principle 4. Fair Management	There should be a documented due process for decisions affecting workers. Workers must have the ability to appeal decisions affecting them, such as disciplinary actions and deactivation, and be informed of the reasons behind those decisions. The use of algorithms is transparent and results in equitable outcomes for workers. There should be an identifiable and documented policy that ensures equity in the way workers are managed on a platform (for example, in the hiring, disciplining, or firing of workers).
Principle 5. Fair Representation	Platforms should provide a documented process through which worker voice can be expressed. Irrespective of their employment classification, workers have the right to organise in collective bodies, and platforms should be prepared to cooperate and negotiate with them. These five principles are applicable to all types of work, regardless of whether workers are classified as employees or independent contractors and regardless of where and how they work.

Table A.7: Fairwork Principles

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We learnt immensely on the way and encouraged by the response, have consolidated the lessons into these Replication Toolkits. We wish to make available practical knowledge and tools for internal and external implementation agencies interested in mentorship and peer-learning as a tool.

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