

Verraki Academy

A Blueprint for Bridging Africa's Digital Talent Gap



AUGUST 2025

Key Takeaways

01

Digital skill gap has become a major theme globally, contributing to missed opportunities, reduced innovation, social inequality, and slow economic growth in some economies. The World Bank estimates that by 2030, 35-45% of jobs in Nigeria will require digital skills.

02

There is a disconnect that exists between what educational institutions teach and the requirements of the business world. New fields such as AI, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data science, are emerging rapidly. However, tech education and trainings in Nigeria have been too slow to adapt.

03

As Nigeria continues to produce thousands of graduates annually, many need more hands-on skills in new technology and valid application to businesses to secure roles in rapidly evolving fields.

04

At Verraki, we continue to deliver advisory support, executive expertise, and strategic industry partnerships to respected institutions, driving capacity building and sustainable impact.

05

As part of our integrated approach, Verraki took a bold step in 2024 with the launch of the Verraki Academy, our platform for shaping the next generation of African problem-solvers. The Academy represents a scalable model for inclusive growth, one that can be replicated to help drive productivity and innovation across the continent.

06

We are motivated by the conviction that unlocking the continent's vast potential depends on reimagining how people acquire knowledge, skills, and values to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Technology is rapidly transforming the global workforce, and employers around the world are seeking talent with increasingly advanced digital skills. However, the supply of tech talent has not kept pace with demand, creating a widening skills gap in many sectors. Digital skill gap has become a major theme globally, contributing to missed opportunities, reduced innovation, social inequality, and slow economic growth in some economies. However, while the importance of digital skills has been recognised, there has been less focus on developing these capabilities across Africa, where large segments of the population remain digitally excluded.

Africa has the world's youngest population, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africans under the age of 30. Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries are facing a critical shortage of digital skills, jeopardising their ability to meet the growing demand for digital competencies which is expected to surge in the near term. To meet this demand on the continent, [650](#) million workers would need to be trained or retrained in digital skills by 2030. This creates an urgent need for industry-aligned digital upskilling to unlock both private sector growth and broader economic resilience.

The World Bank estimates that by 2030, [35-45%](#) of jobs in Nigeria will require digital skills, a trend mirrored across Sub-Saharan Africa. This underscores the urgent need for public and private sector to invest in digital literacy and training programs to equip the current and future workforce for the evolving job market. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), increase in the share of workers with digital skills can lead to higher overall labour productivity.

However, while industries are evolving with AI, digitisation, and automation, many schools are still teaching 20th-century concepts to 21st-century learners, this disconnect is widening the digital skills gap, leaving young people unprepared for the demands of the modern workforce. Also, about [87](#) percent of African business leaders identified digital skills development as a priority area in need of further investment which shows a clear demand for urgent action to bridge the digital talent gap and drive sustainable growth.

The cost of ignoring the growing digital skill gap in Nigeria is immense. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) warns that automation could put [40%](#) of jobs in sub-Saharan Africa at risk, particularly in labour-intensive sectors. Recognising the stakes, government-led initiatives like the 3 million Technical Talent (3MTT) programme, launched in late 2023 with the aim to train three million Nigerians in high-demand tech fields by 2027 is a step in the right direction. But

the ticking clock demands swift expansion of scalable, industry-aligned training to convert Nigeria's youthful demographic into productive digital professionals.

What is driving the tech talent gap in Nigeria?

Despite the evident potential of Nigeria's youth and the growing demand for digital talent, several systemic and structural issues continue to widen the skills gap, and they are:

1. Educational/Skill Mismatch

A disconnect exists between what educational institutions teach and what is needed in the business world. While Nigeria produces thousands of graduates annually in tech related courses, many need more hands-on skills to secure roles in rapidly evolving fields like machine learning, artificial intelligence, and mobile app development etc. According to a GetBundi survey, more than 85% of Nigerian graduates lack the digital skills needed to thrive in today's workforce, underscoring a critical supply–demand mismatch in tech education.

2. Weak Tech Training & Investment

Formal ICT training in Nigeria remains limited and underfunded. Despite the tech sector's rapid growth, local training infrastructure has not kept pace. The World Economic Forum competitiveness index ranks Nigeria 122nd/140 countries with key pillars such as availability of latest technology, firm-level technology absorption among others despite these being part of the key pillars of the country's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy 2020-2030. To this end many young Nigerians resort to informal training on YouTube or expensive overseas/ online courses to get the required skills they need.

3. Talent Migration (“Brain Drain”)

About 80% of Nigerian companies expect to experience a technology skill gap due to the brain drain of their workforce, who are seeking greener pastures in developed nations. A report by [techpoint](#) cites limited local opportunities, lack of mentorship and infrastructure as push factors. The outflow of engineers or IT managers to overseas jobs or remote startups abroad strains an already tight labour market. This talent loss depletes the domestic skills pool, increases recruitment costs, and slows innovation.

4. Infrastructure Deficits

Widespread gaps in power and internet connectivity hinders skill development and remote work. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission, Nigeria's internet penetration has grown to [48.8%](#) in 2025, from 40% in 2020, leaving nearly half the population offline. Lack of electricity also poses a challenge as just [53%](#) of Nigerian households have access to electricity with a stark urban-rural divide in electricity access. While

82.2% of urban households have access to power, only 40.4% of rural households are connected. These gaps make self-learning and tech business operations difficult.

5. Rapid Digital-Economy Growth

Nigeria's expanding tech sector and economy demand far more digital skills than currently supplied. By 2030 an estimated [35-45%](#) of Nigerian jobs will require digital skills, reflecting trends like mobile internet growth and booming ICT investment. Yet only a [fraction](#) of existing workers is trained in coding, AI, data analytics among others. In other words, demand for digital skills is skyrocketing while supply of qualified talent lags, widening the gap. According to Oxford Insights AI Readiness Index, Nigeria ranks 96th/189 countries covering government, technology, data and infrastructure readiness for digital economy growth. This ranking highlights the need to do a lot more and invest further to enable the country take advantage of the global digital economy.

Why Nigeria's approach to bridging the talent gap remains sub-optimal?

Despite intervention programs by both the private and public sectors and a large youth population, Nigeria's current approach is sub-optimal because it focuses on scale without fixing the systemic weaknesses. The five principal reasons this approach is less optimal are:

1. Curriculum-to-industry disconnect: Universities still teach theory, with limited opportunities for applied learning. Most tech related degree programmes like computer science and engineering remain heavily theoretical with limited industry collaboration. There continues to be a mismatch between graduates' competencies, and the work demands of digital roles. This may be due to the lack of continuous update and refinement to the education curriculum to accommodate the skills and competencies demanded by today's digital and innovation-driven economy.

2. Chronic underfunding of tertiary education: Public tertiary institutions face tight budgets that constrain lab upgrades and hiring of qualified instructors. Underfunding lowers the quality and frequency of continuous professional development for lecturers, which in turn reduces graduate employability.

3. Instructor shortages and retention problems: Qualified technical lecturers are scarce and, where available, they often move to better-paying private roles or overseas employment. This talent flight has reduced institutional capacity to deliver hands-on instruction, mentorship and up-to-date technology course content.

4. Infrastructure and geographical access gaps:

Infrastructure and Geographical access gaps: Effective digital training depends on reliable electricity, affordable high-speed internet, and proximity to innovation hubs. Yet Nigeria's infrastructure gaps create a deep urban–rural divide. Rural broadband penetration remains far low, and most innovation hubs are clustered in cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt and Abuja. This leaves millions in other communities without the resources or physical access to acquire emerging tech skills, thereby constraining further their inclusion into the national talent pipeline.

5. High cost of learning: High costs of quality training put digital skills development out of reach for many. A standard coding bootcamp in Nigeria costs between ₦200,000 and ₦1 million, while free resources often require stable internet and personal devices that low-income learners cannot afford. This economic constrain widens the socio-economic inequality tied to digital opportunity.

To produce a new generation of tech innovators capable of driving economic transformation, Nigeria's education system must undergo a fundamental shift driven by a strong collaboration between academic institutions and the private sector which is essential to ensure that learning outcomes align with real-world needs. By co-developing curricula, offering internships, and exposing students to entrepreneurial thinking, Nigeria can build a pipeline of homegrown tech talent who are not just job seekers, but job creators and solution builders for critical sectors of the economy. Also, there is a pressing need for substantial, targeted investment in digital infrastructure to create opportunities for young people to acquire relevant skills and apply them in practical, real-world settings.

Countries like Germany and China have successfully reskilled their workforce and reduced unemployment by strengthening the academic and private sector collaboration, a model that Nigeria is yet to fully adopt. While pockets of progress exist, especially through private-led initiatives, Nigeria's efforts remain somewhat fragmented and reactive rather than delivering sustainable, high-quality outcomes. Without tackling root causes, the country risks producing large numbers of graduates who remain underprepared for the demands of the digital economy.

The result is a persistent reliance on foreign expertise, a widening urban–rural digital divide, and a missed opportunity to harness the full economic potential of our youthful population. A deliberate, integrated approach will be essential to move from incremental improvements to transformative change.

Verraki's Integrated Approach to bridging the tech talent gap

Without equitable access to structured and high-quality training, Nigeria continues to risk widening its digital divide and excluding millions of young people from participating meaningfully in the tech-driven economy. Verraki has taken a step to bridge this gap by providing inclusive, industry-relevant training programs that combine practical learning, mentorship, and access to digital tools at no cost to participants. At Verraki, we believe that education is the cornerstone of Africa's transformation. We are motivated by the conviction that unlocking the continent's vast potential depends on reimagining how people acquire knowledge, skills, and values to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

We envision a Nigeria where:

01	Every young person, regardless of background, can access world class learning opportunities that prepare them for local and global impact.
02	Our education system produces innovators, problem solvers, and ethical leaders who shape industries and drive inclusive growth.
03	Digital technology, entrepreneurship, and values based leadership converge to make Nigeria a talent exporter, a nation that not only meets its domestic demand for skills but powers economies beyond its borders.

Rather than build traditional classrooms or provide internship programs among others, we are designing systems and partnerships that equip people with the right mindset, skillset, and toolset to thrive. From the inside out, we are integrating our support for education reform into our core consulting, technology, and venture operations. Our work cuts across the following.

01 Advisory Support for Schools and Universities

We have continued to partner with respected institutions like University of Ibadan (UI), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), and Corona Schools, helping them become more agile, accountable, and aligned with the demands of a modern economy.

02 Executive Expertise and Leadership Engagement

We contribute as mentors, board members, speakers, and champions of academic excellence. Verraki actively supports institutions such as Nigerian University of Technology and Management (NUTM), Fountain University, Lagos Business School (LBS), and legacy schools like Queen's College and King's College. We help embed values, innovation, and leadership thinking in these institutions.

03 Strategic Industry Partnerships for Capability Building

To bridge the existing gap between learning and the world of work, we have partnered with organisations driving real change:

- ✦ **Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN):** delivering entrepreneurship and financial literacy programmes that build future business leaders.
- ✦ **Women in Management, Business & Public Service (WIMBIZ):** supporting leadership development among young women and emerging professionals.

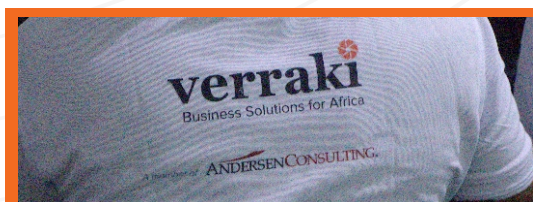
These collaborations inspire young minds with the confidence, skills, and stories that power societal progress.

04 Backing ventures to solve educational challenges

Through Verraki Ventures, we invest in and nurture ed-tech innovators who are transforming access, financing, and delivery of education. They include the following:

- 01 Skilladder**
They offer real-time skills intelligence and workforce insights.
- 02 Flexit**
They provide flexible financing solutions that remove barriers to learning.
- 03 Craydel**
They help students navigate and choose the right higher education pathways.
- 04 Primerli**
They reshape corporate learning through micro-content and knowledge-on-demand.

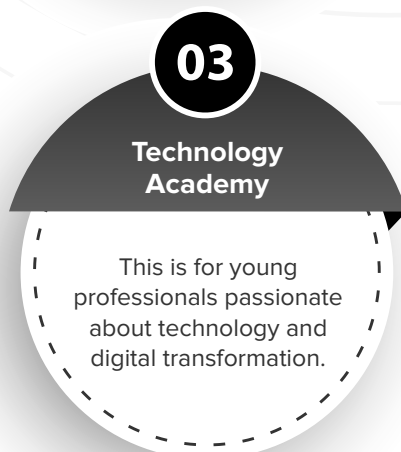
We believe startups play a critical role in reimagining how Africans access, fund, and experience learning and we are betting on those that do.



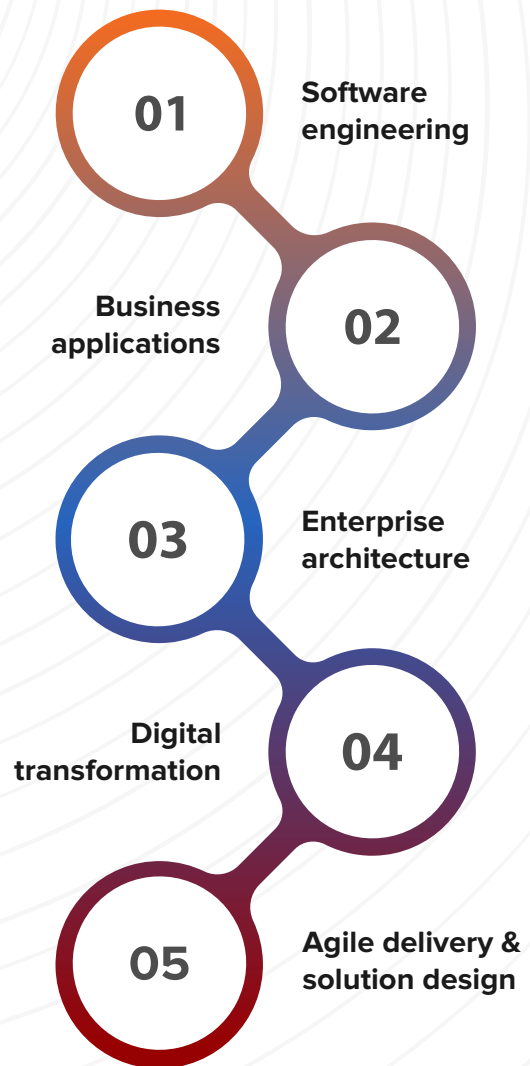
05 The Verraki Academy program

In 2024, Verraki took a bold step with the launch of the Verraki Academy, our platform for shaping the next generation of African problem-solvers. The Academy is not a school, it is a curated, immersive experience built around real-world work, project-based learning, coaching, and systems thinking. It serves as our in-house accelerator for developing purposeful, high-performance talent.

The Academy is being rolled out in alignment with our three core service offerings:



The Technology Academy, our pilot stream, welcomed its first cohort in May 2025. It is specially designed to close the experience gap between technical knowledge and employability, with intensive training in:



Participants will be given the opportunity to work on live projects, receive mentorship from Verraki's teams, and get trainings in leadership, communication, and client management, graduating not just job-ready, but impact-driven at no cost to them.

Why does the Verraki Academy Matters?

The Verraki Academy matters because it is purpose-built to produce high-performing talent that Africa urgently needs. It helps to close the gap between graduation and workplace readiness by equipping participants with both technical expertise and the leadership, communication, and client management skills essential for real-world success. The Academy moves beyond conventional technical training to deliver a holistic development experience that prepares talent to make an immediate impact in the corporate world. At Verraki, we are not just observing the challenge; we are actively building systems where education translates to employability, learning fuels

innovation, and knowledge opens doors to opportunity.

Conclusion

Nigeria's digital talent gap reflects a mismatch between educational outputs and the rapidly evolving needs of a tech-driven economy. Despite having a youthful population, the country struggles with outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of hands-on, industry-aligned training. The result is a generation of graduates who lack the digital skills and workplace readiness to compete locally and globally. Migration of skilled talent, poor mentorship structures, unequal access to learning resources, and the growing digital divide further compound this problem, threatening both private sector innovation and national economic growth. Without urgent reforms, Nigeria risks being left behind in the global digital transformation.

Addressing this challenge requires a fundamental shift in the education system driven by strong collaboration between academic institutions and the private sector to ensure that learning outcomes align with real-world needs. Equally critical is substantial, targeted investment in digital infrastructure to create opportunities for young people to gain relevant skills and apply them in practical, real-world contexts.

Verraki recognises this gap and is contributing to addressing it through a redesigned, integrated approach to talent development. By combining technical training with mentorship, leadership coaching, and real-world application, the Verraki Academy is contributing to bridging the gap between academic theory and professional practice. This is more than just a skills bootcamp, it is a platform for cultivating well-rounded, future-ready talent. Verraki's model empowers individuals not just with tools and credentials, but with the mindset, confidence, and competencies to thrive in a fast-changing world. This holistic model will help to build a resilient digital workforce and help to unlock potentials in Africa.

For more details about Verraki Academy, please send an email to info@verraki.com.



Pictures above were from the Academy's Launch. Held on Thursday 10th of July, 2025.

Authors



Niyi Tayo
Senior Partner, Technology
niyi.tayo@verraki.com

Niyi Tayo has over 30 years' experience architecting and delivering Business and Technology Transformation initiatives across several industries in several countries both in Verraki and Accenture. His functional experience areas include enterprise and technology transformation, enterprise architecture, asset performance management, IT project/program management, process innovation, solution architecting, quality assurance management, capital project management, amongst others. He currently leads the Technology service line, Oil and Gas and Telecommunications industries for Verraki Partners. Prior to consulting, he was an Operations Engineer for an Oil Service and Consultancy company. He holds an MBA from the University of Hull, UK and a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Obafemi Awolowo University.



Chigozie Muogbo
Research Lead
chigozie.muogbo@verraki.com

Chigozie leads the Research and Intelligence function at Verraki. He is an economist and CBAP-certified business analyst with over a decade of experience in research, investment management and business process reengineering. He holds a BSc in Economics (first class honours) from Obafemi Awolowo University, an MPhil in Development Finance (distinction) from University of Stellenbosch Business School and a Certificate in Design Thinking and Innovation from Harvard Business School.



Fredrick Atseyinku Sola
Senior Research Analyst
fredrick.atseyinku@verraki.com

Fredrick is a Senior Research Analyst at Verraki. He is an economist and business strategy professional with over five years of experience in policy and market-based research that cuts across various sectors of the Nigerian economy. He has worked with reputable organisations such as the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chartered Institute of Directors Nigeria and IT Horizons contributing immensely to their growth. Fredrick holds a B.Sc. in Economics from Delta State University, and Msc in Economics from University of Lagos.



Oizamisi Balogun
Marketing and Communication Lead
oiza.balogun@verraki.com

Oiza Balogun leads Marketing and Communications at Verraki, where she shapes the firm's external narrative and executive visibility. She brings deep expertise in strategic communications, brand storytelling, and stakeholder engagement. With a strong focus on innovation and purpose, Oiza drives initiatives that position the firm as a trusted advisor in Africa's transformation journey, amplifying leadership, insights, and impact across public and private sector ecosystems.

About Verraki

Verraki is a proudly African company partnering with enterprises and governments to accelerate the development and transformation of Africa by providing business solutions designed for Africa. We build and implement technology solutions for seemingly intractable challenges, provide advisory services to drive the capacity and motivation for change, and curate innovative ventures to unlock new sources of growth across our continent.

A fusion of two words: 'Versorium' (Latin for Turn Around) and 'Meraki' (Greek word used to describe the action of doing something with soul, creativity, pouring oneself into a task), Verraki aptly captures the essence of our company; to turn around African enterprises and governments via smart, future-focused solutions and business insights, new growth opportunities, helping to unleash their potential, turnaround their performance and achieve the seemingly impossible, with the sole goal of creating a better future for Africa.

We are committed to enabling the African (start-up) story by supporting high-impact socially-conscious entrepreneurs and catalysing self-sustaining enterprises and governments within the continent to deliver affordable services across critical sectors.

Our Technology Advisory Services

In recent years, the role of technology innovation on societal and organisational transformation has become more pronounced, leading to a rising demand for digital-led transformative services. To compete in the digital age, organisations must embrace new technologies to realise untapped digital opportunities. Verraki Technology brings on-board the best-in-class advisors in the industry to help clients resolve their most critical information and technology challenges, ensuring agility and effectiveness while delivering a broad range of innovative, next-generation IT solutions and professional services.

Verraki's Technology practice advises CIOs and other CxOs in developing and executing technology solutions that drive productivity, business growth, and optimisation while establishing effective controls around risk and sensitive data. We provide extensive technology services across application, advisory and solution layers, collaborating with our partners to realise game-changing performance levels for clients and improve the value that IT brings to the business.

Important Disclaimer

Verraki Insights are produced based on publicly available information which the research analyst(s) consider credible and are meant for general information purposes only. Whilst reasonable care has been taken in preparing this report, no responsibility or liability is accepted either by Verraki, its officers or any of its employees for any error of fact or opinion expressed herein. Any forecasts, estimates and opinions set forth in this report constitute the analyst(s) position as at the date and time of this report and may not necessarily be so after the report date and time, as they are subject to change without notice. This document may make descriptive reference to trademarks that may be owned by others. The use of such trademarks herein is not an assertion of ownership of such trademarks by Verraki and is not intended to represent or imply the existence of an association between Verraki and the lawful owners of such trademarks.