

Mapping how ICT adoption is transforming employment in Namibia: Trends and Statistics, 2016–2025

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What the statistics tell us about the future of work

NSA Mandate

LEGAL FOUNDATION

Established under the Statistics Act No. 9 of 2011

NATIONAL AUTHORITY

Serves as the Statistical Authority of the State

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Collects, produces, analyses and disseminates official statistics

STATISTICAL COVERAGE

Economic, demographic, social and spatial statistics

Namibia's Labour Market and Poverty Context

Namibia enters the digital transformation with a significant employment and livelihood challenge.

36.9%

Unemployment rate

2023

44.1%

Youth unemployment
rate

2023

54.8%

Unemployment &
potential labour force

2023

61.4%

Youth: unemployment &
potential labour force

2023

17.4%

Poverty rate

2015/16

The challenge

The challenge is not only to expand employment, but to create pathways to productive work, income and improved livelihoods.

Where does ICT fit into this challenge?

Sources: Namibia Statistics Agency, 2023 Population and Housing Census – Labour Force Report; NHIES 2015/16.

How has the labour market changed?

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

34.0% → 33.4% → 36.9%

EMPLOYED (%)

66.0% → 66.6% → 63.1%

2016

2018

2023

WHERE ARE PEOPLE WORKING?

TOP OCCUPATIONS (%)

1. Elementary occupations	2016: 30.5	2023: 21.8
2. Agricultural / related occupations	2016: 11.2	2023: 9.9
3. Service / sales occupations	2016: 13.5	2023: 13.4
4. Craft / related trades	2016: 12.7	2023: 11.7
5. Professionals / technicians	2016: 14.3	2023: 21.7

TOP INDUSTRIES (%)

1. Agriculture, forestry & fisheries	2016: 20.1	2023: 16.1
2. Wholesale & retail trade	2016: 9.7	2023: 10.0
3. Manufacturing	2016: 6.6	2023: 9.8
4. Administrative & support services	2016: 6.0	2023: 9.3
5. Private household activities	2016: 8.7	2023: 7.9

The structure of employment provides an important starting point for understanding how changing technologies, skills and ways of working may reshape employment opportunities

Information & communication

2016 - 5,973 (0.9 %)

2023 - 8,164 (1.5%)

How does employment affect livelihoods?

Employment is an important pathway through which households generate income and improve their livelihoods.



Poverty (NHIES 2015/16)



17.4%
Poor

Proportion of the population living below the upper-bound poverty line

10.7%

Severely poor

Proportion of the population living well below the upper-bound poverty line

Income inequality (NHIES 2015/16)



0.575

Gini coefficient

Indicates a high level of income inequality in Namibia

The digital transformation is taking place against a backdrop of significant livelihood, inequality and employment challenges.

Source: Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES) 2015/16.

ICT Adoption in Namibia: 2016 vs 2023

Comparable indicators show how digital access and participation have evolved.

2016 — NIDS

19.4%

Internet use / browsing



28.0%

Smartphone



19.1%

Computer



2023 — PHC

28.3%

Internet use / browsing

28.5%

Smartphone

19.6%

Computer

Namibia's digital landscape has expanded significantly between 2016 and 2023, particularly in internet use. Smartphone and computer ownership also increased slightly, creating new pathways for digital participation and economic opportunity.

Sources: Namibia Statistics Agency, Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey (NIDS) 2016; 2023 Population and Housing Census.

Digital Financial Inclusion: From Access to Participation

NFIS shows expanding financial inclusion and a gradual shift towards digital channels for receiving income.

Financial inclusion

78.0%

2017 Financially
included

86.0%

2025 Financially
included

22.0%

2017 Financially
excluded

14.0%

2025 Financially
excluded

Banked population

67.9% → 75.6%

2017 →
2025

How are people receiving their main income?

Percentage of income earners

Cash in hand

2017



62.5%

2025



48.9%

Bank account

2017



37.1%

2025



43.5%

Mobile money /
wallet

2017



1.4%

2025



6.4%

As digital financial channels expand, the way Namibians receive and manage income is changing,
creating new pathways for participation in the digital economy.

Source: Namibia Financial Inclusion Survey (NFIS) 2017 and 2025, Namibia Statistics Agency.

From ICT Adoption to Employment Opportunities

ICT can reshape how people find work, perform tasks, access markets and receive income.



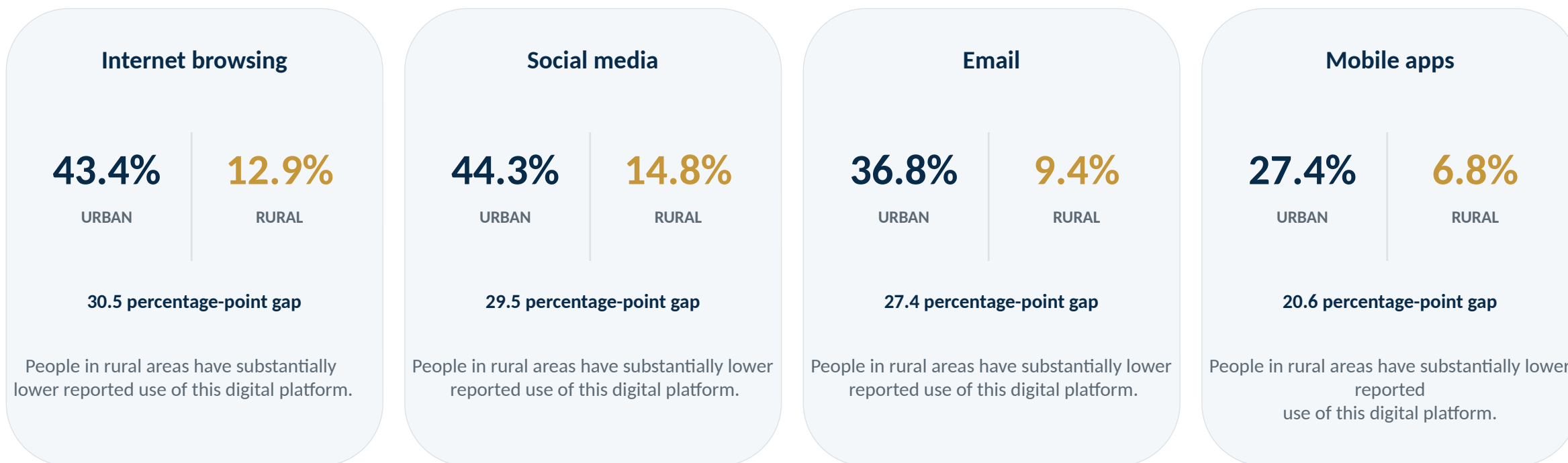
KEY MESSAGE

ICT is not only about creating ICT jobs, but it can also change how opportunities are accessed and how work is organized across the wider economy.

But access to digital opportunities is not equal. Who is being left behind?

Digital Inclusion: Who Is Being Left Behind?

The digital divide remains substantial between urban and rural Namibia.



Inclusive digital growth requires more than connectivity: people also need the skills, devices, services and opportunities to participate.

The challenge is therefore not simply digital adoption, but equitable participation in the changing economy.

How ICT Is Reshaping the Employment Landscape

The transformation extends beyond ICT jobs to how people access, perform and participate in work.



ICT is reshaping employment beyond the creation of ICT jobs, changing how people access work, perform tasks, create income and participate in the economy.

A Namibian Case: The Digital Transformation of the 2023 Census

Digitalization changed how a major national operation was organized, delivered and staffed.



ICT can reshape employment by changing work processes and creating demand for new skills and technology-related roles.

Conclusion



1. Employment remains a major challenge

Unemployment, particularly among young people, remains high, limiting income opportunities and contributing to poverty.



2. Digital participation is expanding

More Namibians are accessing the internet, owning digital devices and using formal financial services, creating new possibilities for economic participation.



3. Access is unequal

Significant differences by region, location, gender, age and socio-economic status highlight the risk of leaving some Namibians behind in the digital economy.



4. Skills and opportunities matter

Digital access must be accompanied by relevant skills, quality education, infrastructure and enabling environments to translate digital participation into more and better jobs, income and improved livelihoods.



A reflection on the importance of data, ICT and measurement.

Without data, we cannot target the problem. Without ICT, we may miss the opportunity. Without measurement, we cannot prove the impact.

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