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**Timeline**

2023

**Study Status**

In Progress

**Study Type**

Randomized Evaluation

**Sample Size**

711 program applicants

# Can an Online Job Training Program Increase Digital Skills and Employment Outcomes for Young People in El Salvador?



E-Lancers pilot program in El Salvador © Secretariat of Innovation, Government of El Salvador 2020

**In collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank, Wisar.pro, and the Ministry of Economy of El Salvador, researchers are conducting a randomized evaluation to measure the impact of an online job training program on digital skills development and employment outcomes for young people. IPA provided technical assistance in the follow-up phone survey data collection activities.**

As of 2021, remote work platforms increased by five times since 2011, leading to significant self-employment opportunities for populations facing traditional labor exclusion such as young people.<sup>1</sup> In El Salvador, young people aged 16 to 29 contend with low labor market participation and a 13.4 percent unemployment rate, which is three times higher than the unemployment rate for people aged 25 to 59. In addition, 26.4 percent of this age group are not in education, employment, or training, which exceeds the regional average.<sup>2</sup> To boost the country's digital economy—and by extension increase work opportunities for young people—the government launched the National Digital Agenda 2020-2030. However, evidence suggests that one of the barriers to digital transformation is an insufficient supply of people who are competent in digital skills.<sup>3</sup>

Researchers partnered with the Inter-American Development Bank, Wisar.pro, and the Ministry of Economy of El Salvador to conduct a randomized evaluation to measure the impact of an online digital training program on skills development and labor market

outcomes for young people. The program, called E-Lancers, offered a 12-week intensive training program covering topics such as profile creation in online platforms, proposal preparation, project management, client interviews, and an English course. A total of 711 eligible applicants to the E-Lancers program were randomly selected to either receive training or not receive training.

Results will be available later in 2024.

## Sources

1. ILO Press Release, "Rapid growth of digital economy calls for coherent policy response," United Nations International Labor Organization, February 23, 2021, [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_771909/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_771909/lang--en/index.htm)
2. OECD. Multi-dimensional Review of El Salvador, (Paris: 2023, OECD), [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/multi-dimensional-review-of-el-salvador\\_2f3d5e1f-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/multi-dimensional-review-of-el-salvador_2f3d5e1f-en)
3. World Bank. Digital Economy for Latin America and the Caribbean: Country Diagnostic-El Salvador. World Bank, 2022.

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## Implementing Partners



MINISTERIO  
DE ECONOMÍA

**Ministry of Economy, El Salvador**



**wisar.pro**

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## Funding Partner



**Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**