

Week of 28 September – 2 October

## AI FOR ALL GLOBAL BRIEF

### 1. GLOBAL SIGNALS — LABOR, GOVERNANCE & SOCIETY

#### **PwC Surveyed 49,000 Workers. Most of Them Are in AI's “Engine Room,” With the Least Access to Training.**

PwC's Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2026, published on September 29 and based on 49,364 workers in 48 countries, finds that AI is now part of ordinary working life: 64% of workers used it at work in the past year, and the share using generative AI every day rose from 14% to 22%.

The more important finding is how unevenly that change is spreading. PwC sorts workers into four groups. The largest, which it calls the “engine room,” makes up 56% of the workforce: people with neither scarce skills nor meaningful AI experience. They are getting less access to learning, fewer chances to experiment and little use of AI in their actual jobs. Across the whole sample, the share of workers who say they can reach the learning they need fell from 59% to 51%, and trust in top management dropped seven points. “There is a real risk that the global workforce is starting to move at different speeds,” said PwC's Peter Brown.

**Why it matters:** The divide that matters is less about who loses a job to AI than about who gets to learn it. More than half the workforce is being left to adapt on its own, which makes training the clearest opening of the moment for employers, schools, training providers and governments able to reach those workers.

Sources: [PwC, Hopes and Fears 2026](#) | [The Next Web](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- Gallup's State of the Global Workplace report, published in April, found that just 12% of workers say AI has meaningfully changed how work gets done — but employees whose managers actively champion AI are 8.7 times more likely to say it has. [\[source\]](#)

### 2. INFRASTRUCTURE & COMPUTE

#### **Selling Compute to Light Up Rural Africa: The Rockefeller Foundation Tests a New Way to Pay for Mini-Grids**

Most stories about AI and electricity in Africa run in one direction: data centers competing with households for scarce power. The Rockefeller Foundation's Emergent Grid pilot, launched last week under its Mission 300 electricity-access effort, tests the reverse. Shipping containers of computers running AI workloads are placed next to rural mini-grids and buy the surplus power those grids cannot sell locally, turning wasted electricity into revenue that keeps the grid viable.

The pilot will run at up to 10 sites in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and one more country, operated by Gridless with AI-computing partner Liquidstar, and evaluated independently by Arizona State University. The model has been tried before with bitcoin mining: at the Zengamina hydropower site in Zambia, computing income helped connect about 2,000 more people and 40 businesses within a year. Whether AI workloads can do the same at scale is what the pilot will show.

**Why it matters:** If it works, the AI boom becomes a source of finance for rural electricity instead of a competitor for it — meaning light, refrigeration and power for small businesses in villages that grid extension has never reached.

Source: [Forbes](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- The UAE is redesigning its planned 5-gigawatt AI campus in Abu Dhabi as a network of hardened sites across the country, with air defenses and underground halls, after Iranian strikes in March damaged AWS data centers in the UAE and Bahrain (Reuters, September 11). [\[source\]](#)
- Africa's AI data centers are increasingly running on gas: Tetracore Energy's \$400 million Nigerian project pairs a 20-megawatt data center with a 100-megawatt on-site gas plant, raising the risk of stranded assets if hyperscalers later move to cheaper power. [\[source\]](#)

### 3. EDUCATION & HUMAN CAPACITY

#### Education Ministers Agree AI Must Not Turn Schooling Into a Product

At UNESCO's Digital Learning Week in Paris, more than 25 education ministers and representatives adopted a joint statement that education must remain “a human right and a common good in the age of artificial intelligence.” The statement sets out eight priorities, among them protecting the development of critical thinking, strengthening teacher agency and professional autonomy, governing educational data in the public interest, building equity and inclusion into AI tools by design, and calculating the full cost of ownership before adopting AI in schools.

It also asks countries to build their own AI governance capacity, nationally and regionally, rather than leaving the terms to vendors.

**Why it matters:** For a teacher, the statement is a reference point for refusing tools that sideline professional judgment; for a ministry, the “total cost of ownership” test is a practical check before signing a contract whose recurring costs land on school budgets for years.

Source: [UNESCO](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- Abu Dhabi's Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence and the African Leadership Academy ran a two-week “AI for Africa” bootcamp in Johannesburg, taking high-school students from coding basics to machine learning, AI safety and deployed projects such as AgroFast and Farm Connect. [\[source\]](#)

### 4. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

#### AI Music Now Pays the Labels. Session Musicians Are Suing to Get a Share.

Suno has retired the models at the center of the music industry's copyright fight and launched v6, a suite trained from scratch on licensed catalogs from Warner Music Group, BMG and Believe.

From launch, a portion of Suno's revenue goes to those partners — and, in the words of its chief product officer, “those rightsholders are responsible for figuring out how to distribute that capital.” Artist-level opt-in features, where individual artists choose to take part and are paid when they do, are promised for a later phase.

That arrangement is exactly what the American Federation of Musicians is challenging. Its suit against Universal and Warner argues that licensing recordings to train AI is a “new use” under the union's contract, which would entitle the session players on those records to compensation. Briefing on the labels' motions to dismiss closed on September 11; no ruling has been issued.

**Why it matters:** Licensing settles what AI companies owe the labels; it does not settle what reaches the people who played on the recordings. For working musicians — including the many independent artists, African ones among them, distributed through companies like Believe — the next question is whether revenue shares are passed down or stop at the catalog owner.

Sources: [Music Business Worldwide](#) | [AFM v. Universal & Warner](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- Voice actors from Brazil to India are organizing against AI dubbing; Mexico has already banned its unauthorized use, and Brazil's dubbing professionals' association is pressing for similar protection (Rest of World, April). [\[source\]](#)

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## 5. REGIONAL LENS — AFRICA & THE GLOBAL SOUTH

### A Senegalese AI Expert Names the Risk Africa Faces: “Colonial AI”

Seydina Moussa Ndiaye, a member of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence and a lecturer at the Université numérique Cheikh Hamidou Kane in Dakar, argues that Africa's main AI risk is not the one dominating global debate. What he calls “colonial AI” repeats an older pattern — control of resources, control of knowledge and control of the terms of exchange — in a new medium.

He points to concrete symptoms: national AI strategies that exist on paper without the capacity to implement them, skilled people who “move out of Africa very easily,” and international partners who keep control of data flows and technical standards. The risk, in his view, is that Africa becomes a permanent consumer of systems built on other people's data and values. He is equally clear about the upside: precision health care, better farming decisions, personalized education and the preservation of African languages and culture.

**Why it matters:** For African governments signing compute and cloud deals at speed, the test he proposes is simple: does the agreement leave behind people, data and standards the country controls? For students and engineers, it is a case for building locally rather than only consuming imported tools.

Source: [Democracy Now!](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- MTN has taken a minority stake in Africa Data Hub, a joint venture led by UAE investor Tarek Al Ashram's platform, targeting 150 megawatts of AI data center capacity in South Africa and Nigeria as a first phase (announced August 27). [\[source\]](#)

## 6. OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

### A Free Online Fellowship for Young Africans Working on AI, Climate and Governance — Apply by October 16

Emerging Climate Frontiers and the Young Africans Research Academy are selecting about 25 early-career Africans for an eight-week online fellowship on AI, ethics and climate governance, running October 21 to December 15. It is open to researchers, graduate students, policy staff, civil-society practitioners, journalists, technologists, and legal and economics professionals; no technical background in AI is required.

The commitment is about five hours a week. There is no stipend; fellows receive a certificate, join the ECF–YARA alumni network and can have their policy briefs considered for publication. Applications close on October 16 at 23:59 GMT.

**Why it matters:** Climate and AI policy are being written in the same rooms, and few of the people in them are young Africans. A free, remote program with no technical entry bar is one of the lower-cost ways in for people who want to shape both.

**Sources:** [Global South Opportunities](#) | [Application form](#)

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- Fifteen AI startups led by historically disadvantaged South Africans began the Google for Startups Accelerator South Africa on September 28, each eligible for up to R1 million in non-dilutive funding. [\[source\]](#)

#### ONE SIGNAL WE ARE WATCHING

Who gets to take part. This week's stories share one question: as AI spreads, who is inside it and who is left to adapt on their own. PwC finds the largest share of the world's workers in an "engine room" with the least access to training. Session musicians are asking whether AI licensing money will reach the people who played on the records. A Dakar researcher warns that Africa risks becoming a permanent consumer of systems built elsewhere. And yet the same week offers the other half of the answer: a pilot that lets AI computing pay for electricity in villages, education ministers insisting that AI serve schooling rather than reshape it into a product, and a free fellowship that brings young Africans into the policy rooms. The signal to watch is whether these routes in grow faster than the gaps they are meant to close.

*AI for All Global Brief is a publication of Tomorrow Foundation.*