

Kenya Workforce & Talent Report 2026

The Kenyan talent pipeline: 2024 graduate output by discipline, universities and TVET capacity, English proficiency and retention.



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Executive summary

Kenya offers one of Africa's deepest and youngest talent pools. The country produced **123,928 university graduates in 2024** — up 24% on the year — alongside roughly 144,000 TVET graduates, and ranks among the continent's strongest for English proficiency.

For UK buyers, the headline is an **education surplus**: more qualified graduates than the domestic economy can absorb, which means degree-holders are available for roles that elsewhere require only secondary education — with faster training cycles and high retention. This report profiles the demographics, the graduate pipeline by discipline, the technical and vocational system, English proficiency, and the training programmes that feed the sector.

About the data: Figures are drawn from the Commission for University Education (CUE), KNBS, TVETA and EF EPI as understood for 2024–2025. Where older sources cite much larger graduate counts, this report uses the authoritative CUE figure of 123,928 for 2024.





SECTION ONE

Demographics & labour market

A young workforce within a services-led economy.

Demographics & labour market

Kenya combines a young population with a services-led economy — the conditions for a scalable talent base. Services accounted for **55.3% of GDP in 2024**, and the economy grew 4.7%.

Labour market indicators

Indicator	Value
Youth (15–34) share of population	~35%
Adult literacy (15+)	82.9%
Youth literacy (15–24)	95.7%
General unemployment	5.4% (Dec 2024)
Addressable digital talent pool	1.95 million
Minimum wage (major cities)	KES 16,113.75/month

A large youth cohort and high literacy create a continuous flow of work-ready candidates — the addressable digital talent pool is put at around 1.95 million. But the headline rates conceal the dynamic that matters most to international buyers: while general unemployment is low at 5.4%, **youth unemployment runs far higher**, and one in five young people are not in education, employment or training.

That gap between a high-output education system and a domestic economy that cannot yet absorb its graduates is the engine of Kenya's outsourcing proposition. It means employers can recruit motivated, degree-qualified people into internationally facing roles that offer stable contracts and above-average pay — which in turn explains the sector's unusually low attrition.



SECTION TWO

Graduate output & universities

2024 graduates by discipline and institution.

Graduate output & universities

Kenya produced **123,928 university graduates in 2024**, a 24% increase on the 99,829 of 2023, from a system of **78 universities**. Public chartered universities accounted for about three-quarters of the total, private chartered institutions for most of the rest.

2024 university graduates by field (selected)

Field of study	Graduates
Education	34,156
Business, administration & management	28,005
Natural sciences, maths & statistics	11,019
Arts & humanities	9,068
Health & welfare	8,886
Computing & ICT	8,627
Engineering, manufacturing & production	7,023
Law	3,117

These disciplines map directly onto outsourced functions: ICT and sciences feed software, data and technical support; business graduates feed finance and administration; engineering and law enable engineering- and legal-process outsourcing. The 28,000 business graduates and 8,600 ICT graduates a year are the raw material of the KPO segment specifically.

The system is also broadly gender-balanced — women make up close to half of graduates — and is feeding professional pipelines beyond the degree itself, from the Kenya School of Law to engineering programmes accredited under the Washington Accord, which gives Kenyan engineering qualifications international recognition.



SECTION THREE

TVET & vocational training

The technical and vocational pipeline beyond university.

TVET & vocational training

Universities are only half the story. Kenya’s technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system adds a large, practically-skilled cohort each year — the people who staff support, operations and technical roles that need applied rather than academic skills.

TVET capacity

Metric	Value
TVET institutions	2,401
Total enrolment	562,499 trainees
TVET graduates (2023)	144,027
STEM enrolment (2023)	467,317
STEM : non-STEM enrolment ratio	7 : 1

The scale is significant: more than 2,400 institutions, over 560,000 trainees enrolled and **144,027 graduates in 2023** — more than the university system produces. The heavy STEM weighting (a 7:1 ratio) means the output skews toward the technical and digital skills that BPO and ICT-enabled services actually use.

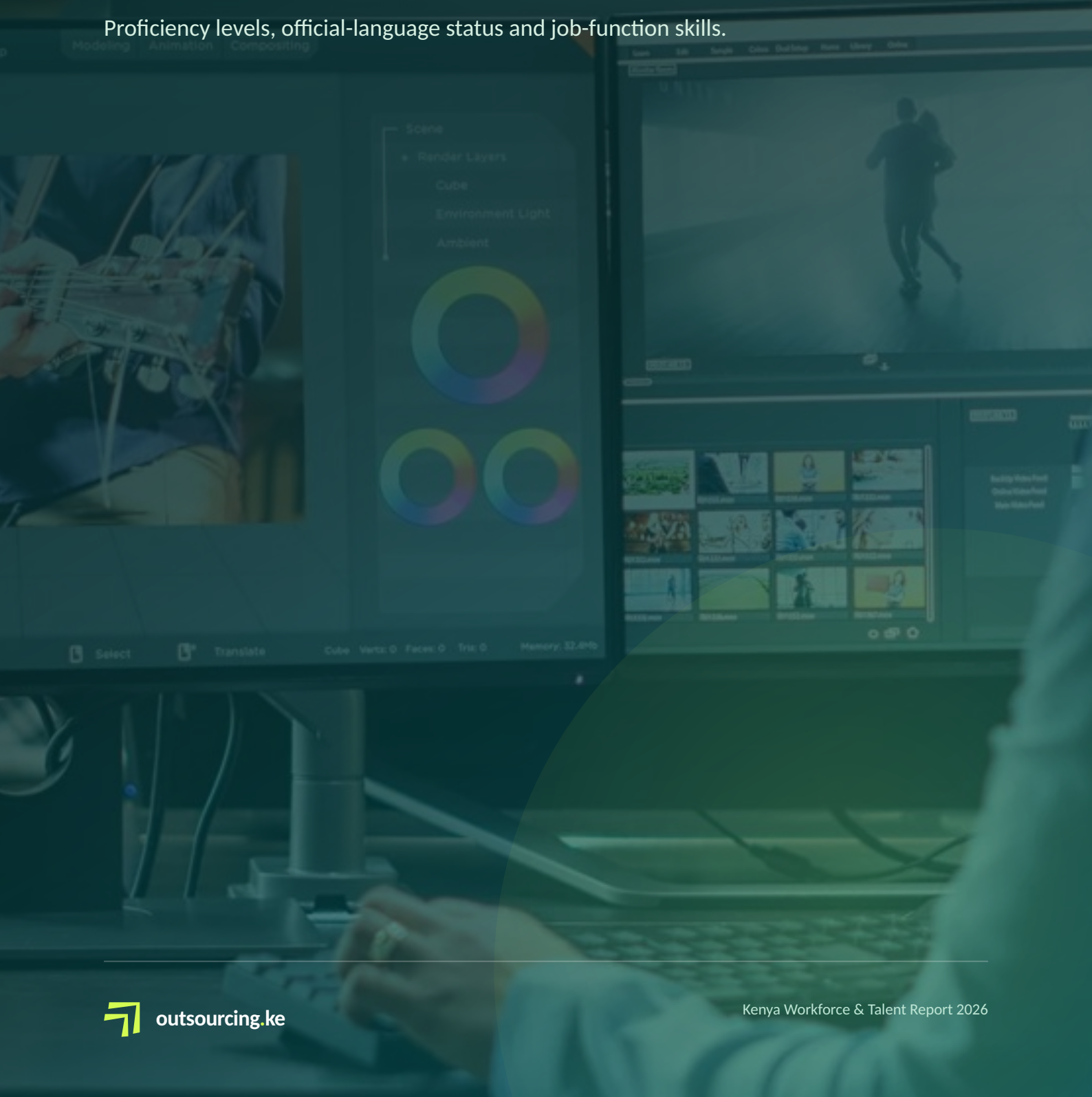
Tracer studies point to strong employability — one national polytechnic reported an 81% employment rate for its leavers — and the government continues to expand the system under its education-sector plans. For an employer, TVET widens the recruitment funnel well beyond graduates, supporting volume hiring for support and operations roles while the universities supply the professional and knowledge tiers above them.



SECTION FOUR

English proficiency

Proficiency levels, official-language status and job-function skills.



English proficiency

Kenya ranks **9th of 116 countries on the EF English Proficiency Index 2025**, with a national score of **593 (“High Proficiency”)** — second in Africa only to South Africa, and well above the global average of 488.

EF EPI 2025 — job-function scores

Dimension	Score
Reading	609
Operations (job function)	612
Accounting & finance	608
Customer service	608
IT	606

All four BPO-relevant job functions score above 600. English is an **official language under Article 7 of the Constitution** and the medium of instruction from upper-primary onward, of government and the courts, and of every professional body — so contracts, policies and customer interactions need no translation. Coastal Mombasa (600) and Nairobi (595) score highest among the regions.

For UK-facing work this is decisive. A neutral, clearly-understood accent and genuinely high written English mean Kenyan teams can handle voice, chat and email channels for British customers with minimal friction — and can take on the kind of nuanced, judgement-based interactions (complaints, finance queries, professional correspondence) that lower-proficiency markets struggle to staff reliably.



SECTION FIVE

Skills, retention & availability

Training programmes and the education-surplus advantage.

Skills, retention & talent availability

Training and professional bodies

Beyond universities and TVET, dedicated programmes bridge graduates into industry. **Generation Kenya** has trained 35,000 young people with an **85% placement rate**, of whom 70% remain in high-quality roles five years or more. The **Ajira Digital** programme has trained tens of thousands more through hundreds of constituency innovation hubs. Professional depth runs deep too: **ICPAK has 40,000+ members** (1,200+ working abroad), and Kenya is among ACCA's most active sub-Saharan markets.



Talent at a glance

University graduates (2024)	123,928
TVET graduates (2023)	144,027
B2-level English speakers	642,000
ICPAK-certified accountants	40,000+
EF EPI 2025 rank	#9 of 116

The education-surplus advantage

With over 123,000 university and 144,000 TVET graduates entering the market each year, supply outstrips domestic absorption. For international buyers this means degree-holders are available for roles that elsewhere demand only secondary education — yielding higher productivity, faster training and operational reliability.

It also underpins retention. Internationally facing roles offer stability, above-average pay and a sense of career progression that is scarce in the domestic market, so people stay — attrition of 15–20% is low for the sector, and Generation Kenya's data shows 70% of trained youth still in high-quality roles after five years. For an employer, that combination of availability and stability is the practical payoff of the talent story.

Tap into Kenya's talent

Outsourcing.ke profiles the talent, skills and pipeline behind Kenya's outsourcing sector. Explore the full data set at outsourcing.ke.



[Learn more at outsourcing.ke](https://outsourcing.ke)

Figures reflect CUE, KNBS, TVETA and EF EPI data understood to be current for 2024–2025. For general information only; verify against primary sources before relying on specific figures.

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Kenya outsourcing market intelligence — talent data and guides for UK businesses building offshore teams.