

SPOTLIGHT STORY



Impact worker **Joseph Mwilu**
Company **Samasource**
Location **Kenya**

Youth unemployment is a major challenge in Kenya, with unemployment for 15 to 24 year olds at 22 percent (ILO 2016). Given the large youth population of nearly 9.5 million, more than 20 percent of Kenya's overall population (UN 2017), youth unemployment is matter of growing economic and social concern.

Joseph, a student on a Broadcast Production course in Nairobi, found it difficult to rely on irregular, part-time work. On the recommendation of his brother, who works at Samasource, he applied for a job at the company. After taking part in two weeks' training at one of the organization's training centers, Joseph was hired as an Agent at Samasource in November 2016.

Working on a web research project, Joseph is responsible for maintaining up-to-date information about several companies, including company and product descriptions, and industries served. This job enables Joseph to use and enhance his skills in Microsoft Office applications, social marketing platforms, and content management systems.

In addition to technical skills, Joseph has learned leadership, cross-cultural communication, interpersonal, organizational, and problem-solving skills. He is now improving his public speaking, event planning, and social media marketing expertise.

“

I PLAN TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PROFESSIONALS IN MY REGION AND BEYOND.

”

 samasource

Joseph explained: “I have been fortunate to handle projects that have granted me opportunities to develop my skills. In 2017 and 2018 I volunteered to help promote the Sama Olympics, a sporting event in Nairobi organized by Samasource. I used my photography and interviewing abilities at the event, and I was able to utilize my interpersonal skills to communicate with clients effectively.”

Working on a particular project at Samasource gave Joseph insight into the possibilities of AI:

“The project was centered on web research and data cleaning services, creating training data to build a natural language processing-powered data platform. The platform searches, analyzes, and visualizes data to deliver insights. It creates a custom, visual, interactive map for raw business data, which comprises documents and articles.”

“

THE PROJECT UPGRADED MY RESEARCH SKILLS, AND I LEARNED ABOUT THE NEW AND EXISTING TECHNOLOGY THAT START-UPS AND COMPANIES ARE WORKING ON. I FOUND I AM COMFORTABLE LEARNING NEW SOFTWARE AND RELATED WEB APPLICATIONS.

”

"My experience working with AI has been really thought-provoking. It has made me dream about the possibilities that could exist for my country and my continent.



I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THIS TECHNOLOGY BEING APPLIED HERE. I WOULD LOVE TO FAST-FORWARD TO A PLACE WHERE WE HAVE CONVENIENT LOCAL SOLUTIONS, RESEARCH AREAS WHICH REQUIRE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS FOR NEW AUDIENCES AND UNIQUE PROBLEMS.



"It would help if researchers developed single-language datasets in African languages. Also, it would be useful for AI built around farming to be scaled down to smaller, family plots that make up much of agriculture.

"AI could be the answer to better transport services, communication channels and platforms for people in rural areas, healthcare services provision, security and surveillance systems installations, manufacturing standards, and a way to identify nutritional and natural disasters."

As Ulrich Paquet, a South African DeepMind Research Scientist, said:

"AI is booming in Africa, but it's booming from the grassroots."

Joseph plans to use his acquired skills to further his career:



I PLAN TO TAKE UP A CAREER IN BOTH THE ENTERTAINMENT AND MARKETING INDUSTRIES, SHOWCASE AND UTILIZE MY ACQUIRED SKILLS, AND OFFER CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND OPINIONS THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRY. BASICALLY, BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER PROFESSIONALS IN MY REGION AND BEYOND.



Joseph's work at Samasource has also had a positive impact on his family. He said: "My family is proud of me for the different achievements I have made thus far. Plans are underway to start a small investment for my mother, and my little sister looks up to me and my brother as her role models."

Joseph is one of over 50,000 impact workers that Samasource has hired as part of its goal to equally distribute opportunity in the digital economy and pay workers a living wage.



TO TAKE PART IN THE GLOBAL IMPACT SOURCING CHALLENGE AND PLEDGE TO HIRE IMPACT WORKERS VISIT: [GISC.BSR.ORG](https://gisc.bsr.org) OR CONTACT [GISC@BSR.ORG](mailto:gisc@bsr.org)

IMPACT SOURCING IS A BUSINESS PRACTICE WHERE A COMPANY PRIORITIZES SUPPLIERS THAT INTENTIONALLY HIRE AND PROVIDE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PEOPLE WHO OTHERWISE HAVE LIMITED PROSPECTS FOR FORMAL EMPLOYMENT. IMPACT WORKERS ARE PEOPLE HIRED INTO AN ORGANIZATION WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED OR LIVING UNDER THE NATIONAL POVERTY LINE.