

# Partnership creates employment opportunities for unemployed youth

The Digital Skills Partnership is a strategic collaboration between key stakeholders in the digital industry committed to transforming the sector by redesigning the traditionally onerous employment pathways into jobs for unemployed youth.

According to PwC 21st Annual Global CEO Survey - 2018, 98% of South African CEOs say they are worried about the availability of key skills for the future. This is especially true in preparing for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the need for digital skills.



The first cohort of students being trained by the new skills partnership.

A powerful national partnership to address this challenge was launched in October 2018 with founding organisations that include Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, Cape Innovation & Technology Initiative (CiTi), Explore Data Science Academy, WeThinkCode\_, Tshimologong Precinct Digital Skills Academy and the Joburg Centre for Software Engineering (JCSE) at WITS University; all of whom are major contributors to skills development and job creation in South Africa. The partnership is already expanding with additional members joining from leading technology companies, government agencies, and innovative skills providers.

Ian Merrington, CEO of CiTi, says “The future of the global economy is a digital one. For South African businesses to play their role and to participate meaningfully will require a change in emphasis to a more digitally literate and equipped workforce. Several of the challenges faced by business, in acquiring digital skills, are systemic.”



“The founding partners of this digital partnership have each individually made significant inroads into providing a pathway for excluded youth to attain digital and tech jobs. We believe that together we can make an exponential difference in supporting and assisting business to fill their digital talent pipeline.”

The partnership is designed to accelerate the pipeline of digital and tech skills, create new jobs and develop inclusive hiring pathways. The partnership will train 5,000 young people who have been excluded from the economy for digital jobs that include junior coders, data analysts, junior data scientists and software developers.



### Boost for digital skills training

Mish Mlakeng 6 Dec 2018



The partnership has also set objectives to change the way the current system works to grow digital skills. These include establishing a new way of matching young people with the potential to do tech jobs by creating universally accepted assessments that are driven by inclusion; developing alternate and more affordable pathways to these jobs that may not require a university degree; and unlocking new financing mechanisms through a social impact bond.

Siven Maslamoney, a founding member of Harambee, comments that collectively there are many barriers preventing unemployed youth from succeeding in digital jobs, including how employers see, measure and pay for talent. It is his view

that this credible collaboration of partners with deep expertise in the field can serve as a catalyst to unblocking barriers and changing the digital employment landscape in South Africa.

Prof Barry Dwolatzky, director of the JCSE, said: “The exciting thing about this initiative is that we have found synergies between a number of successful existing programmes. Building on tried-and-tested skills development programmes has a far greater prospect of achieving ambitious targets, rather than starting a new initiative from scratch. We are really excited to be part of this important partnership.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>