

Joburg leg of SAP Skills for Africa initiative kicks off

SAP Skills for Africa is a skills development and job creation initiative launched by SAP Africa in 2015. The latest chapter in the South African leg commenced this week with student orientation, prefacing the actual training due to start on 29 September.



Since inception, the initiative has grown to maturity across Africa with growing numbers of graduates, SAP customers and partners. The new Johannesburg chapter represents the biggest graduate intake to date with 100 graduates embarking upon the SAP Skills for Africa ICT and soft skills training. Involved partners and customers all share the same mission: promoting economic growth and developing substantive ICT skills that change lives in a sustainable manner.

Johannesburg partners who will take the successful graduates into internships post completion of this leg of the training include EOH, Accenture, Eskom, Zimele Technologies, T-Systems, Britehouse, Bosch, Clariba Solutions, Cosnet, Cornastone and MICT SETA.

Using a hybrid approach of classroom and e-learning training, with hands-on simulated exercises, the three-month programme will afford the participants the opportunity to develop world-class IT skills. The training will comprise seven classes and modules and SAP flagship in-memory technology, SAP S/4HANA, will be introduced as part of the training for the first time.

The course also incorporates essential business and soft skills training, with a formal SAP Academy accreditation resulting in internationally recognised associate SAP consultant certification. The programme is fully-sponsored with no cost to qualifying university graduates.

IT talent development

Technology talent has always been in short supply, but as Africa increasingly becomes digitalised, that lack is now a clear inhibitor to growth and the root of a vicious cycle: technology industries don't have access to enough skills, they fail to meet customer demands, the market shrinks and what talent there is looks for greener pastures. Since demand for IT skills is a worldwide phenomenon, the IT skills brain drain is a reality that is significantly impairing Africa economies.

“Skills development with specific job creation in mind is not a simple challenge to overcome,” commented Lawrence Kandaswami, managing director for SAP South Africa: “In a developing economy such as South Africa’s, digital education is not yet accessible for all. What SAP sees is a vast gap between the education that young people are receiving and what the employment market needs and this is where SAP Skills for Africa is increasingly making its unique value-proposition known.”

“The problem is not a shortage of jobs, but a lack of skills,” agreed Ebrahim Laher, managing director at EOH SAP. “Local skills pools define how competitive and effective a market is, so supporting SAP Skills for Africa is not about being a ‘nice’ company, it is to secure our future prosperity.”

Public sector support

As a key financial contributor since 2012, MICT SETA, through their skills levy programme, has enabled the SAP Skills for Africa initiative to grow as both public and private sector organisations support the need for specialised skills development.

“Demand for technology skills reaches beyond the confines of the ICT industry. As such the SAP Skills for Africa initiative also has support from partners in other sectors, such as Eskom,” concluded Sean Maritz, CIO and group executive at Eskom. “Partnerships with the private sector are becoming increasingly important for enablement and development of core skills and resources across a multitude of industries.”

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