

CMU, Mastercard Foundation partnership to expand tech education in Africa

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) and the Mastercard Foundation have announced \$275.7m partnership, which will expand the engineering and technology, research, and entrepreneurship programmes at CMU-Africa in Kigali, Rwanda.



Image source: Andor Bujoso – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The investment from the Foundation includes a \$175m endowment to perpetually fund CMU-Africa. It also includes \$100.7m to establish CMU-Africa's Center for the Inclusive Digital Transformation of Africa.

Specifically, through this historic partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, CMU-Africa will:

1. Expand instructional capacity, including introducing a new degree in engineering artificial intelligence, and online learning programmes.
2. Grow the annual cohort of students enrolling in CMU-Africa by more than 33%.
3. Provide additional financial assistance to more CMU-Africa students, including increased support for the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme at CMU-Africa. The partnership will provide direct scholarship support to a total of 300 students.
4. Ensure programmes recruit and provide opportunities for marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, and displaced people.
5. Pilot programmes for English language immersion to help prepare undergraduate students from other African universities for graduate study.



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20 May 2022



The new partnership will also strengthen Africa's research, entrepreneurship, and innovation ecosystem more broadly by:

1. Establishing a network of higher education institutions in Africa that will work with the private sector and governments to create the conditions for inclusive digital transformation.
2. Supporting up to 10 African universities to deliver high-quality engineering and technology education.
3. Increasing digital knowledge creation to drive technology development and job-creating innovation through training, seed funding, and collaboration opportunities for researchers at CMU-Africa and other partner universities.
4. Directly involving faculty and staff from CMU-Pittsburgh in CMU-Africa activities to innovate in education and help create the knowledge needed to drive the inclusive digital transformation of Africa in fields that include agriculture, health, and finance, among others.

Through these various pillars of the partnership, a total of 10,000 young people will gain the skills to compete in the global marketplace, innovate, design new tools that solve regional and global challenges, and bring those tools to market.

The new initiative builds on a previous partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and Carnegie Mellon University, as well as a successful 10-year partnership between the Government of Rwanda and CMU-Africa that has connected 561 young people from 21 African countries to world-class training—including 125 students supported through the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme.



If education is the gateway to freedom, digital literacy is the key

Jackie Carroll and Phemelo Segoe 25 Apr 2022



"The strategic partnership with Carnegie Mellon University is one of the Government of Rwanda's key investments to support the development of a critical mass of skills in science and technology, particularly in ICT, required by the knowledge economy and to help accelerate Rwanda's and the region's socioeconomic transformation. We express our sincere appreciation to the Mastercard Foundation for their significant support, which will help Rwanda realize its vision for the future in establishing the Regional Center of Excellence in Rwanda (CMU-Africa) and ensure the sustainability of the programme. The Regional Center of Excellence, coupled with other important strategies will help ensure that we are part of, and benefit from, the global digital revolution," said Valentine Uwamariya, minister of education in Rwanda.

"The Mastercard Foundation's support will enable us to accelerate our Africa strategy, which is uniquely defined to prepare higher education students to meet the complex needs of the digital future along with the research and entrepreneurship necessary to compete in the global economy," said William Sanders, dean of the College of Engineering.

CMU-Africa's impact includes a close to 90% employment rate within the first year of graduation. Its alumni have founded or joined startup companies, are pursuing their PhDs in top doctoral programmes in the US and Europe, and are serving in government information offices, including within the Government of Rwanda and the World Bank.

“The Mastercard Foundation has been a critical partner in the growth of CMU-Africa as we help meet the growing demand for high-quality technical talent who will accelerate development on the continent,” said Allen Robinson, director of CMU-Africa and associate dean for international programmes in Africa. “This new, extraordinary phase of our relationship will exponentially magnify our ability to build a pan-African network that positively impacts the future of young people across the continent.”

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