

Young entrepreneurs benefit from ICT centre in Joburg inner city

After being introduced to the Skills Village grassroots entrepreneurial concept by the Foundation for Internet Development (FID), BitCo, an emerging telecoms operator, has provided its young entrepreneurs with the ICT tools necessary to kick-start their dreams. Skills Village is in Frere Street, downtown Joburg.



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It has handed over a fully-fledged ICT development centre with hardware such as an IP PBX system with two VoIP phones to be used as call boxes with four VoIP channels, a wireless internet connection (1Mbps uncapped) with one year's bandwidth, as well as a printer and consumables. In addition, its wireless links and outgoing VoIP calls are guaranteed to have 99% uptime. The PBX comes with 24/7, 365 on-site and remote support whenever Skills Village requires it. The company's support for inner city enterprise development also includes a generous financial contribution.

Skills Village offers events management services

Skills Village provides small black-owned businesses the opportunity to provide a range of services relating to event management. The ICT Development Centre now provides these businesses with access to the internet for research, business communication and collaboration.

FID coordinated the company's donation of VOIP telephony and other ICT hardware in line with its stated goal of consolidating the Internet industry's efforts to promote BBBEE. UniForum SA, the Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA), the Wireless Access Providers' Association (WAPA) and the Internet Society of South Africa are founding members of FID.

Speaking at the launch of the BitCo ICT Development Centre, FID MD Octavia Kumalo said, "Community-based entrepreneurship, as espoused by the Skills Village philosophy, is a key driver of economic development and poverty reduction. This CSI initiative is to be welcomed as a vehicle that will enable young people to be the architects of their own entrepreneurial success."

Lagging behind

According to the 2012 Global Report on Entrepreneurship, South African young people have been found to be severely lagging behind their Southern African peers.

"We believe in developing sustained relationships with role players such as Skills Village and BitCo who share our commitment to properly considered enterprise development."

According to Garth van Sittert, MD of BitCo, "As a tier-one telecommunications provider, we are in the business of helping organisations to use communications technology to drive competitive advantage.

"We try to apply the same mind-set when it comes to helping enterprises to meet their developmental goals. We are particularly pleased to be collaborating with FID on this project which has all the hallmarks of effective enterprise development."

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