

Microsoft YouthSpark grant for Mentec Foundation SA

Microsoft Philanthropies has partnered with over 100 non-profit organisations in 55 countries as part of its [\\$75m commitment](#) to increase access to computer science education around the world.



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Microsoft is partnering with these non-profits by providing cash grants, content and other resources they need to bring computational thinking and problem-solving skills to young people in local communities. These skillsets are important building blocks that help the youth succeed in today's tech-driven economy.

“Computational thinking and problem-solving skills will be relevant to every job in the future. Through our partnerships with non-profit organisations around the world, we aim to empower all youth to prepare for this future, with the foundational knowledge of computer science that enables them to create the innovations of tomorrow,” said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft.

Get Online programme

Here in South Africa, the grant that Microsoft Philanthropies made through Microsoft YouthSpark to [Mentec Foundation](#) is in support of the Get Online programme that is aimed at unemployed matric or university graduates and unemployed members of under-resourced communities. Through this grant, Mentec Foundation will be able to provide these communities with access to Microsoft Office Specialist and Basic Microsoft Technology Associate training, as well as to business and life skills training.

"The programme aims to equip graduates not only with skills but with the ability to teach their skills to others," explained Solly Khoza, CEO of Mentec Foundation.

The Get Online programme, initiated in September 2014, has successfully trained 300 master trainers to date through the assistance of trainers from 17 community-based organisations in townships and rural communities in all nine provinces of SA. The hope is that these 300 trainers will in turn reach 36,000 beneficiaries within their communities and surrounding areas.

Expanding accessibility

Closing the computer science skills gap and reaching young people on a global scale is a multi-faceted challenge that cannot be solved by one organisation or solution alone. Microsoft's partnerships with non-profit organisations mean that more young people around the world - particularly underserved communities, girls and ethnic as well as racially diverse populations - will have access to computer science education, helping to expand the accessibility to skills critical for future success.

"We see our work with non-profits as a partnership where we can bring to the table our resources and tech expertise to some of the organisations that are already making impact with young people in our community. The purpose of the Mentec Foundation, through the Get Online training programme is to upskill on an individual level, while driving broader impact on employment and entrepreneurship opportunities," said Zoaib Hoosen, MD of Microsoft SA.

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