Building 21st century skills through education and industry partnerships

Through the IBM Academic initiative, IBM partners with educational institutions in South Africa to support the use of open standards-based and IBM technologies for teaching purposes. It helps ensure that universities have the most current, relevant curricula that map to the requirements of the job market.

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The award-winning Saturday School programme supplements regular curricula through a series of extracurricular lessons at IBM offices on Saturday mornings to strengthen a child’s ability in mathematics, science, technology and life skills. Dozens of students from several high schools have joined this programme. For instance, IBM volunteers teach secondary school pupils from Ivory Park Secondary School and Reingale High School in Alexandra, in Cape Town, IBM partnered with MTN Science Centre to transfer technology skills to teachers from Khayelitsha and surrounding townships.

Over 300 schools in South Africa are currently using IBM Reading Companion—an online interactive English literacy programme running on IBM software—to help their students practice their reading and improve pronunciation skills.

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Uplifting communities through the transfer of skills and expertise

IBM works in partnership with non-profit organisations and government departments by providing IBM technology, expertise and employee’s time to support the local communities.

Since the launch of the IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) programme in 2008, South Africa has received eight CSC teams, consisting of selected IBM employees who voluntarily lend their skills and expertise to help resolve complex societal and business problems. A team worked alongside three government agencies to help Limpopo Province streamline an initiative that aims to position the province as a development and investment hub for local and foreign businesses.

IBM has been building the world’s largest public computing grid – World Community Grid – to encourage computer owners around the world to volunteer cycles from their PCs when they are not in use to tackle compute-intensive problems. One completed project is AfricaClimate@Home, an ambitious effort based in South Africa that attempted to accurately predict the impact of climate change in various regions in Africa.
General Manager
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IBM in South Africa – A Short Overview  2

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IBM has made a commitment to help grow the local IT ecosystem and support local businesses. In 2009, IBM and IBM business partner Canonical – an open-source software company – introduced a new, flexible personal computing (PC) software package for netbooks and other thin client devices to help businesses in South Africa bridge the digital divide. The solution includes open standards-based email, word-processing, spreadsheets and networking tools, and best practices that currently deliver quality services to local customers and customers in Europe and US.

As a result, SMEs as well as start-ups can now use any type of device and low-cost software to enable their employees to work smarter anywhere. A network of local service providers such as Inkululeko and ZSL, Inc. have planned to extend the IBM Client for Smart Work work locally throughout Africa to government, educational institutions and businesses. In addition to local service providers, IBM is also working with leading universities such as Makerere University and other academic consortia to deliver this new computing model to employees or students of learning institutions.

Supporting South Africa’s national agenda

IBM has actively helped position South Africa as a feasible destination for Business Process Outsourcing. In 2006, IBM established the Integrated Delivery Centre (IDC), an IT technical and professional support service centre. This centre offers an infrastructure with world-class processes, tools, and best practices that currently deliver quality services to local customers and customers in Europe and US.

IBM in South Africa – A Short Overview 2

Building a smarter South Africa

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As part of this commitment, IBM has donated a US$1.6 million Blue Gene/P supercomputing system, the first of its kind in Africa. This system is accessible to any African research institute that focuses on helping the socio-economic growth of the region. The supercomputer is managed by the Meraka Institute at the Centre for High-Performance Computing, a major Department of Science and Technology initiative, based in Cape Town.

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Building a smarter South Africa

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Uplifting communities through the transfer of skills and expertise

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Under the Celebration of Service initiative, IBM has donated over 100,000 man hours from 700 staff members to help build houses with Habitat for Humanity as part of the company’s centennial celebrations. Ten houses were built from scratch across South Africa for poor and underprivileged people.

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IBM works in partnership with non-profit organisations and government departments by providing IBM technology, expertise and employee’s time to support the local communities.

Under the Celebration of Service initiative, IBM has donated over 100,000 man hours from 700 staff members to help build houses with Habitat for Humanity as part of the company’s centennial celebrations. Ten houses were built from scratch across South Africa for poor and underprivileged people.

Since the launch of the IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) programme in 2008, South Africa has received eight CSC teams, consisting of selected IBM employees who voluntarily lend their skills and expertise to help resolve complex societal and business problems. A team worked alongside three government agencies to help Limpopo Province streamline an initiative that aims to position the province as a development and investment hub for local and foreign businesses.

IBM has been building the world’s largest public computing grid – World Community Grid – to encourage computer owners around the world to volunteer cycles from their PCs when they are not in use to tackle compute-intensive problems. One completed project is Africa Climate@Home, an ambitious effort based in South Africa that attempted to accurately predict the impact of climate change in various regions in Africa.

IBM investments and facilities in South Africa

Sales and Distribution
Established in 1956, IBM South Africa has more than 6,000 clients and 800 business partners.

Global Process Services
Service Lines: IBM provides services in the areas of Human Resources, Finance and Accounting, Procurement Services and Customer Relationship Management.
Clients: IBM serves numerous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, supporting more than 15 languages.

Application Management Services
Service Lines: IBM provides a wide range of services including Application Management Services, Software Services, Data Centre Design and Build, Network and Site Integration, Systems Services, Hardware Maintenance and Technical Services and 24-7 Helpdesk Services.
Client: IBM serves leading banks, telecommunications companies, the public sector and retail-based companies.

IBM Innovation Centres
Established in 2007 and 2009 respectively, the IBM Innovation Centres in Johannesburg and Cape Town provide software developers with access to IBM’s software tools, hardware, methodology and global network of partners. Through the centres, we also provide IBM’s IT curricula to colleges and universities nationwide.