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Taking technology to the people

The Digitruck rolls into South Africa loaded with laptops...and hope

A ground-breaking, solar-powered mobile trailer called “the Digitruck” is helping bridge the digital divide in South Africa’s Western Cape province, where access to computers, the internet, and trained facilitators is profoundly needed.

A joint initiative among Brothers for All (BfA), Close the Gap, and Deloitte, the Digitruck functions as a mobile information technology lab equipped with 20 fully configured laptops and supporting peripheral devices. Its arrival brings optimism and the opportunity for a better life to communities where unemployment among young people tops 80 percent.

“The Digitruck provides the space to do in-house software development work, increasing the technical experience of the students, which will improve their chances of securing jobs,” explains Sihle Tshabalala, national coordinator for BfA, a nonprofit organization that teaches computer coding and soft skills to ex-offenders and at-risk youth. “We also can offer training in job-readiness skills such as presenting, project management, and workplace English.” By adding the Digitruck, BfA instructors should be able to train approximately 60 more students per year and place them in internships or full-time jobs.

The Digitruck is the brainchild of Deloitte in Belgium and Close the Gap. Deloitte in South Africa enlisted in the effort, offering its understanding of Western Cape communities and their challenges to help implement the project. Deloitte volunteers will spend the next year working with BfA to provide soft-skills workshops, job shadowing, product development, guest speakers, and presentations showcasing modern technology and BfA’s work. Deloitte also is covering the cost of moving Digitruck from town to town, as well as all required insurance.

“BfA has demonstrated that when you give people access to computers and technical instruction, they can develop a strong base of core skills quickly,” says Olivier Vanden Eynde, Risk Advisory Director, Deloitte Belgium. “This creative and scalable solution to digital literacy is helping at-risk young people earn opportunities for meaningful, well-paid employment. That’s a hope many of them did not have before the Digitruck.”



The Digitruck is a 12-meter-long, solar-powered mobile trailer that can accommodate up to 18 students at a time.

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Olivier Vanden Eynde, Risk Advisory Director, Deloitte Belgium