

Expanding the Arm(E3)NGAGE Partnership networks in Africa

New partnership with mLab set to strengthen digital skills development amongst youth in South Africa

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Stephen Ozoigbo

youth unemployment compounded by a lack of access to digital skills and resources represents some of the major challenges that need to be addressed to bridge the inequality gap in South Africa. Education-based technologies play a vital role in levelling the economic playing field, facilitating better access to training tools and curriculum and ultimately, provide access to jobs.

The new partnership between Arm(E3)NGAGE, and Mobile Applications Laboratory (mLab) in South Africa, aims to bolster the local skills development landscape by enhancing access to hardware, software, digital tools and

training opportunities.

The partnership was announced on September 19th, 2022 at the AI Expo Africa event, hosted at the Sandton Convention Centre. AI Expo Africa is the largest business-focused Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and 4IR trade event in Africa, uniting thousands of buyers, suppliers & innovators across the region.

The partnership announcement attracted interest from various practitioners in the Information Communications and Technology (ICT) sector. As part of the signing ceremony Stephen Ozoigbo, Senior Director, Emerging Economies at Arm stated, “The partnership with mLab enables Arm(E3)NGAGE, and our ecosystem partners to significantly contribute towards South Africa’s digital skills revolution by providing access to cutting edge technologies that will accelerate South Africa’s progress in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR)”. He continued, “Learners across various age groups and capabilities will get the opportunity to experiment with Arm-based tools and resources that could foster their interest in STEM-based learning while advancing their career paths in the digital economy.” These resources include various forms of hardware devices and

learning kits from Arm partners such as Arduino and Microbit. Arm's rich ecosystem of partners provides an incredible portfolio of world-class ed-tech tools that are low power, energy efficient and uniquely designed to support learners at every level.

Nicoli Koorbanally, CEO of mLab remarked, "When the prospect of holding, building and testing technology can be realised at a young age, it can spark creative thinking, an entrepreneurial mindset and the motivation to build innovative solutions that can solve local challenges. Closing the skills gap, and developing this calibre of digital talent is what mLab wants to supply into the South African economy," she says.



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The partnership will primarily benefit mLab's Ecosystem Acceleration offering that focuses on building a pipeline of digital talent for its Skills and StartUp Accelerators. Ecosystem activities include short 4IR training, digital literacy, school robotics and coding workshops amongst other programmes. In addition to providing mLab programme participants with training kits, laptops and software licences, the agreement with Arm(E3)NGAGE also seeks to provide access to international initiatives for talented local youth and establish a Technology Hub with mobile digital labs (Lab in a Box) that will be able to service remote locations and communities. With over a decade of experience in delivering impact, mLab is known for having a strong focus on empowering youth, women and previously disadvantaged communities. This partnership supports this endeavour by fostering a conducive learning and development environment for South Africa's youth.

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