

Mobile career opportunities network launched

On Friday 28 October 2011, founder of Praekelt Foundation, Gustav Praekelt launched Ummeli mobile career opportunities community and social network at the 2011 [Tech4Africa](#) conference



Ummeli, the Nguni word for "mediator", went live on YoungAfricaLive, a community to share and discuss critical issues such as love, sex and relationships with over 500 000 active participants, on Thursday 27 October 2011.

Supporting young jobseekers

Ummeli, founded on the principle of Ubuntu ("I am what I am because of who we all are"), resulted in the creation of a supportive community of young jobseekers who use the platform for advice, suggestions, connections, and ideas exchange.

In addition, registered Ummeli users will be able to share job posts and relevant information around bursaries and grants. Easy-to-use practical tools ensure users can edit their CV on their phones, and submit their CVs for jobs they may be interested in or even use the CV Coach tool in creating this vital part of job-seeking.

"Ummeli is a much more than simply a portal to find a job through," explains Shikoh Gitau, the project founder who developed a mobile job board and CV builder as part of her PhD in Computer Science at the University of Cape Town.

"The emphasis is very much on a community where young Africans can support each other in the development of their careers, share ideas, act as connectors or even just be a sounding board when things seem hopeless."

Youth affected by unemployment

"In Kenya, like in so many African countries, it's the youth that is most affected by unemployment. But as YoungAfricaLive has shown in the territories where it operates, Africa's youth are fully switched on to mobile technology and Ummeli is a way of using that to help young Africans in developing countries on their journey to find employment." says Gitau, who is from Kenya and currently working for Google. She was motivated to come up with Ummeli whilst observing the sometimes overwhelming unemployment faced by Africa's young citizens.

Currently, the official stats for unemployment in South Africa sit at 25.70%, although this is widely considered conservative. Earlier this year, the South African Institute of Race Relations published its *South Africa Survey* in which it showed that unemployment amongst 15-24 year olds is 51%, more than twice the national unemployment rate. Unemployment is highest among African women aged 15-24 years, coming in at 63%

"This is a horrific figure," says Gustav Praekelt. 'Building on the success of YoungAfricaLive in getting its users engaged around the issues that affect them, including HIV/AIDS, we believe that Ummeli has every chance of making a real impact - of really changing people's lives and positively impacting the cycle of poverty."

Ummeli fits into Praekelt Foundation's mission of building open source, scalable mobile technologies and solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in poverty. Already, with the support of funders like Omidyar Network, programmes that have emerged out of Praekelt Foundation and its partners have reached over 50 million people across 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Praekelt Foundation-driven Project Masiluleke, which uses mobile phones and other technologies as high impact, low cost tools in combating HIV/AIDS, was named the first winner of the [Tech4Africa Innovation Award](#), created to encourage innovation in solving uniquely African problems whilst also encouraging global thinking.

Ummeli can be accessed for free, with no bandwidth charges, while users are on the YoungAfricaLive platform on Vodacom. Once users click on a job link or the URL of a company advertising a job, they will be charged normal bandwidth rates to access that URL. Ummeli will be initially tested within YAL while a standalone Ummeli mobi platform is created.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>