

A sustainable AfricaCom 2019

Skills development, learning spaces and the internet are what's needed for Africa's sustainable growth - here's how AfricaCom 2019 is helping to move the continent closer to economic prosperity.

AfricaCom is synonymous with the coming together of great minds, the generation of new ideas and the showcasing of innovation. This year, AfricaCom goes one step further to ensure the progression of the African continent towards a digital democracy with the support of a number of causes that will focus on providing the space, skills and access to the Internet to make it all possible.

AfricaCom's chosen sustainability partners include Code for Cape Town, Mellon Educate, and Africa50, via the Africa50 Innovation Challenge.



Tom Cuthell, event director at Informa, organisers of AfricaCom, expressed his pleasure at being able to provide a platform for these three deserving initiatives, "AfricaCom is delighted to be able to partner with these initiatives, a first for us as an event. Each organisation addresses a particular technological and communication need and by bringing them together in one place, we are hoping that delegates and visitors, will visibly connect just how important it is that we all work together to ensure digital inclusivity becomes a reality for everyone on the continent."

Code for Cape Town (Code4CT) - will have a prime position at AfricaTech, which is co-located with AfricaCom - is a community of young female tech leaders who are advocates for encouraging more women to enter the technology industry, and who place coding at the heart of their skills development outreaches. Diversity is needed in the technology space, with currently, only one in five women represented as global IT executives.

Of the opportunity to participate at AfricaCom 2019, Emma Dicks, founder of Codespace, the social enterprise that powers Code4CT, said, "Code for Cape Town addresses the lack of diversity in the tech industry by creating a space for high school girls to learn to code and explore potential career paths in the tech industry. Ultimately, our goal is for young women to choose to include coding as part of their tertiary education.

"An event such as AfricaCom, is a fantastic opportunity for our community of young coders to see the scope of opportunity offered in the tech industry and connect with future employers. At the same time, our young coders can pass on their love of coding to delegates at the event. We are hoping to be able to engage with companies who share our mission to create a more diverse and inclusive tech industry."

Help build a school

Skills development is one thing but, what about the practical spaces to come together for education? Niall Mellon and his organisations are no strangers to Africa, having built many homes for people over the years, but through Mellon Educate UK, corporate teams are encouraged to get involved in a seven-day school Building Blitz.

Team building at its best - a sign-up for the next November Building Blitz challenge, which will take place immediately after AfricaCom this year, will be open at AfricaCom for all delegates/enterprises and their colleagues, to participate in, learning new skills, developing radical insights into the living and schooling conditions of ordinary Africans and even making new friends, in the process.

Niall Mellon, founder of Mellon Educate, explains why they are involved this year, "On behalf of Mellon Educate, we welcome our valued partnership with AfricaCom and look forward to each and every one of you helping change the lives of many less fortunate than us. I've always wondered why somebody didn't do something and then I realised I am somebody and with the power of the collective, we can achieve anything.

"As Nelson Mandela once said 'Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world,' and with the support of AfricaCom you have that opportunity to do just that by joining our Building Blitz! Thank you AfricaCom for getting behind Mellon Educate!"

Two schools in the Mfuleni Township, Cape Town, will benefit this year, thanks to the generosity of all involved.

Help get Africa connected

Skills development and education hubs need access to the internet to make the dream of an inclusive and economically thriving Africa a reality, and this is where the third initiative that AfricaCom will profile in 2019, comes in - The Africa50 Innovation Challenge.

This is pan-Africa investment platform Africa50's exciting crowdsourced initiative seeking ICT experts, engineers and innovators to help them find a sustainable solution to Africa's most pressing infrastructure needs.

Over 75% of Africans still do not have access to the internet and Africa50 is hoping that AfricaCom can provide it with access to the brains trust required to help them ensure that affordable and reliable last-mile connectivity can be rolled out to all under-served communities across the continent.

Individuals and organisations with a strong passion for developing innovative solutions are encouraged to apply. Submitted solutions to the Challenge will be reviewed by a group of experts in ICT, investment, and international development. Finalists will be invited to present their solutions at AfricaCom in November 2019 in Cape Town.

The winning solutions will receive cash prizes and/or will be considered for project development funding. Projects will be rolled-out in Rwanda as the pilot country, with the objective to scale them up to other countries in Africa.

With the recent signing of Africa's intra-continental free trade agreement, the time is ripe for more than just conversations around inclusivity, it's a time for action, and with the showcasing of the above three initiatives, AfricaCom hopes to be the catalyst for true and sustainable system change. All delegates and visitors are therefore encouraged to visit each of the above and make it their business to know more, and even, sign-up to be a changemaker.

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