

## **e-Entrepreneurship – connecting entrepreneurs with ICT for greater productivity**

**15 March 2012 – Pretoria, Gauteng**

On the 16 March 2012, the Gauteng e-Skills Knowledge and Coordination Production Hub (e-SKCPH) will hold the graduation ceremony of its e-entrepreneurship pilot project. It will also be launching the e-Skills for Entrepreneurs curriculum. Speakers at the event include Rosey Sekese, Director-General of the Department of Communications, and Dr Harold Wesso, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Communications.

The Gauteng e-SKCPH is a provincial presence for the e-Skills Institute, a national catalyst, facilitator and responsive change agent in the development of SA and part of the Department of Communications. The e-Skills Institute and its hubs are leading the creation of key e-skills development strategy, solutions and practises to benefit the total population. The Gauteng e-SKCPH was launched on 26 October 2011.

### **Entrepreneurs building South Africa**

The Gauteng e-SKCPH, based at the University of Pretoria, conducted an environmental scan of all e-skills activities in the province. They identified entrepreneurship as having the most relevant impact in terms of advancing e-skills and ICT within Gauteng.

Gauteng is South Africa's economic hub, encompassing large, medium and small businesses. However, most of these businesses have not identified how ICT can be leveraged to make their business more productive. Greater productivity leads to increased employment and improved livelihoods for many families.

Consequently, the Gauteng e-SKCPH has set out to equip new and existing entrepreneurs with complementary ICT and/or entrepreneurship skills. These skills will enable entrepreneurs to grow financially, increase employment and make meaningful contributions to their communities. The Gauteng e-SKCPH's aims and focus areas are in alignment with the key government national priorities of increased employment opportunities, employment readiness and business and socio-economic development.

The initial focus of the Gauteng e-SKCPH will be on entrepreneurs in the creative industries and on mobile application development and innovation.

### **e-Entrepreneurship pilot project**

On 1 August 2011, the Gauteng e-SKCPH started a pilot project training 20 new entrepreneurs from a rural community in Mpumalanga, Siyabuswa. (For the pilot, the University of Pretoria leveraged its long-standing relationship with this community.) The course was developed with a learner-centred approach. After five days of classroom-based training, there was a 10-week mentorship programme. The course included training on both entrepreneurship skills and e-skills.

This first group of entrepreneurs has already recorded considerable success measured by increased business revenue. One individual is now considering a multi-million proposal for his business, triggered by ideas generated during the Gauteng e-SKCPH pilot.

Evidence-based research is still ongoing with regards to the e-entrepreneurship pilot project. The intention is to better understand entrepreneurs' processes in adopting ICT to make their business more productive, as well as refining methodologies and course content.

Outcomes of the research will be fed into: new e-skills curriculum development, new policies required to promote entrepreneur usage and uptake of ICT, and the development of relevant applications that support e-entrepreneurship.

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