

Huawei supports Digital Council Africa's skills development for SA women in fibre optic technology

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Huawei South Africa has lent its support to a pioneering fibre optic technologies skills training programme targeting young women from three Johannesburg townships. The cohort of 19 selected participants, who all have a background in maths and science, spent a day at Huawei's flagship Customer Solutions Innovation Centre in Woodmead, Johannesburg.



Fibre Optic Training Group with (from left to right) Huawei SA's media and communications manager, Vanashree Govender; Huawei SA COO Christina Naidoo; Sipho Makhalema, project lead from the DCA; and Elmien Kleynhans from Signa Academy.

Here the students were introduced to technology solutions in 5G networks, Cloud/AI, and big data among others and learned about digital solutions for specific business verticals. They also had a formal training session relating to fibre deployment and a typical fibre project was unpacked and evaluated from start to finish.

The day was a fitting conclusion to their three-month course, hosted by the Digital Council Africa (DCA), of which Huawei is a member, together with training partner Signa Academy and MICT SETA, the project funder, as well as Herotel which provided much-needed practical workplace experience.

The three-month programme consisted of:

- Technical hands-on training on fibre optics technology.
- Fibre Optic installation workflow processes from the planning to installation phase.
- A work readiness programme describing the different behaviours in a typical fibre installation company, and how to manage themselves in the workplace.

The fibre installation industry, which is largely male-dominated, now has 19 empowered young women who are enthusiastic about their futures and the new skills acquired during training.

The session was opened by Huawei SA COO Christina Naidoo and is part of Huawei's ongoing global Women in Tech

programme.

“Huawei congratulates all the young women who participated in this training, which served to expose them to a sector about which they previously knew very little. I can see that the course has ignited a passion in each of them, and I am sure that by harnessing this passion, supporting each other and working hard, they will go on to build careers in ICT infrastructure, crucial for growing the South African economy,” Naidoo said.

Juanita Clark, CEO of the DCA, said, “This one-of-its-kind training was designed to encourage more women into the sector, which requires greater transformation and inclusivity. Women bring a different and more nurturing side to technology whose development must ultimately serve us all. The young women now have a much clearer understanding of the vital role they will play within the end-to-end value chain that connects us to continually evolving technologies.”

Senior strategy consultant at Huawei, Marius Engelbrecht spoke to the group about the importance of optic fibre infrastructure.

“The information shared during the tour of our Innovation Centre will assist in expanding the trainee’s insights and knowledge relating to telecommunications technologies, which all depend heavily on fibre networks. Fibre not only brings fast download speeds to our homes for streaming our favourite entertainment, but it is the backbone of all the technologies they were introduced to today, especially in the 5G era.”

5G networks will demand more fibre connectivity due to the massive amounts of data and traffic that needs to be transported back to the core network.

“Before starting this programme I knew very little about ICT or fibre optics but now I am sufficiently qualified to enter the sector and work towards higher certification,” said Sagwadi Nkuna, one of the graduates of the programme. “My ambition is to work in final stages, as a fibre optic splicer.”

Jennifer Latifi, who previously worked in cost and management accounting, said, “I am someone who loves to explore new things, and this course exposed me to the exciting world of fibre optic technology. I am now committed to a new career in this field and hope to ultimately work on the digital aspects of fibre optics,” she said.

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