

Microsoft 4Afrika launches AppFactory in Kenya

By  Tom Jackson

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The United States International University - Africa (USIU-Africa), in collaboration with Microsoft's 4Afrika Initiative, has launched Kenya's first AppFactory at the Incubation and Innovation Center (I2C) in Nairobi, aimed at improving local IT skills.



Image: [Disrupt Africa](#)

The I2C AppFactory aims to address the competency gap between ICT graduates and employment, by equipping students with high-level skills in designing, developing, implementing and managing modern software solutions.

The initiative will provide an experiential way of learning, encouraging students to develop new skills, attitudes and ways of thinking. It will also provide access to first-grade jobs through the Microsoft Partner Network, increasing the employability of [USIU-Africa](#) students and unemployed graduates from other universities who participate in the programme.

“Despite hundreds of students graduating in ICT, IT companies are still finding it difficult to recruit graduates who are ready to contribute as software developers, without first taking them through extensive on-the-job training,” said Professor Paul Zeleza, vice chancellor of USIU-Africa.

The I2C AppFactory is the 14th AppFactory to be launched in partnership with [Microsoft 4Afrika](#) on the continent, with others in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, Uganda, Rwanda, Mauritius, Malawi and Ethiopia.

In 2017, 500 students graduated from the African AppFactories, with 85% securing full-time jobs within three months of graduation. Others have started their own businesses.

“Graduates from the AppFactory are highly sought-after. Virtually all of them find work – often before they even graduate,” said Lutz Zlob, dean of the Microsoft 4Afrika Academy. “Across Africa, AppFactory students are learning how to build digital solutions in business, finance, healthcare, education, agriculture, tourism and transportation. As they become experienced software engineers – working with modern technologies from cloud computing to secure coding, bots and data analytics – startups and corporates are snatching them up.”

USIU-Africa will host the AppFactory, while Microsoft will provide assistance and access to various platforms, tools and networks to successfully operate the programme. The I2C AppFactory will target final year ICT students at USIU-Africa and fresh graduates from other universities. Every six months, 30 students will become software apprentices and receive training and mentorship by senior software craftsmen.

Enrolment for the AppFactory is currently ongoing [here](#).

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ABOUT TOM JACKSON

Co-founder @DisruptAfrica. Tech and business journalist in Africa. Passionate about the vibrant tech startups scene in Africa, Tom can usually be found sniffing out the continent's most exciting new companies and entrepreneurs, funding rounds and any other developments within the growing ecosystem

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