

Telkom Women's month AD
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How FutureMakers started..

Founded in 2015, FutureMakers is Telkom's Enterprise and Supplier Development unit. Having assisted more than 2 600 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) since its inception, FutureMakers advances the growth of SMMEs by providing access to external innovation and diverse supply chain partners through entrepreneurship.

Today, Telkom FutureMakers has two main commitments: to help SMMEs thrive in the digital economy, and to develop the South African technology sector.

This is achieved through:

- Independent Field Technician programme by Openserve
- Consumer Dealers Programme
- Township Innovation Programme

Initially, Telkom invested R250-million through the IDF Future Fund towards technology entrepreneurs in the sector.

The organisation further invested R58-million in funding and R39-million in interest-free loans to current suppliers within the supply chain.

These investments reflect Telkom FutureMakers' commitment to growing ICT SMMEs that form the backbone of the South African economy.

In the 2022 financial year, Telkom Future Makers directly supported 102 enterprises.

These businesses have created 66 536 job opportunities, further showing how, through FutureMakers, Telkom is creating **real value for South Africans and connecting them to better lives.**



“We rise by lifting others”

- Life motto of Netcampus CEO and owner Tebogo Makgatho.

Inspiring a digital future led by women, for all

In an ever-advancing world, women are stepping into roles that were traditionally undertaken by men – including leadership.

At Telkom, we believe in moving away from decades of perceptions that “only men can lead” and embracing opportunities to empower female representation towards achieving a more equal and inclusive future.

The female advantage

We are already seeing great success. Take Mamello Mofokeng, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Spana! for instance.

As a developer, data scientist and cloud practitioner, she is a seasoned information and communications technology (ICT) professional. Beyond her skills in the world of digital innovation, she is also an ambitious and determined entrepreneur.

“I grew up in a household where we had many family-owned businesses. My dad ran a butcher shop, tavern, and general store,” reveals Mamello. “Back then, I didn’t realise how much it was teaching me. But now I can see how it helped me start my own business.”

Today, Mamello is the co-founder and chief executive officer of Spana! – a tech-led start-up that uses gamification to encourage learning and development.



Embracing Opportunities to empower female representation

At Telkom, we are committed to ignite a movement that fans the flames of female empowerment and representation throughout our nation.

As we acknowledge Women’s Month, let us reflect on our individual roles to create an enabling environment that allows women to continue to grow, thrive, and ultimately connect everyone to a better life.



Through a web-progressive software as a service (SaaS) tool, users can track and record their progress on SE-TA-accredited programmes.

"When my partner and I decided to start our business, I knew we needed help to get it off the ground," reveals Mofokeng. "It wasn't long after that we came across Telkom FutureMakers. We participated in their highly competitive hackathon, and won. This provided us with the business development tools we needed to successfully position Spana!. My goal is that we will be able to monetise our tool within the next year."

Through FutureMakers, the Group's Enterprise and Supplier Development (ESD) unit, Telkom has a long history of supporting and funding businesses in the ICT sector. Today, FutureMakers has two main commitments; to help SMMEs thrive in the digital economy and to develop the South African technology sector.

In the world of ICT start-ups, Mamello notes there are far fewer women than men. She says it's not uncommon for people to not take her seriously, or think she's not as good, just because she's a woman.

"There's maybe one woman for every 10 to 15 men. I can count us on a

single hand," says Mamello. "It's easier when you understand that some stereotypes won't change overnight.

It's a challenge that can work for or against you. For me, I choose to see it as an advantage."

According to Mamello, women inherently have what it takes to thrive in a digital environment. But having a mentor in the field, someone to offer guidance and advice, makes things easier.

"Having a strong woman guide you is the most important thing you can do for your career," she says. "You don't always have to make mistakes yourself. You can learn from someone else's blunders, especially if they're okay with sharing their experiences and insights with you."

She believes it's crucial to find someone who is happy to teach you and wants to see you succeed. But it's up to young women to ensure they show up, remain consistent and do what they set their minds to.

Rise by lifting others

"We rise by lifting others" is the personal life motto of Netcampus CEO and owner Tebogo Makgatho.



Dr Mmaki Jantjies, Telkom Group Executive: Innovation & Transformation.

“If we want to reduce unemployment and create future-proof jobs, we need to invest in digital skills development,” she says.

“We must also consider a future where access to opportunities is equal. This is something that both the government and private sector must work towards.”



Born and raised in Soweto, her journey toward a promising career in the ICT sector started along a completely different path.

"When I decided I wanted to study, there wasn't much career guidance," reveals Tebogo. "So, I went for what I thought was right. On paper, I'm a Medical Sciences BSc Graduate from Wits. But what I really wanted was to make money, to be independent."

After university, she began working as a research analyst, investigating trends and growth of black-owned ICT companies. She also spent her time learning from the buying patterns of ICT products and services.

In 2015, she joined the BCX Group as a managing executive for Netcampus, the skills development and training arm of the company.

Not long after, Telkom acquired BCX and the option to do a Management Buy Out (MBO) was presented. She knew this was her shot and took it.

Netcampus has a rich history

and national footprint which continues to flourish under the leadership of Tebogo, as well as the support of FutureMakers. In her case, the ESD unit provided the equity she needed to fund

the initial costs of the MBO, keep the company operational and position it to thrive.

"When Netcampus exited BCX, the staff complement was less than 25 people," says Tebogo.

"Thanks to the support of FutureMakers, we have 81 full-time employees. We have a further 90 interns on our payroll for various projects and clients. With a vision to lead the ICT training industry by inspiring potential to achieve greatness, I am proud of the success we have seen over the last few years."

As a female CEO, Tebogo says she feels blessed because she can make a big difference in women's lives through her businesses. By making her company more efficient and successful, she can give her female employees the chance to grow their careers.

"For me, it's not just about profits, it's also about making a positive impact on society," she says. "I believe in being open to learning and building something meaningful for the greater good."

To that end, every year, Netcampus manages and implements internships, learnerships and various

"Making a positive impact on society"

Telkom FutureMakers.

Bringing ideas to life.



youth development projects for 100 unemployed youth. Thus, the company is an important catalyst of youth employment in the job market.

"All training done by Netcampus leads to the beneficiaries being linked to employers for work-based experience, and ultimately fixed-term or full-time employment," she says. "This is one of the things I really love about what I do. I like helping young people, especially young women, connect with employers and secure jobs."

In her own organisation, Tebogo reveals that she relies on appointed experts for technical matters because she isn't that way inclined. She believes in allowing her team to lead in their areas of expertise while she focuses on sustainability and growth.

"By trusting my team, staying true to myself and listening to my gut, I know things will always work out," she says. "A smart leader knows their strengths and supplements their weaknesses with talented and skilled people. I always surround myself with people who can teach me."

She says this is a lesson that should be applied beyond her business. When trying to improve the economy, we need to focus on developing digital skills, especially advanced ones, that can create more opportunities for others to grow.