

Job Readiness Centres open at 27 libraries

In a job creation partnership between social enterprise, Lulaway, and the National Library of South Africa (NLSA), Mzansi Libraries Online, a Job Readiness Centre, was launched at the Sharpeville Library in Gauteng on 12 September 2017.



The partnership will initially see 27 community libraries house Job Readiness Centres, with a further 600 earmarked for rollout in 2018.

Each of these job centres will offer job seekers the opportunity to register their full CVs at no charge on the Lulaway online database and apply for available vacancies. These job seekers will instantly be connected to a range of employers nationally, enabling them to access a diverse range of job opportunities.

Establishing the job centres is an extension of NLSA's multi-million rand Mzansi-Libraries Online project, which received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Initiative. The grant was given to help strengthen public libraries in South Africa through the provision of new technologies (computers, data, software) and training in ICT to uplift local communities.

With hundreds of national libraries equipped with the latest technology and data connections, it made sense for the NLSA to appoint Lulaway to establish job centres at 27 of these libraries – as an additional service to the communities.

Accessing opportunities

Lulaway chairman, Andile Mkhosana, says as the economy battles to pull itself out of a recession and 14-year high unemployment rate, many individuals' efforts to find work are stymied. "Job creation initiatives are more critical than ever for empowering the millions of unemployed people in South Africa. The current structure of finding jobs for entry-level employees is costly, inefficient and leaves job seekers feeling at a loss of where to turn next.

“While there are more employment opportunities than most realize, equitable and affordable job access is almost non-existent. Jobs are not posted in central locations and employers pick whoever shows up on their doorstep. Job seekers do not know where to start looking and, with no income, they cannot afford the associated costs.”

Sixty-five graduates of the NLSA BCX Graduate Internship Programme will manage these job centres. The previously unemployed youth completed the training programme where they acquired ICT skills and training. Through the internship programme, they also received training on how to assist job seekers on the Lulaway Portal.

ICT skills play a critical role in helping the youth create more opportunities for themselves in terms of employment and entrepreneurship. This collaboration between the NLSA and Lulaway will play a significant role in contributing to skills development amongst the youth.

This initiative will provide unemployed youth with access to technology and information, allowing them to take advantage of employment opportunities as well as align libraries as information hubs contributing to the developmental needs of the communities.

Mkhosana says Lulaway was founded to level the playing field of the job seeker ecosystem. “We have one goal: to connect job seekers to job opportunities, and thereby enable them to find sustainable employment.

“The entry-level recruitment landscape is complex. We cannot sit and wait for people to email their CVs or register on their own computers. We have a deep understanding of the grassroots challenges and we constantly look for ways to increase job access.

“We have created an infrastructure where job seekers are not excluded from opportunities due to their location. We aim to bring job access to the people, rather than force job seekers to resort to ineffective and unaffordable methods.”

Libraries offer freedom

Mkhosana says that the location of these job centres is profoundly significant in a democratic South Africa.

“Libraries represent what we as South Africans will never take for granted: the freedom to learn, the freedom to choose and the freedom to share our ideas. It is where anyone, no matter what their background, can engage with the greatest minds of all ages. In a library, everyone is equal. Libraries are anchors in communities. They offer hope and exposure to global ideas.

“Because of this, the libraries project is more than finding new locations for job centres. Rather, it represents the possibility of what can be done when all parties work in synergy. It represents free and fair economic transformation for every South African.

“These libraries will now become hubs of hope for the unemployed. They will provide free access to economic growth and will play a pivotal role in bridging the divide between the unemployed and the private sector. This partnership demonstrates what is possible when all parties join forces for the greater good,” concludes Mkhosana.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>