



Breaking News: Entrepreneurial education NGO, Ecubed, selected for global digital accelerator for the groundbreaking digital service, TeacherConnect

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Ecubed (DBE-E³) is thrilled to be among the ten organisations joining the Aspen Institute and HP 2023 Digital Equity Accelerator.

The accomplishment is a testament to South Africa's innovative spirit and the hard work and dedication of our nation's teachers. The accelerator helps close the digital divide and reduce the opportunity gap for communities that are underrepresented in the digital world, like many in the South African public education ecosystem. We are delighted to be part of this initiative and look forward to working with the Aspen Institute and HP to grow our community of over 400 000 users even more and get every teacher access to impactful digital tools.

What is the Digital Equity Accelerator?

The Aspen Institute and HP Digital Equity Accelerator is a programme that aims to help not-for-profit organisations promote digital equity and inclusion in their communities. The programme was launched in 2020 and is part of HP's broader commitment to bridge the digital divide. The programme provides funding, training, and support to ten not-for-profit organisations and NGOs working to





reduce the opportunity gap in underserved communities. The selected organisations will receive technical assistance, mentorship, and access to a network of experts and other resources to help them achieve their goals.

“We are thrilled to continue building on the success of the Digital Equity Accelerator with an exciting new cohort dedicated to innovative solutions,” said Michele Malejki, Global Head, Social Impact, HP. “Digital equity is indispensable for access to education, healthcare and economic opportunity, and HP is proud to partner with these organisations pursuing change in their communities.”

Why is it important to close the digital divide?

The digital divide refers to the gap between those with access to technology and the internet and those without access. The divide is most pronounced in low-income communities and formally disadvantaged communities in South Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgency of closing the digital divide as access to technology has become critical for remote work and online learning. However, even before the pandemic, lack of access to technology and the internet has prevented many individuals from fully participating in the digital economy and society.

“We are humbled by the expertise of each local organisation chosen for the 2023 Accelerator,” said Vivian Schiller, Executive Director of Aspen Digital. “This class represents ambitious projects, each addressing some of the most urgent challenges in digital inequity. We’re excited to help these 10 NGOs scale their innovations and deepen their local impact.”





Closing the digital divide is not just a matter of providing access to technology and the internet. It's also about ensuring that people have the skills and knowledge to use technology effectively. Digital literacy is essential for individuals to participate in the digital world and take advantage of the opportunities it offers. By promoting digital equity and inclusion, we can help ensure that everyone has access to the benefits of technology and the internet.

“At its core, the purpose of the Digital Equity Accelerator is to strengthen the work of organisations addressing social and economic inequalities in their communities,” said Hazami Barmada, Director of the Digital Equity Accelerator. “COVID-19 revealed to the world that without full and equal access to the digital economy, inequalities in access to employment, education, healthcare and social services are exacerbated. In selecting this cohort, we sought organisations dedicated to solving issues at the intersection of technology and socio-economic inequalities.”

What does this mean for Ecubed (DBE-E³)?

Ecubed (DBE-E³) is excited to be one of the ten not-for-profit organisations and NGOs selected for the Aspen Institute and HP Digital Equity Accelerator. This programme will provide us with the resources and support we need to expand our efforts to promote digital equity and inclusion in underserved communities. Our mission is to empower formally disadvantaged communities by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the digital world. With the support of the Digital Equity Accelerator, we can reach more teachers and learners and make a more significant impact.





“We are thrilled to be named as one of the ten recipients of Aspen Institute and HP Digital Equity Accelerator from the 120 equally competitive applicants. The resources from Accelerator will assist Ecubed (DBE-E³) to achieve its bold goal of reducing youth unemployment by 90% in 2035”, said Crysty Swift, Ecubed (DBE-E³) Technology workstream lead.

The programme will provide us with funding, technical assistance, mentorship, and access to a network of experts and resources. We will use these resources to develop and implement new programs and initiatives that promote digital literacy and inclusion. We will also work to build partnerships with other organisations and community groups to expand our reach and impact. Ultimately, our goal is to help close the digital divide and reduce the opportunity gap for underrepresented communities.

Conclusion

The Aspen Institute and HP Digital Equity Accelerator is an exciting opportunity for Ecubed (DBE-E³) to expand our efforts to promote digital equity and inclusion. We are thrilled to be one of the ten not-for-profit organisations and NGOs selected for the programme, and we look forward to working with the Aspen Institute and HP to make a positive impact. Closing the digital divide is critical for ensuring that everyone has access to the opportunities of the digital economy and society. We are committed to doing our part to make this a reality.

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About the Digital Equity Accelerator

The Digital Equity Accelerator, an initiative of Aspen Institute in collaboration with HP, Inc., works to advance social and economic equality by investing in not-for-profit organisations and NGOs that are accelerating digital inclusion. Launched in 2022, the Accelerator has successfully helped scale seven organisations from India, Morocco, and the United States, boosting their cumulative reach by 1.7 million people and counting. In 2023, the Accelerator expanded its programming to ten organisations from Malaysia, Mexico and South Africa. Visit digitalequityaccelerator.org or join the mailing list to learn more.

About Aspen Digital & the Aspen Institute

Aspen Digital is a nonpartisan technology and information-focused programme of the Aspen Institute that brings together thinkers and doers to uncover new ideas and spark policies, processes, and procedures that empower communities and strengthen democracy. The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organisation committed to realising a free, just, and equitable society.

About HP

HP Inc. (NYSE: HPQ) is a global technology leader and creator of solutions that enable people to bring their ideas to life and connect to the things that matter most. Operating in more than 170 countries, HP delivers a wide range of innovative and sustainable devices, services and subscriptions for personal computing, printing, 3D printing, hybrid work, gaming, and more. For more information, please visit: <http://www.hp.com>





About E-Cubed (DBE-E³)

E-Cubed (DBE-E³) works with South African educators and learners in public schools. Through TeacherConnect, a WhatsApp chatbot and online community, it provides tools to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and inspire success in young people. For more information, please visit: <https://www.ecubed-dbe.org/> or <https://learn.ecubed-dbe.org/>

For media queries, please contact:

Moeketsi Nchoba

moeketsi@ecubed-dbe.org

0829408575

