



Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs with Digital Skills in South African Informal Settlements: A Mixed Methods Pilot Programme Evaluation

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of a six-month pilot digital skills training programme for youth entrepreneurs in South African informal settlements, focusing on empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. The study employed mixed methods research design, integrating quantitative pre- and post-assessments with qualitative focus group discussions to gather comprehensive insights into the programme's impact. Data collection was conducted among 120 youth participants randomly selected from a sample of 500 applicants. Pre-training digital literacy levels were found to be low, with only 30% of participants able to confidently operate basic digital devices and applications. Post-training assessments revealed significant improvements in digital skills (78%), but challenges such as limited access to technology at home remained prevalent. Focus group discussions highlighted the need for ongoing support and mentorship. The DSYE programme demonstrated potential in enhancing youth entrepreneurs' digital literacy, though persistent barriers hindered full adoption of new technologies outside training environments. Future research should explore scalable models to reach more participants and address long-term sustainability issues. Continuous professional development for trainers is recommended to ensure consistent quality of instruction. Digital Skills Training, Youth Entrepreneurship, South Africa, Informal Settlements, Mixed Methods Evaluation

Keywords: *African, Geographical, Empowerment, Methodology, Practice, Qualitative, Quantitative*

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