

Microsoft launches new jobs drive for S.Africa

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President of Microsoft International, Jean-Philippe Courtois gives a press conference in Johannesburg on June 6, 2013. Microsoft launched Thursday a campaign aimed at helping 3,000 graduates find information technology jobs in South Africa, where one in four workers is officially unemployed.

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The [software giant](#) will partner with the South African government's [job creation](#) fund to train the youths and place them in permanent employment.

"We cannot let an entire generation of young people become long-term unemployed," said Jean-Philippe Courtois, president of Microsoft International.

The company will act as a link between universities and IT companies that they will approach to determine needed skills.

Despite it being the continent's largest and wealthiest economy, South Africa is reeling under chronic joblessness.

Officially, 25 percent of the people who could be employed have no job, of which 70 percent are young people.

The expanded [joblessness](#) rate, which includes people who have given up looking work, paints an even bleaker picture with nearly 37 percent of South Africans unemployed.

Two years ago South Africa established a 9.0 billion rand (\$900 million) jobs fund to create at least 150,000 jobs by 2015. To date some 20,000 [new jobs](#) have been created.

For the 3,000 jobs it is targeting, Microsoft is investing 146 million rand (\$14.6 million) as part of its \$75 million pan-African initiative.

"It is very clear for us as a company, if we want to be relevant, if we want to sustain our growth as a company, we have to work in partnership with many constituencies in Africa," Courtois told AFP.

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