



CAPE WINELANDS KNOWLEDGE SHARING FESTIVAL



REPORT
11 MARCH 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Cape Winelands Knowledge Sharing Festival (CWKSF) was initiated by community broadcaster KC107.7 and is now in its second year. It created a space to explore new ideas for solving challenges in education, governance and skills development. The festival focused on youth opportunities, innovation and building sustainable communities. Experts from various sectors came together to share knowledge and practical solutions. CWKSF began with a CEO dinner on 10 March. This dinner gave leaders a chance to connect and show support for positive change. On 11 March, participants engaged with 12 case studies. Participants could ask questions and take part in the discussions. The presentations showed how small changes can lead to big impact.

2. KC107.7 – A VISION FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT – DR HARLAN CLOETE, CHAIRMAN

KC107.7, a community radio station in the Greater Paarl Valley, has long been a pillar of community broadcasting, amplifying local voices and fostering social cohesion. Through its Knowledge Sharing Festival, the station aims to empower communities by focusing on sustainable development, economic empowerment and improving quality of life. The initiative emphasizes amplifying underrepresented voices, preserving cultural identity, and engaging audiences through multi-platform broadcasting, on air (radio), online (various digital channels) and outdoors (community events). The broadcaster's ABCG partnership model – academia, businesses, community and government play a critical role in driving economic growth and social transformation. As Dr. Harlan Cloete, Chairman of KC107.7, aptly stated, *“We declared this year (2025) as 2020Thrive and we want our people not just to survive – We want them to thrive.”*



3. CASE STUDIES

Participants were presented with 12 case studies, offering an opportunity to engage with the speakers. Each case study shed light on transformative initiatives aimed at empowering youth, advancing technology and driving sustainable development. At the end of the summary, readers can scan the QR code to watch the presentations.

CASE STUDY 1 : USING LINKEDIN FOR CAREER GROWTH – MARY GEDAMU, DIGITAL STRATEGIST



Mary Gedamu showcased the transformative power of LinkedIn as a tool for personal branding, strategic networking, and career advancement. By leveraging the platform, she built meaningful connections with industry leaders and demonstrated her value through personalized outreach and portfolios. Her journey began with proactive engagement, such as directly contacting hiring managers and showcasing her skills through well-crafted messages and visual portfolios. Gedamu's success illustrates the importance of taking initiative and creating value-driven interactions to unlock career opportunities. She emphasized, *"It's about showcasing your value and what you can bring to the table—not just waiting for someone to find you."*



CASE STUDY 2: LINKEDIN'S GLOBAL IMPACT – SEAMUS CLANCY, LINKEDIN VICE PRESIDENT



Seamus Clancy, Vice President of LinkedIn, highlighted the platform's role in addressing economic inequality through data-driven workforce development initiatives. The passion for those at the "bottom of the pyramid" fuels LinkedIn. Drawing on the success of LinkedIn's Economic Graph in Colombia, he demonstrated how real-time employment data can bridge the gap between job seekers and employers. In Colombia, LinkedIn facilitated skill-based hiring and upskilled 600,000 individuals, significantly improving employment rates and attracting foreign investment. Clancy proposed similar strategies for South Africa, including integrating informal jobs into LinkedIn, expanding digital literacy programs, and fostering public-private partnerships to create sustainable



employment opportunities. *“The future of South Africa’s economy is a digital economy that integrates both formal and informal economies,”* he asserted.

CASE STUDY 3: MICROSOFT AI AND THE FUTURE OF WORK – MARTIJN VERMOLEN



Martijn Vermolen explored the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on workplaces, emphasizing its potential to automate repetitive tasks, enhance productivity, and shift hiring practices toward skills-based models. Organizations must embrace AI as a tool for progress by fostering a culture of lifelong learning, ethical AI use, and leadership in digital adoption. Vermolen highlighted Microsoft Copilot as an example of AI-driven efficiency, enabling seamless transitions between Word and PowerPoint to create professional presentations. He noted, *“AI won’t replace managers, but managers who use AI will replace those who don’t,”* underscoring the importance of adapting to an AI-driven world.



CASE STUDY 4: ADDRESSING EDUCATION GAPS – HERMIAS NIEUWOUDT, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL LEARNING SOLUTIONS – SPECCON HOLDINGS



SpecCon Holdings has developed innovative solutions to address systemic barriers in South Africa’s education system, focusing on digital delivery, early childhood development, and AI-driven learning. By transitioning to digital learning platforms, SpecCon has expanded access to quality education, reduced delivery costs, and increased learner participation. Initiatives such as WhatsApp-based learning, low-cost e-learning platforms, and AI-generated video lessons ensure inclusivity and accessibility for underserved communities. SpecCon’s vision of lifelong learning—from early childhood to retirement—reflects its commitment to creating a sustainable educational ecosystem. *“Our purpose is to fundamentally transform education and provide a good quality education for every person,”* said Hermias Nieuwoudt, Director of Digital Learning at SpecCon Holdings.



CASE STUDY 5: USING AI IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE – KUREISH ISAACS, DIRECTOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CITY OF JOHANNESBURG



The City of Johannesburg is leveraging AI to enhance municipal governance, improve service delivery, and foster community engagement. Kureish Isaacs, Director Public Participation at the City of Johannesburg, highlighted the transformative potential of AI in policy development, compliance management, and operational efficiency. Success stories include transitioning to paperless systems and using AI tools like Perplexity and ChatGPT to streamline administrative processes. Isaacs emphasized the importance of fostering a mindset shift among municipal employees to embrace AI as a problem-solving tool. *“AI is not just a tool; it’s a friend that knows everything,”* he explained, underscoring the need for education and training to maximize AI’s impact.



CASE STUDY 6: WHAT DOES A SMART CITIES LOOK LIKE – DE WIT COETSEE, ICT STRATEGY SPECIALIST



De Wit Coetsee explored the concept of smart cities, emphasizing the importance of incremental technological improvements tailored to local contexts. He shared examples such as Drakenstein Municipality’s GPS-enabled waste collection system and the See-Click-Fix app for citizen engagement, which streamline operations and enhance service delivery. Despite financial constraints and aging infrastructure, municipalities can leverage data-driven solutions and AI to address pressing challenges. Coetsee stressed the importance of aligning technology with business needs, stating, *“Technology plus business that solves a problem is the solution—technology alone is not enough.”*



CASE STUDY 7: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION – MERCIA JACOBS, CENTRE MANAGER OF MBEKWENI YOUTH CENTRE



The Mbekweni Youth Centre has become a beacon of hope for youth in Mbekweni township, addressing issues such as unemployment, poverty, and limited access to education. Through programs focused on academic support, life skills development, health and wellness, career guidance, and economic development, the centre empowers youth to rise above their circumstances. Success stories include learners pursuing careers in medicine and achieving academic excellence. The centre's slogan, *"A place of hope, influence, transformation, and responsibility,"* encapsulates its mission to guide young people toward brighter futures. *"Out of the mud and slime comes the lily sublime,"* said Mercia Jacobs, Centre Manager.



CASE STUDY 8: THE ROLE OF AI IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT – SIBUSISO DHLADHLA, ACTING CEO OF THE SERVICES SETA



The Services SETA integrates AI into its skills planning, curriculum development, and adaptive learning programs to prepare South Africa's workforce for emerging technologies. By leveraging AI tools like VR/AR simulations, Services SETA provides learners with practical workplace experience while addressing gaps in traditional training methods. The organization also focuses on entrepreneurship, equipping individuals to start businesses alongside employment readiness. *"Technology and digitization are the key change drivers affecting the type of skills that any industry would require,"* noted Sibusiso Dhladhla, Acting CEO of Services SETA.



CASE STUDY 9: BUILDING A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE – SYLVIA BRUCKNER, INSTITUTE OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT (IMP)



The Institute of People Management (IPM) focuses on preparing HR professionals and youth for an evolving workforce through work readiness programs and future-fit skills training. IPM's initiatives include CV preparation, competency-based interview training, and leveraging AI and social media platforms like LinkedIn to connect job seekers with employers. By fostering collaboration with employers and institutions, IPM ensures participants are equipped with the tools and skills needed to succeed in a dynamic job market. *"Building a future-ready workforce requires collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to continuous learning,"* said Sylvia Bruckner.



CASE STUDY 10: THE USE OF AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION – PROFESSOR ELIZABETH ARCHER, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



Professor Elizabeth Archer from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) explored the transformative potential of AI in higher education. She emphasized how AI can enhance learning experiences, improve efficiency and address challenges such as academic integrity. For example, AI tools like ChatGPT can serve as personalized tutors, guiding students through complex concepts and improving their understanding. Archer highlighted a UWC initiative where AI tutors in pharmaceutical studies improved student performance, with average scores increasing from 62% to 73%. She also stressed the importance of ethical AI use, noting that while AI can revolutionize education, its integration must be transparent and equitable. *"AI is not inherently good or bad. It's about how we use it responsibly,"* she explained.



CASE STUDY 11: WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING HUBS – DR. TIAAN OOSTHUIZEN, INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY



Dr. Tiaan Oosthuizen's Work Integrated Learning Hubs address youth unemployment and the skills gap by providing hands-on experience and fostering innovation in sustainability challenges.

These hubs integrate students into projects that address food security, renewable energy, and waste management, creating opportunities for practical learning and entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as the Net Zero Nexus and Future Leaders Academy showcase technologies and foster cross-sector collaboration to drive systemic change. *"Sustainability challenges are not just problems; they are opportunities for innovation,"* said Dr. Oosthuizen.



CASE STUDY 12: THE MICT SETA'S ROLE IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT – BONTLE MOKOENA, SENIOR MANAGER, SECTOR SKILLS PLANNING, MICT SETA



The MICT SETA addresses skills gaps in ICT, electronics, telecommunications, and media through research-driven planning, innovative funding mechanisms, and strategic partnerships. Programs focus on 4IR readiness, vendor-specific certifications, and soft skills development to prepare learners for the digital economy. Improved employment outcomes and reduced dropout rates highlight the impact of MICT SETA's initiatives. *"The future of the MICT sector lies in our ability to adapt to change, embrace innovation, and empower individuals with the skills they need to thrive,"* said Bontle Mokoena.



4. CONCLUSION AND RESOLUTIONS

The CWKSF noted:

1. South Africa's political, economic and social success depends on its people's capabilities. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly significant role in shaping the future of youth development. A skilled and globally competitive workforce drives economic growth, social development, nation-building, productivity, firm-level competitiveness and society's well-being.
2. Education and training ensure that people have the foundational knowledge and skills to pursue lifelong learning in their personal, public, work and social lives. They equip people with life and employability skills to create sustainable livelihoods and become productive members of society. Investing in AI and technology-driven youth development programs is essential for preparing the next generation for a digital-first future
3. Youth bears the brunt of unemployment with close to 3.7 million (36.1%) young people aged 15-24 are not in education, employment and training (NEETs). And only 15% of the labour force has a post school qualification as their highest level of education.
4. The National Development plan concludes that a comprehensive, co-ordinated, multi-sectoral approach to development is required. Such an approach must include partnerships between civil society, the private sector, government and academia.
5. All development is ultimately local and local government has a direct impact on decision making at the global level – By providing access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities, young people can be empowered to become leaders and innovators in the tech-driven world.

The CWKSF resolved to;

1. **Develop**, implement and monitor collaborative strategies to unlock youth opportunities through various digital platforms.
2. **Build** a database of willing partners (spheres of government, business, community and academia) defining what they can contribute to unlock youth opportunities.
3. **Commission** ongoing research that address and respond to youth/community needs leading to new knowledge and action for social change.

4. **Institutionalise** and accelerate collaboration and coordination among willing partners to unlock youth opportunities.
5. **Amplify** the collaborative efforts of the implementing partners through sharing content geared to unlock youth opportunities.

The Cape Winelands Knowledge Sharing Festival 2025 demonstrated the power of innovation, collaboration, and technology in addressing systemic challenges across sectors. Each case study presented at the festival highlighted transformative initiatives aimed at empowering youth, advancing technology and fostering sustainable practices. By embracing these solutions, communities can build inclusive, future-ready ecosystems that unlock opportunities for all. The event was highly successful with the majority of attendees expressing strong satisfaction. Valuable feedback provided by respondents will inform strategic improvements to ensure future events are even more impactful and inclusive.



APPENDIX A: CEO DINNER

As part of the 2025 Unlocking Youth Opportunities & Knowledge Sharing Festival, KC107.7 hosted an exclusive CEO Dinner on 10 March at Nederburg Wines. This high-level gathering brought together 30 influential leaders from government, business, academia, and community sectors for an evening of meaningful dialogue and networking. The dinner created a unique platform to exchange ideas on how the festival can evolve into a long-term think tank focused on youth empowerment and skills development. Guests praised the warm hospitality, intimate setting, and strategic conversations that laid the groundwork for future collaboration and deeper stakeholder engagement



APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

The initiative received strong participation from diverse sectors, including government, academia, business, and community stakeholders. This broad engagement reflects a collective commitment to collaboration, innovation, and inclusive development.

2. Government Sector

Various government bodies, including municipalities, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and national departments, participated. Key organizations represented included:

- MICT SETA
- City of Cape Town
- Drakenstein Municipality
- Casidra
- City of Joburg, Services SETA, LGSETA, IMPSA, MDDA, Department of Employment and Labour, among others.

This multi-level government involvement underscores significant interest and commitment to the initiative.

3. Academia Sector

Representatives from academic and research institutions contributed to the discussions, reinforcing the importance of knowledge-driven support. Institutions represented included:

- University of the Western Cape (UWC)
- NRF-iThemba LABS
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)

Their participation highlights a commitment to research-based insights and informed decision-making.

4. Business Sector

Diverse industries attended, showcasing strong private sector involvement. Key sectors represented included:

- Financial Services (e.g., Old Mutual)
- Consulting & Training (e.g., SpecCon, Virtual Consulting, De Wit Consulting)
- Media & Communications (e.g., Sakaza Communications, Newskoop)
- Legal, Agriculture, Construction, and other industries.

This diversity reflects an eagerness for cross-sector collaboration and industry-driven innovation.

5. Community Sector

A wide range of grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, youth initiatives, and local development efforts. Notable organizations included:

- Faith-based organizations (e.g., URC Huguenot Church, Church of Ascension, The Bay Christian Family Church)
- Local development initiatives (e.g., Izibane Social Investment Club, Mbekweni Youth Centre)
- Youth, training, and empowerment groups (e.g., Young People @ Work, Work 4a Living)
- Numerous individual delegates and community leaders.

The strong community engagement underscores the importance of inclusive and locally driven development efforts.

6. Conclusion

A total of **120** stakeholders participated in the initiative, demonstrating broad support across key sectors. The diverse representation ensures a holistic approach to addressing challenges and fostering sustainable growth.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The event was broadly successful, with 69% rated the event a perfect "5," highlighting the conference's educational value and overall impact.

Summary of Feedback

- **Positive Themes:**

- Majority praised the conference as “educational,” “excellent,” and “fabulous.”
- High satisfaction with the overall content and organization.

- **Constructive Suggestions:**

- Add more breaks for better pacing.
- Enhance technological aspects and provide practical follow-up resources.
- Introduce youth speakers, principals, and youth centre representatives for broader engagement.
- Incorporate an exhibition section to diversify the conference experience.
- Offer tokens of appreciation (e.g., gifts) to speakers.

Recommendations for future conferences:

1. **Logistical Enhancements:** Adjust event schedules to include additional breaks and amenities.
2. **Content Expansion:** Invite diverse stakeholders such as youth representatives, principals, and youth centre organizations.
3. **Recognition:** Provide gifts to speakers to foster goodwill and strengthen relationships.
4. **Follow-Up Support:** Develop and distribute resources that can empower participants to bring conference learnings into their communities.
5. **New Features:** Integrate an exhibition area to expand learning and collaboration.