

Microsoft SA, Brightwave bring connectivity to 213,000 students in Eastern Cape

Microsoft South Africa and internet service provider Brightwave, have signed an agreement to bring Wi-Fi and TV white spaces technology based on broadband access to more than 213,000 students at 609 primary and secondary schools, as well as several healthcare clinics in King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape.



The partnership forms part of the commitments Microsoft has made via its Affordable Access Initiative (AAI) programme, a holistic, partnership-based programme that invests in internet connectivity, energy access, and IoT (Internet of Things) projects in unserved and underserved communities. The AAI programme seeks to support, accelerate, and scale innovative business developing technologies that enable local communities to utilise cloud-based services and business models that reduce the cost of internet and energy access to help more people participate in the digital economy.

Empowering entrepreneurs

“Far too many South Africans lack internet connectivity along with the educational, commercial and economic benefits of cloud-based services,” says Paul Garnett, senior director within Microsoft’s Affordable Access Initiative team. “Through partnerships such as these, we will be able to empower entrepreneurs to provide connectivity to many more people and consequently, enable the creation of critical services for many more South Africans who need it most.”

This strategic partnership with Brightwave will enable cloud consumption and digital transformation solutions in health, education, public safety and national security. The Brightwave deployment is being co-funded by Microsoft and Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA).

“This initiative will provide many entrepreneurs within underserved communities and rural areas with the tools they need to create businesses, address community problems and also help close the local skills gap by enhancing the learning

experience available to schools in these areas,” says Lumko Mtimde, CEO at USAASA.

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