

Empowering young women to write their own future

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Lancôme launches its global 'Write Your Future' campaign in South Africa.



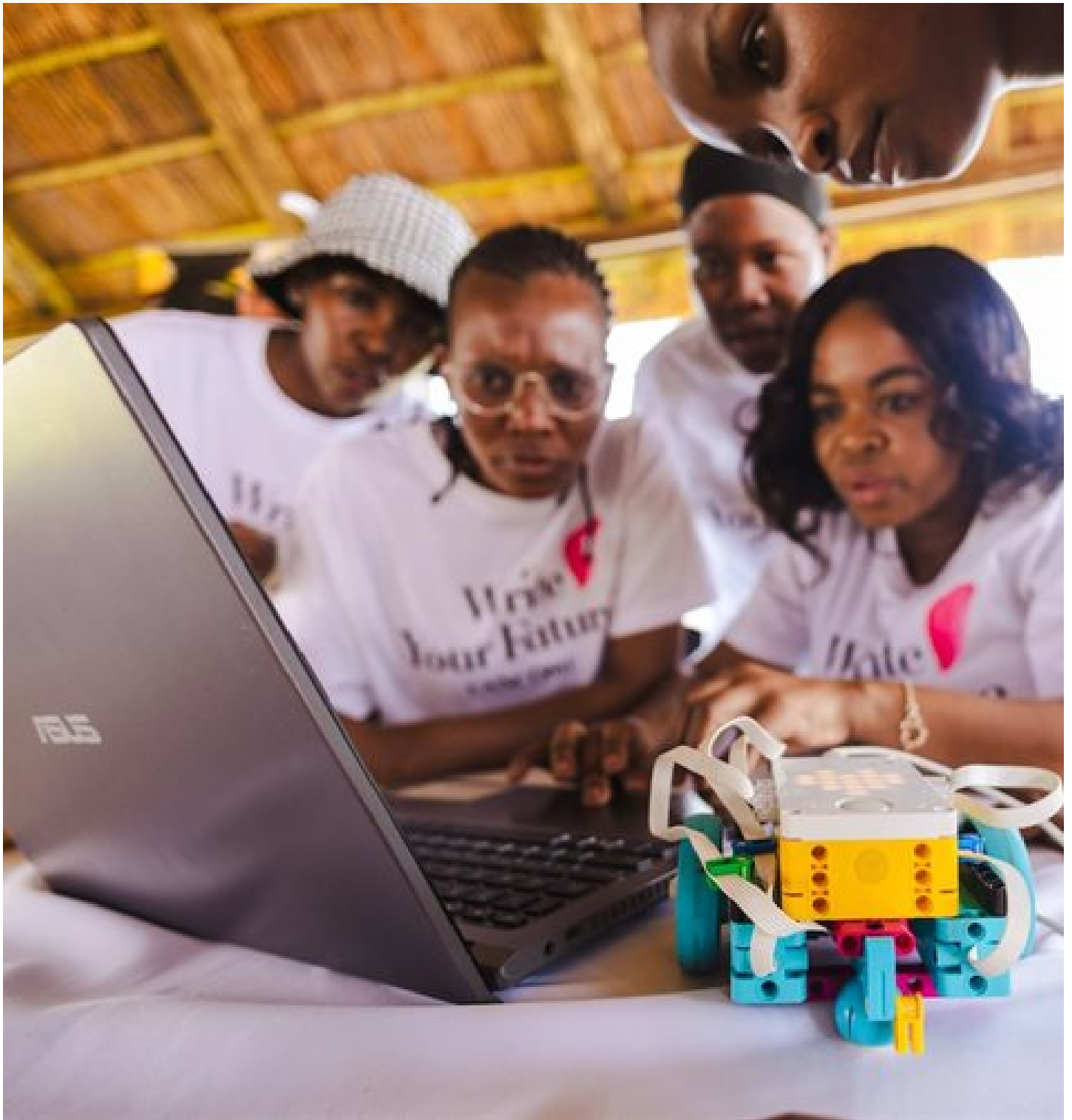
Write Your Future campaign launched in South Africa last month. The local campaign is spearheaded by a pilot project, which launched in Mashite, Limpopo on 20 September, with plans to roll out countrywide over the next few years. Aimed at enabling high-potential women aged between 18 and 25 through digital education, Write Your Future is being delivered in partnership with Social Coding, a non-profit company (NPC) which helps under-resourced communities to leverage technology for a better future.

First launched in 2017, the Lancôme Write Your Future, brand social responsibility programme has empowered more than 150,000 young women around the world. These include the beneficiaries of the Write Your Future Scholarship Fund as well as the beneficiaries of the many learning, entrepreneurship and mentorship programmes funded by Lancôme.

“While adult literacy in South Africa is fairly high, the digital gap is still a notable issue and is a significant barrier to entry into the digital economy,” says Yumnaa Waja, general manager of L’Oréal South Africa’s luxury products division. “Write your Future is specifically designed to ensure that young women have the skills necessary to compete successfully in today’s world of work and to be both personally and financially independent.”

According to the [2022 JCSE-IITPSA ICT Skills Survey](#), South Africa still has a critical shortage of ICT skills, posing a significant threat to the country’s ability to benefit from the fourth industrial revolution. The survey, which is conducted annually by Wits University’s Joburg Centre for Software Engineering and the Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa, found that the digital skills gap is still so substantial that organisations are struggling to fill tens of thousands of vacancies. Critically, this means that a large cohort of South Africa’s youth is unable to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital economy.





Write Your Future, which aims to address this issue, will form part of L'Oréal South Africa's broader sustainability programme.

"Lancôme has always stood for and with women by helping them to develop into the skilled, confident and happy individuals they want to become," says Waja. "With Write Your Future, we will be working with Social Coding to identify the specific needs of young women in rural communities around the country and to provide them with both the digital education and support they need to realise their full potential. And, as around 38% of households in South Africa are headed by women, there will be a very real impact for communities and society as a whole."

Social Coding uses digital literacy and technology tools such as coding, robotics, and virtual reality (VR) to expand socio economic inclusion among young people living in rural communities and to help them use these digital skills to break the cycle of poverty and build successful careers.

“We prioritise digital inclusion so that young people from rural areas can have a better chance of completing their schooling, furthering their education and gaining access to meaningful work,” says founder, Thembiso Magajana. “We are committed to ensuring that every young person, no matter what their background or circumstances, has the chance to learn, grow and thrive in the digital age.”

Waja says that the aim of Write Your Future is to bridge some of the barriers that prohibit youth from becoming active, engaged, productive and independent citizens.

She concludes: “On completion of the programme, participants will be equipped with a higher certificate in information technology. They will then have the opportunity to participate in an eight-month internship. With Social Coding, we want to empower every woman to be the author of her own destiny.”

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