

Google is helping in the road to economic recovery

Google has announced plans to help businesses, job seekers, educational institutions and vulnerable populations as they grapple with the "new normal" and begin to rebuild and recover from the impact of the Covid-19 crisis locally and across the continent.



Alistair Mokoena, Google South Africa Country Director.

The tech company's initiatives will address the need for funding, training and services across identified sectors, including support for 500,000 SMBs and 25,000 teachers.

To this end, Google has set up a digital hub providing free tools and resources to businesses and individuals. The hub will give 500,000 small businesses help to get online or improve their digital presence through Google My Business (GMB), which helps businesses connect with millions of users every month.

"Small businesses have been hardest hit during this period. Many of them have had to figure out quickly how to pivot their operations to a 'digital-first' approach. Yet, there remains a gap between those who can access these online opportunities and those who can't. That's the gap we want to bridge with this initiative," says Alistair Mokoena, Google South Africa Country Director.

Google is also launching a new [Marketing Kit tool](#) to help people to put together marketing kits for their businesses while the free Market Finder tool (which includes updated insights for negotiating a Covid and post-Covid environment) is there to help with localisation, international payments and logistics for African businesses looking to reach new customers around the world. Using information from their Google My Business profile, the tool helps businesses keep customers informed with their latest news, create custom posters and social posts.

In an effort to help job seekers acquire new skills while they look for opportunities, Google is providing underserved

communities and job seekers with R12.5 million (\$750,000) in IT support scholarships through Google.org across Africa. Job seekers can also access the [Grow with Google training portal](#) for help in growing their careers or businesses at their own pace and through flexible and personalised training courses.

For educational institutions and teachers, Google is working with partners across Africa, through Google for Education, to help deploy its suite of education products in schools and help 500,000 students continue learning. To help teachers keep teaching, Google aims to give 25,000 educators access to free online training sessions and resources, such as Teach From Anywhere.

To provide assistance to vulnerable populations, Google.org has set aside R50 million (\$3 million) in grants to non-profits that support education, entrepreneurship and women empowerment across Africa. R8.3 million (\$500,000) of that is going towards a grant to the Praekelt Foundation (a software development non-profit that builds open-source, scalable mobile technologies and solutions to improve the health and well-being of underprivileged people) in order to help train micro and small businesses in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria.

An additional R8.3 million (\$500,000) grant is going to Youth Employment Services in order to provide twelve-month employment opportunities and digital skills to young black people in South Africa.

“We will continue to do our part to help businesses recover and grow, help more people prepare for jobs, and support students, teachers and underserved communities. And in-so-doing, we hope to create real economic opportunity for everyone,” concludes Mokoena.

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