

#LevelUpAfrica paves the way to growing the creator economy in SA

In South Africa, where the youth unemployment rate has surged to a staggering 61%, as revealed by Trading Economics, it's clear that traditional career paths are facing unprecedented challenges. Moreover, the expanded definition of unemployment, encompassing those discouraged from seeking work, remains daunting at 42.6%.



Content creators, LadyFogba, AuntyDiski and TechGirlZA. Photo by Lwando Nqweniso and Hayley Felix. Image supplied.

However, these alarming statistics have sparked a wave of creativity among the youth, propelling them to explore alternative avenues to secure their livelihoods, distinct from conventional careers. One such path gaining prominence is the world of content creation in response to the expansion of digital platforms and the soaring demand for captivating online content.

TikTok stands firmly committed to empowering and uplifting South African content creators through its transformative #LevelUpAfrica programme. Launched in 2021, this pioneering initiative has elevated the careers of hundreds of South African content creators and fostered a vibrant and supportive community.

A journey of discovery

At the heart of this programme lies an immersive in-person experience where content creators ranging from entry all the way up to public figures embark on a journey of discovery. Through a series of exclusive educational masterclasses, the creators are immersed in TikTok's best practices and equipped with insights into the Community Guidelines, best use of the tools in the app as well as the platform's Trust and Safety guide, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to craft engaging and responsible content.

Bianca Sibiya, TikTok's head of content operations for sub-Saharan Africa, emphasises the platform's commitment to nurturing and supporting the inherent creativity of South Africans. She remarks, "The #LevelUpAfrica programme has amplified South African creators' voices and unlocked valuable economic opportunities. It has empowered them to cultivate their personal brands and explore potential collaborations and partnerships, enabling many to grow into multipotentialites underpinned by their passions".

Sibiya adds, "The programme is South Africa's premier content creator education experience, offering a platform for creators to unlock their potential, enhance their TikTok skills and embark on a journey into a realm of endless creativity."

Content creator Yoliswa Gumede shared her experience of the #LevelUpAfrica programme and key insights she acquired: "The most important lesson that I learned while I was attending these events is defining my unique selling point as an influencer that helped me build my brand and my community on TikTok. That helped me hyperfocus on the type of content I wanted to create and the type of community I wanted to create on TikTok."

"I feel like I can now clearly define my identity as a content creator and the type of community I would like to grow on my page," she adds.



Rosemary Zimu and Swanky. Photo by Lwando Nqweniso and Hayley Felix. Image supplied.

The programme is not confined to South Africa alone; it forms part of TikTok's broader initiative to grow this programme across sub-Saharan Africa. The inaugural gathering of diverse creators in South Africa for 2023 underscores TikTok's enduring commitment to supporting and empowering creators and the creative economy in the region.

Some of the benefits of partaking in the #LevelUpAfrica programme include:

- Content support, product tools training and guidance for 2023
- Access to TikTok's exclusive events and masterclasses

- Connecting and collaborating with other creators
- Collaborative opportunities with brands
- Exclusive TikTok merchandise
- Matching creators with relevant internal and external paid opportunities

TikTok's #LevelUpAfrica programme celebrates the success of South African content creators, promotes diversity, and unlocks economic opportunities, all while recognising the urgent need for alternative career paths.

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