

How disruptive technologies are transforming small businesses in Africa

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Regent Business School*, a member of the global Honoris United Universities network, hosted a webinar on the Positive Impact of 4IR on SMME and Start-ups, on Tuesday, 21 July 2020. This follows projections by analysts worldwide that SMMEs (small, medium, and micro enterprises) will play a pivotal role in shaping post-Covid-19 realities.

All around the world, the Covid-19 health crisis has powered up digitisation and fast-tracked 4IR. Here in Africa, this rapid digital conversion packs a potentially extraordinary impact for small businesses who are willing to infuse ideas with digital innovation.

Earlier this week, Regent Business School, through the RegentT Enterprise Development Hub (REDhub) had the pleasure of virtually hosting Kevin Viret, Vice President Africa for Yahsat, an Abu Dhabi-based satellite communications company and the first hybrid (commercial and military) satellite communication system to be launched in the Middle East and Africa. Viret joined Regent Business School MD, Dr Ahmed Shaikh, for a webinar on how 4IR, with its exponential and disruptive technologies, is already influencing small businesses.

Speaking from the business school's iLeadLAB makerspace in Durban, the interactive session saw Dr Shaikh taking participants on a hands-on 4IR journey using interesting examples to visually home in on the effect technology is having on business. Crossing over to the iLeadLAB, participants could see how seemingly "futuristic" technology has already muscled its way in and is at work in various industries in South Africa.

A live virtual demonstration undertaken by Vuyani Dlamini, a Bachelor of Commerce student at Regent Business School at the iLeadLAB, showed the impact of an infusion of tech and innovation. He was tasked with building a product from scratch in just 60-minutes: from ideation to production.

While Vuyani got to work, Kevin Viret, who himself is deeply immersed in technology, spearheaded a discussion on how connectivity is critical for sustainable economic and entrepreneurial development in Africa. He shared practical insights as to how 4IR is being rolled out in the continent by his organisation, saying he was optimistic about Africa's readiness to embrace and mobilise 4IR technology.

The riveting, insightful session ended with a cross-over to the iLeadLAB where Vuyani proudly showed off his masterpiece that took an hour to conceptualise and produce: a chess set made from MDF material using a laser-cutter!

A recording of the webinar will be available on our YouTube page and shared via our social platforms.

Details on how the newly launched entrepreneurial and enterprise development centre, REDhub, can help stimulate digitally driven economic recovery among small, medium and micro enterprises, can be found [here](#).

*About Regent Business School

Since 1988, **Regent Business School** (RBS) has been at the forefront of premium management education across the continent. Headquartered in Durban KwaZulu-Natal, RBS's acclaimed finance and management programmes have helped individuals and organisations build and sustain competitive advantages in a rapidly changing, complex business environment. With tuition centres in all major hubs, Johannesburg, Cape Town, East London and Pretoria, as well as in Eswatini and Namibia, the institution's alumni base of 5,000 is rapidly expanding.

Regent Business School offers 30 formal programmes ranging from Higher Certificates to Doctoral programmes. These qualifications have a strong employability focus using the iLeadLABs as a basis for empowering students.

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