

UCT launches new MOOC to empower people to change the world

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The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a specialised centre at the UCT Graduate School of Business, is offering a first-of-its-kind MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on Innovative Finance that seeks to give individuals and organisations, who are passionate about tackling social issues, the financial tools to turn their plans into reality.

Have you ever despaired over the state of the world, and asked yourself “how can I make a difference”? Or perhaps there’s a pressing issue you, or your organisation, would like to address? Now a new free online course: [Innovative Finance: Hacking Finance to Change the World](#), can help you to create innovative ways to finance that goal.

This ground-breaking Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), which starts on 4 December 2017, is being offered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a specialised centre at the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB). It seeks to empower organisations and individuals to design workable financial strategies to tackle social issues.

Aunnie Patton Power, Innovative Finance Lead at the Bertha Centre and designer of the MOOC, explains that what makes this course unique is it teaches a different way of looking at financing. “It starts with the outcome you want to achieve, for example access to healthcare or clean water, and then you design a financing strategy around that outcome.”

This is the second MOOC to come from the Bertha Centre, as part of a wider UCT initiative to develop [open online learning courses](#) that are free and accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world. The UCT MOOCs project, which was originally funded by UCT’s Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Fund and implemented by [UCT’s Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching \(UCT CILT\)](#), has been a springboard for courses such as Innovative Finance which play an important role in increasing access to education and in helping transform society.

“We’re very proud to have worked with the Bertha Centre to produce this Innovative Finance MOOC, UCT’s 11th free online course to date, which provides strategies for developing innovative ideas for financing action to address social problems. The online space offers passionate educators like Aunnie Patton Power opportunities to reach audiences who wouldn’t otherwise be able to benefit from their teaching and knowledge; and allows for the creation of a global classroom for mutual sharing and learning,” says Laura Czerniewicz, Director at UCT CILT.

The Bertha Centre’s first MOOC – [Becoming a Changemaker: Introduction to Social Innovation](#) has had over 15,000 participants from 168 countries to date, and it was voted by Class Central users as one of the top ten new MOOCs launched in 2016.

“The first MOOC focused on empowering individuals to act as social innovators,” says Dr François Bonnici, Director of the Bertha Centre and Co-Convener of the first MOOC. “This MOOC is focused on innovative financing, and essentially looks at ways to help finance the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is an estimated \$2.5 trillion funding gap, annually, in reaching the SDGs and innovative finance has been identified as one of the key strategies towards bridging that gap.”

Patton-Power says that the course’s methodology is unique. “It lays out how we do what we do at the Bertha Centre. It’s a specific methodology that we’ve designed over the last six years and it ties in with the global focus on SDGs and how we’re working in our small way to help attain them.”

There are no entry requirements for the course and it caters for a broad range of people from different professions. “There

is definitely some financial jargon,” says Patton Power, “but you do not have to have a financial background to join. It is at a level that is very approachable and we define all the terms we use, to cater for those without a financial background.” Although the course may appeal to professionals with tertiary education, no formal education is necessary to participate.

Innovative Finance will appeal to anyone interested in financing social impact, including students and professionals from the public and private sectors. Five case studies are included in the course to demonstrate successful innovative finance models used by foundations, non-profits, social enterprises, private investors and governments. It gives participants the tools to address a social issue, to think through the best way of doing it, and to design a financing and resourcing strategy. “If a traditional model doesn’t work, then we equip you to invent a new one,” says Patton Power.

The Bertha Centre is the first academic centre in Africa dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Centre was recently chosen by the United Nations Development Programme to represent UCT, as one of nine universities worldwide, to develop a research agenda to better leverage private investment to finance the SDGs.

To sign up for this MOOC go to <https://www.coursera.org/learn/innovative-finance>

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