

Microsoft launches AppFactory Academy in Ethiopia

By [Tom Jackson](#)

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Microsoft 4Afrika, Wollo University and Tulane University's Centre for Global Health Equity (CGHE) have joined forces to launch a new AppFactory Academy in Ethiopia, which will offer six-month internships in app development and business skills to graduates.



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The initiative led by [Microsoft 4Afrika](#) will provide selected [Wollo University](#) IT0 and related computing discipline graduate with the opportunity to work on real-world software development projects with senior software engineers.

At the end of the internship, graduates will be able to design, implement and deploy cloud-enabled, mobile and IT solutions in various sectors, and will also be equipped with critical business skills that empower them to secure jobs or create their own startups.

This is the ninth Microsoft AppFactory to be launched in Africa, with eight others in South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Rwanda and Ghana. To date, over 300 software system developers have graduated from the AppFactories, with 90% of these graduates since placed in jobs.

“Across Africa, public and private sector organisations are finding it difficult to recruit capable software engineers. Many end up resorting to hiring expensive expatriates, or spending lots of money on in-house training,” said Lutz Ziob from

Microsoft 4Afrika.

“Yet there are hundreds of local IT graduates who are either unemployed or underemployed, because they are deemed unqualified for these high paying opportunities. The AppFactory is bridging the competency gap for these graduates, so that they are able to take on these kinds of opportunities the day they leave the AppFactory Academy.”

Wollo University will host the new AppFactory at its institution of technology campus, the Kombolcha Institute of Technology (KIoT). Each year, it will set projects based on different sectors, from healthcare to education, agriculture, air transportation and others.

“Wollo University KIoT is committed to helping the government of Ethiopia achieve its goal of developing to a middle-income country by increasing skilled professionals. The AppFactory Academy will focus on certain sectors each year, to ensure we have a large number of quality graduates in various disciplines, who can innovate and problem-solve for social good and improved livelihoods,” said Dr Ahmedin Mohammed, scientific director at the KIoT.

In its first year, the AppFactory will focus on healthcare, through the partnership with Tulane University.

“Tulane and Lalibela Networks PLC offer extensive expertise to render proven IT solutions and services. Our healthcare ICT solutions have been deployed in hundreds of clinics and hospitals in Ethiopia,” said Dr Wuleta Lemma, director at Tulane University.

“We want to ensure that our IT solutions are locally maintained and continue to evolve, however it’s a challenge to find enough qualified information technologists as we expand and scale up in the market. The AppFactory Academy will play a significant role in enhancing local capacity for IT innovation that can transform Ethiopia and the continent.”

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