



IMPACT STORY: Johannesburg, South Africa

Unemployed/Underserved Youth Graduate with Tech Certifications



Graduation Ceremony - July 2023 – Networking and Security Specialists

Interview with Zelda Fynn, Sci-Bono Discovery Centre ICT Manager

Q: How did the Centre get started, and how has it progressed since then?

A: It's been a 20-year journey so far! The [Sci-Bono Discovery Centre](#) celebrated its 20th anniversary on March 17, 2024. What began simply as a collaborative effort between the South African government and the private sectors, housed within a humble electric workshop donated by the City of Johannesburg, has become a leading science and technology center, now the 2nd largest in Africa and the largest in the southern hemisphere.

The team envisioned a space that would ignite a passion for science and technology, and that has become a reality. Today, Sci-Bono boasts over 300 interactive exhibits, a fully-fledged career center offering psychometric, psycho-social, and career education services, and an ICT Centre with multiple international accreditation and industry affiliations. Sci-Bono's reach extends far beyond its own walls through partnerships with government, private institutions, NGOs, research centers, and universities.



[Click to watch a brief video overview](#) (02:58)

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHTS



Beauty Ramushu
IT Network Intern,
Air-Liquide PTY



Nathen Zwane
Monitoring Officer,
Vodacom



Zwivhuya Davhana
Web Development Intern,
University of Johannesburg

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This collaborative spirit has fueled the growth of its teaching and learning across provinces. Sci-Bono is thrilled to announce the upcoming launch of the Multi-Media Broadcast Platform, the 4IR Centre, and a brand new "Classroom of the Future" exhibit with a strong focus on early childhood development. Sci-Bono's dedication has been recognized at a global scale, and it is proud to be a new member of the [World Organization on Science Literacy](#), a testament to its unwavering commitment.

Q: How did the idea of offering Cisco ICT learning emerge?

A: This required a series of steps. First, Sci-Bono and Dell Technologies started discussions to formalize a youth ICT program in 2009. Four Sci-Bono staff members were identified to receive ICT Training from the Cisco Academy situated nearby. Then, expanded ICT training for Sci-Bono teachers was a collaboration between The Clubhouse Network Coordinator and the Science Centre Teacher Development Education Officer. These teachers then conducted digital literacy training for a group of unemployed, disadvantaged youth, which included placement in jobs at the City of Johannesburg offices.

[Current learning material](#) includes:

- IT Essentials
- Introduction to Cybersecurity
- Linux Essentials
- Networking Essentials
- CCNA: Routing & Switching
- CCNA Cyber Operations
- Internet of Things
- Programming in C, C++, Python
- Web Development
- End User Computing
- Microsoft Office
- Essential Life Skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Job Readiness Skills

Q: Was it tough to implement or promote?

A: There were some teething problems with the first cohort of 30 unemployed youth who achieved a pass rate of only 10%. The biggest challenge was the language barrier, as the material was only available back then in English, which is a second or third language for most of our learners. So, we set up additional support to ensure development of the foundational ICT skills. We also revised the entry requirements. This enabled us to deliver the next cohort with greater success.

The program is not at all hard to promote as youth unemployment in South Africa is high, and many of our youth have no financial resources for ongoing studies. There is always a demand for free formal training and skills development. Youth, parents, guardians, and other supportive programs are eager to learn about what Sci-Bono can offer for building successful economic pathways.

Q: How is it going now?

A: The program has grown in reach, levels offered, and status. Sci-Bono is now an official Cisco Instructor Training Centre and an Academy Support Centre, enabling us to support other programs beyond our center with registration, start-up infrastructure, and content.



Sonwabile Manqalaza
Enterprise Service Desk + Access SOC, Vodacom



Thendo Masindi
IT Network Intern, Air-liquid



Jaden Smith
Cisco Instructor Training



Nyiko Mpunzi
IT System Support Intern, Carnival City



Martin Tsabalala
Service Account Mgr, Dell Technologies



Sivuyile Shwayimba
Network Security Engineer, Dimension Data



Julius Dhlamini
Level 2 Network Engineer, Peermont School Support Program



Lesedi Masokwane
Sr Technical Support Agent, Dell Technologies

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Annually, we serve 250 youth in our full-time Youth Development Program. We also serve school learners, teachers, technical and vocational colleges, national libraries, and other organizations. We offer Cisco specialized training and certification prep for IT Essentials, Networking Associate, Cyber Operations, and Programming, which are globally recognized and in demand to fill job openings in South Africa and beyond.

Q: Who thought of the idea to require certification for Sci-Bono graduation?

A: The South African job market relies heavily on formal certification for employment, so it is essential need for job seekers to have on their resumé.

All of our youth complete 5 introductory courses for entry into the Youth Development Program. Upon successful completion, they register for the formal 10-month program, which offers:

- Full-time training and support (with trainers available from 09:00-16:00 daily)
- Technical resources, including laptops and networking equipment such as routers and switches, to gain practical hands-on skills
- Upon successful completion of the learning material (including Cisco assessments), participants receive vouchers to cover the cost of the international certification exam

Q: What does this mean to your Clubhouse learners?

A: Once they pass the certification exam, they are provided with the internationally-accredited certification to ensure their competence in their area(s) of specialization. This improves their competitiveness in the job market.

Q: Do they collaborate on learning and exam prep?

A: The Clubhouse Learning Model is active pedagogy where learners research and collaborate with peers before consulting the instructor for guidance. They are exposed to project-based learning where they apply competence gained by finding solutions to real-life scenarios. All the instructors require valid certification in the courses they teach, so they are able to provide extensive, up to date examination support and preparation. Learners complete their certification exams in phases, and those who complete first return to provide examination support to their peers who are scheduled next.

Q: How does this program build confidence for your learners?

A: Our program makes a deliberate effort to build confidence through a multifaceted approach that emphasizes skills, mentorship, and experiential learning. Through structured activities such as team-building exercises, opportunities to present their projects, and workshops focused on personal development, learners are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and explore their potential. They are exposed to professionals in the industry through information and motivational talks and mentorship.



Kerry Ann Bosman
Instructor,
Makwa-it Academy
CCNA/DevNet



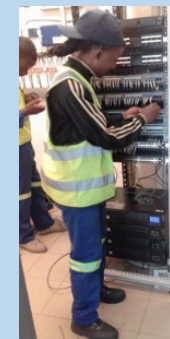
Gosiame Moyo
Network Engineer Intern



Caleb Hassin
One Year Internship



*"Sci-Bono Youth Development was a stepping stone for me into the IT industry. It enhanced my skills to help me earn a proper living income, and enjoy my job. I am forever grateful to the opportunity that Sci-Bono gave me. Today, I am a **Cyber Security Specialist.**"*
-Victor



*"I was able to get my dream job as a **Network Engineer.** It required a CCNA certification, and that was not gonna happen if I didn't get the opportunity at Sci-Bono ICT Academy. Today I am the world's happiest man since I can use the skills and qualifications to my advantage."*
-Sci-Bono learner

The Learning Model encourages positive reinforcement and constructive feedback from instructors, peers and mentors - this plays a crucial role in bolstering self-esteem and fostering a sense of accomplishment.

Real-world experiences, such as ad-hoc projects for Sci-Bono, community service, and internships, where they can apply their skills and see the tangible impacts of their efforts, further boost their confidence and sense of efficacy. Through this supportive environment and hands-on learning approach, learners gradually build the confidence and resilience needed to navigate challenges and pursue their goals with determination.

Q: How does Sci-Bono’s program create options for their future?

A: Our graduates have preferential access to funder employment and further skills development opportunities. They gain valuable sought-after skills and internationally recognized qualifications leading to job opportunities. They also gain confidence, hope, and the mindset that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to. Some choose to continue with more advanced ICT studies, and some achieve self-employment by starting their own business.

Q: Is ICT in demand in Johannesburg?

A: Cybersecurity, advanced networking, and programming remain on the critical skills list in our region and beyond, so our youth are set up for good employment opportunities.

Q: How do parents perceive the opportunities Sci-Bono creates?

A: Parents make tremendous sacrifices to enable their children to attend our program. They want their children to become more employable and have a chance for a better life. They are proud of their children's achievement and very grateful for the opportunities provided by Sci-Bono.



"In our pursuit of digital equity and access, the partnership between Sci-Bono and TCN empowers South African children from underserved areas to stand as equals on the global stage, alongside their peers worldwide."

- Anele Davids (far left), Sci-Bono Acting COO and Clubhouse Network Board Member

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"Being from a rural area (Sweet Waters), I was not familiar with a computer. I joined the Sci-Bono IT

Essentials course, and learnt a lot about computer hardware. I was able to help people with computer problems.

I managed to raise funds to register for more classes with the little compensation from those I helped. At University, I did not struggle much with completing my assignments because the program had already exposed me to the IT world.

*Today I am a **teacher at Davey Secondary School** and I was part of the ICT committee, since we use smart boards to teach. I assist older educators with ICT-related issues. Thank you so much Sci-Bono for introducing me to the digital world of the 21st century."
- Lebohlang*

For more information about the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, click here: [Sci-Bono Discovery Centre](#)