

The Future of Entrepreneurship in Africa

Smart township digital framework: Growing the township economy post-COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic changed how people and businesses interact. Its impact severely impacted the global economy. As the governments of different countries imposed heavy lockdown regulations to curb the spread of the virus, an already struggling informal sector economy was the most affected. South African townships were not immune to the impact. Though the South African government introduced various financial relief through the R500 billion support grant, most township entrepreneurs could not access the government grant to sustain their everyday business operations. As a result, many livelihoods and informal businesses within the townships were severely impaired. Drawing on the experiences and good practice in the conduct and reporting of systematic review method, this chapter commenced by reviewing published journal articles and reports on township economy and digitalisation. The chapter then proposes a smart township digital framework for growing the township economy post the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework is built on four components: (i) last-mile connectivity; (ii) cloud & virtualisation; (iii) customers and end-users; and (iv) key enabling digital skills. To conclude, this chapter offers critical recommendations that will enable the implementation of the proposed framework. It is worth noting that critical research directions for developing knowledge in this domain have been flagged.