

# Press information

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## ESMT Berlin employability program in Africa opens new locations and moves virtual

The Industry Immersion Program (IIP), a joint initiative by business school ESMT Berlin and the [African Institute for Mathematical Sciences \(AIMS\)](#), welcomed three new classes this week. Launched in 2017, the tuition-free program prepares mathematically trained African graduates to transition from an academic environment into industry. This year, the IIP serves students at new locations in Kigali, Rwanda and Accra, Ghana, in addition to its original location in Cape Town, South Africa. Due to COVID-19, teaching moved to a blended format, with students following online seminars from their respective campuses accompanied by local work readiness and skills programs.

The IIP is an important contribution to sustainable industrial development and new job opportunities in Africa, which is particularly relevant in the face of the current economic crisis. Due to their heavy reliance on the export of raw materials, many African economies suffer greatly from the current global recession and shrinking demand.

“Only a few weeks ago, the IIP was on the brink of being cancelled because of the Corona restrictions,” said Nick Barniville, associate dean of degree programs and director of the EdTech (educational technology) lab at ESMT. “But thanks to the agility of our African partners, the ESMT faculty, and a team of fantastic ESMT student interns, we were able to move our program content online much faster than anyone would have expected. The current crisis is an enormous challenge for education providers worldwide, but it is also a catalyst for innovation and pragmatic solutions. I am happy that we were able to not only implement the program this year, but even to expand delivery from one to three locations simultaneously, serving more students than ever before.”

While the IIP had seen around 25 participants each year previously, the current three intakes have 45 students altogether – 15 at each location – with 53 percent of them being female. Over the course of two months, the students attend courses on topics such as general management, data analytics, and entrepreneurial strategy. The online units, delivered via ESMT’s digital learning platform The Hub, are accompanied by live video lectures and class discussions. In addition, the students follow a comprehensive industry-linked skills development program delivered by the AIMS teams on the ground. The academic module is followed by a three- to six-month internship with industry partners in Africa, including renowned German companies such as Siemens, B. Braun, and Bosch.

The first three years of the IIP have been successful. Of the 78 alumni, 80 percent gained employment in industry and ten percent a position in academia after program completion. The pilot program is supported with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) via the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

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### About ESMT Berlin

ESMT Berlin is the highest ranked business school in Germany and Top 10 in Europe. Founded by 25 leading global companies, ESMT offers master’s, MBA, and PhD programs, as well as executive education on its campus in Berlin, in locations around the world, and in online blended format. Focusing



on leadership, innovation, and analytics, its diverse faculty publishes outstanding research in top academic journals. Additionally, the international business school provides an interdisciplinary platform for discourse between politics, business, and academia. ESMT is a non-profit private institution of higher education, accredited by AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS, and FIBAA. [esmt.berlin](https://www.esmt.berlin)