

Lesley Donna Williams

Lesley is the CEO of Wits University's Tshimologong Precinct that aims to take African digital innovation to global markets through entrepreneurship and skills development. She further serves on Gauteng Premier David Makhura's 4IR and Digital Transformation Advisory Panel. She founded Impact Hub Johannesburg in 2010 to advance social entrepreneurship in Africa.

Lesley has 20 years international experience in curating innovation ecosystems and networks with a primary focus on social and digital innovation. She moderates dialogue and facilitates change processes, creating common ground between diverse public and private stakeholders.

Her work is celebrated through multiple awards; she participated in the 2018 inaugural class of the Obama Foundation Leaders Program: Africa and was requested to be a mentor on the successive program. She is a recipient of the 2018 InspiringFifty award, an initiative by the Kingdom of the Netherlands to recognize the 50 most inspiring women in South Africa's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries. She became a recipient of the 2015 Unashamedly Ethical Award in the Business Category and in 2011 was selected onto the list of the Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans. In 2009 she was selected as one of 60 young global leaders on a BP Antarctica Expedition focusing on Climate Change.

Lesley's work is regularly featured in the media and includes CNN, Fast Company, CNBC Africa, and Entrepreneur Magazine, USA. Audiences she has presented to include the UN Women, African Union, Gauteng Provincial Government and the South African Presidency's Commission on the 4th Industrial Revolution. A career highlight was moderating a dialogue on Nelson Mandela's legacy and the Future of Africa between President Barack Obama and Graça Machel at the African American Museum in Washington DC.

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