

PRESS RELEASE: embargoed until 17.00, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

## **Johannesburg: Public launch of digital initiatives to support migrants**

**Three new initiatives using digital technologies in support of migrants and their families have been launched today** during an event held at St Patrick's Catholic Church, La Rochelle: **the *Fusion Avenue* channel on YouTube**, which makes available videos crafted by migrants for migrants about their lives in South Africa; a **Documentary film *Through Their Eyes*** made with migrants by Simone Zanetti and Maria Rosa Lorini; and training resources about the safe, wise and secure use of digital tech by migrants.

In 2020 it was officially estimated that there were 2.9 million migrants living and working in South Africa, although some informal estimates place the real number much higher at around 4 million. Most African migrants come from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi, Ethiopia, DR Congo, Somalia and Botswana (all of which recorded more than 50,000 in 2020), but people from many other African countries also make their home in South Africa in search of safety and economic opportunities for themselves and their families. These free online resources are designed to provide all of them with advice to improve their lives and especially to help them use digital tech safely, wisely and securely, thereby avoiding the abuse, harassment, identity theft and other crimes that can arise from such use.

The initiative was conceived and facilitated by the Digital Technologies and Migration work package (WP9) of the MIDEQ Hub funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). WP9 is led by Professor G. "Hari" Harindranath and Professor Tim Unwin CMG, with the support of Dr. Maria Rosa Lorini (who led the work in South Africa), based at the ICT4D Collective (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK). The resources were created collaboratively with migrants and organisations in both the Johannesburg and Cape Town regions, including the Scalabrini Centres in Cape Town and Johannesburg, the University of Cape Town, UNISA's Information Systems Department, Stoneintheshoe, GSMA, and SIHMA. Other organisations involved in the initiative have included Adonis Musati Project, Cape Town TV, Ubuntu Bethu, and Philippi TV.

*Use and share these free resources to improve the lives of migrants in South Africa*

### **For more information:**

- The MIDEQ Hub: <https://mideq.org>;
- Work Package 9 on Technology, Inequality and Migration <https://www.mideq.org/en/themes/digital-technologies-and-inequality/>
- Fusion Avenue channel on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@FusionAvenueOfficial>
- The ICT4D Collective: <https://ict4d.org.uk>

### **Contacts:**

Dr. Maria Rosa Lorini: [MariaRosa.Lorini@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:MariaRosa.Lorini@rhul.ac.uk) (until 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

Prof. G. "Hari" Harindranath: [G.Harindranath@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:G.Harindranath@rhul.ac.uk)