

Stories of Impact shared at AUx

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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[Autodesk's University Extension \(AUx\)](#) event took place at Cape Town's Century City Conference Centre earlier this month. Kostas Samaras, Autodesk territory director for Africa, expanded on some of the projects undertaken by the sustainability arm of the organisation, the [Autodesk Foundation](#).

The Autodesk Foundation focuses investment on people and organisations using design for impact.

"The goal of the Autodesk Foundation is to help non-profit organisations, innovators, and entrepreneurs meet very complex and challenging project goals around the world," explained Samaras.

The foundation provides training and technical skills to non-profit organisations to enable them to create innovative solutions that can help contribute to a better world.

Samaras highlighted a few of the key projects:

[KickStart International](#)

Many traditional smallholder farmers in Africa depend on seasonal rainfall to water their crops, leaving them vulnerable to drought, and other irregular weather conditions. KickStart International designs and makes low-cost irrigation pumps accessible to these farmers allowing them to grow more crops, start their own businesses, and secure their food needs.



According to KickStart International, so far 287,435 pumps have been sold across Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 216,000 businesses have been created, and more than 1,000,000 people are now out of poverty.

[Water for People](#)

Water for People is an international non-profit organisation working across nine countries, including Malawi, Uganda, and Rwanda, to make safe water and sanitation accessible to four million people.



Its engineers make use of software, design tools, and technologies to meet the unique topography, climates, and population needs in each of the communities they serve. The initiative, according to Samaras, has provided safe drinking water for 3000 people in the Rulindo district of Rwanda.

Foundations for Sustainable Impact in Kayamandi

Earlier this year, Autodesk volunteers participated in a pro bono project in Kayamandi Township, Stellenbosch. Over two weeks, Autodesk and its partners from Team4Tech and SMALLIFY spent more than 70 hours each working directly with teachers and learners in the community.



During a hands-on workshop with Fusion 360 at Stellenbosch University, students were challenged to develop innovative concepts for water collection and storage that could be useful to the Kayamandi community.

2016 Community Plumbing Challenge

Following Samaras, Matthew Bell, global strategic partnerships manager with Autodesk Education, expanded on the 2016 Community Plumbing Challenge in Diepsloot that aimed to inspire students to focus on real world challenges faced on a daily basis in communities.

The community of Diepsloot has to contend with issues surrounding inadequate access to clean water and sanitation. During the project four international teams, including South African students and the local community, were challenged to design and install their projects while integrating Autodesk's Fusion 360.



Team South Africa Design

22 new toilets were installed at the end of the challenge, supplying clean water and sanitation to over 5000 people, saving 6000-litres of water each day at each installation, explained Bell. Together with the [International Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Foundation](#), Autodesk is raising money to continue this work in Diepsloot where more than 730 toilets are in need of repair or placement.

For more info on the Autodesk Foundation and its Stories of Impact, go to www.autodesk.org.

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