

## UK BRITISH COUNCIL CEO VISITS AI CENTRE AT BRITS CAMPUS

*(By Reuben Marakalala: Media and Communications Officer)*



**Pictured f.l.t.r: Ms Skhumbuzo Masango – British Council Schools Project Officer, Ms Rumbi Mapani – British Council – Skills Consultant, Mr Harry Kgankenna -AI programme coach, Ms Tebogo Tlhopile - Brits Campus Manager, Mr Scott McDonald -British Council CEO, Mr Dika Mokoena -College Principal, Ms Goerge Barret – British Council South Africa Country Director, and Veronica Matiziba British Council Regional Senior Marketing Manager**

ORBIT College has been enjoying a solid partnership with the British Council for more than ten years. In 2022, the British Council in collaboration with ORBIT College piloted an Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme at Brits Campus that has since started to bear significant fruits. Artificial Intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, more especially computer systems. The specific applications of AI include expert systems, natural language processing, speech recognition and machine vision in simple terms technology at an advanced level. The significance of the AI project was cemented further on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 as a British Council delegation, led by CEO, Mr Scott McDonald, visited Brits Campus with the specific focus to view and experience the advancement made in Artificial Intelligence (AI) at the AI Centre. Regional Manager for Mpumalanga and North West TVET Colleges, Dr Nick Balkrishen, College Council Chairperson, Dr Kabelo Moloantoa and College Principal, Mr Dika Mokoena formed part of the College delegation who welcomed the British Council delegation. Brits Campus Manager, Ms Tebogo Tlhopile and Campus AI Programme coach, Mr Harry Kgankenna were also in attendance to honour this special occasion.

During the management meeting, Mr McDonald indicated that he was so impressed with feedback received from his colleagues about the AI project and its objectives that he decided to visit the College himself to observe what the students are doing. Apart from observing the strides made in the advancement of the AI project, the visit also served to strengthen the partnership between South Africa and the UK since it is aimed at changing the lives of young people. Mr Dika Mokoena, College Principal indicated that the College is indeed heading the right direction if this programme succeeds in eventually reducing the unemployment statistics of the country. In his presentation, Mr Mokoena pointed out that the College is planning on expanding the AI laboratory and

recruiting more students. At present, the AI programme has only nine committed students of which five are male and four are female.

Mr Harry Kgangkenna, AI Programme coach highlighted the huge progress made in AI projects by the enrolled students since they started on the programme. The delegation had the opportunity to witness the progress registered as they visited the AI laboratory and interacted directly with the students. The different projects include, but are not limited to biometric entrance control, anti-cable theft alarming, temperature-based water recommendation and AI asset management.

In his closing remarks, College Council Chairperson Dr Moloantoa expressed his gratitude towards all role players while reiterating College management's dedication to the AI programme and ensuring its compliance to National Development Plan (NDP) objectives, more specifically in terms of addressing the challenge of gender inequality by recruiting and enrolling more female students.



**Pictured above is British Council CEO, Mr Scott McDonald registering and requesting access to enter the facility via a biometric entrance control system**



**British Council delegation pictured together with AI programme students and ORBIT College delegates**