

EPF Tech Hub helps empower young developers with hackathon

The Empire Partner Foundation Tech Hub (EPF Tech Hub) hosted its first hackathon on 7 and 8 November at its headquarters in Illovo, Sandton. The hackathon empowered 30 young developers from across Gauteng to foster their innovation into cutting-edge solutions to urbanisation.



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The EPF Tech Hub is a local NPO that is committed to harnessing emerging technologies like AI, big data, fintech and IoT to build solutions that address the key challenges in South Africa, such as unemployment, urbanisation, rural development, and water and energy challenges.

The diverse mix of developers at the hackathon included students, IT professionals and civil society. The theme for the hackathon was 'Urbanisation' and how the use of data can address the challenges and opportunities posed by urbanisation in the region, hence the name 'Digital GCR'.

Akivan Kemraj, CEO of the EPF Tech Hub, says: "General and easily accessible information about the Gauteng city-region has not been available in the region. This has resulted in frustration, poor planning and poor service delivery."

"We plan to address this problem through the creation of a new Digital Gauteng City Region platform. The platform will bring together existing and new information, opportunities and useful information via an e-platform for the public good, including

current planning challenges and poor service delivery. The platform will provide a digital ecosystem where innovators can deeply understand challenges in real-time in order to develop comprehensive, tech-focused solutions."

"The first iteration of the Digital GCR platform will focus on the early-stage technology companies in the Gauteng City Region. The reason for this is to stimulate the industry and form a community where innovation is abundant and collaboration is promoted. It will be challenging for us to digitise the Gauteng city-region alone, but with the collective efforts of the innovators in the region, we can accomplish this," concludes Kemraj.

A panel of key individuals inspiring the developers

Sharing their vast knowledge to guide and inspire the developers were a panel of key individuals from the public and private sector, including Xolile George, CEO of the South African Local Government Association (Salga), Reshaad Sha, CEO of BriteGaze, and Tahir Sema, a *Mail & Guardian* Top 200 Young and Inspirational Youth. The unique collaboration between developers and civil society ensured that everyone at the event had a true context of the real-world challenges that stem from urbanisation.

The developers returned to complete their solutions on the second day. Each hour brought the five teams closer and closer to winning their share of the R20,000 cash prize sponsored by Itakane ICT, NMVE Capital and Afri-Tec Technologies.

The winners of the Hackathon, team Gravitass, built a unified platform for users to log incidents relating to water, waste and electrical incidents directly to the municipality.

In addition to this, their platform also provides job opportunities to private contractors to address the incident while being subsidised by the municipality in an innovative 'Tinder your plumber' feature. The platforms seek to reduce the pressure on municipalities while providing opportunities to local plumbers and electricians. The platform also integrated a WhatsApp chatbot for users to interact with the platform easier.

The second hackathon will take place on 14 and 15 December. Registrations are open on [EPF Tech Hub's website](https://www.bizcommunity.com).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>