**Press Release**

# SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT HACKATHON
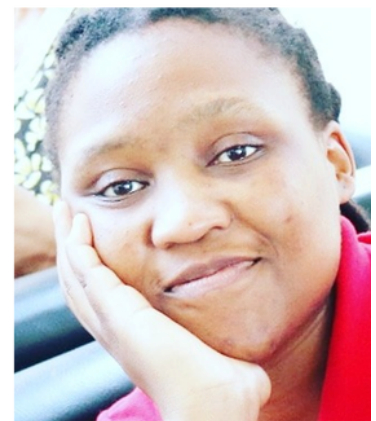
28-29 May 2022

Sponsored by :

**EPF TECH FUND**



**Winning Team: Monarchy**

Top Row: Sibusiso Magwaxaza (Team Leader), Hope Nkabinde, Elelwani Makulan, Tshegofatso Mmakola.
Bottom Row: Nduduzo Shabalala, Clarence Mantiya, Precious Myemane, Sisipo Songo .
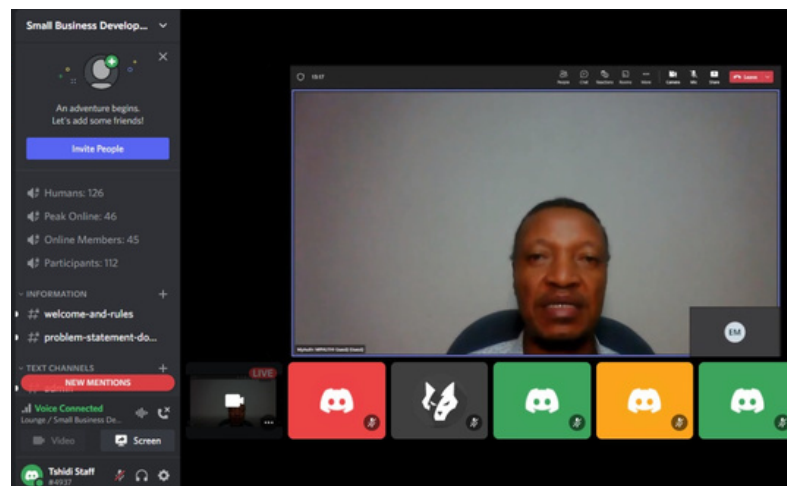
# Empire Partner Foundation

- EPF hosted its 2nd virtual hackathon and 19th hackathon since inception.

- Funded by the EPF Tech Fund, the EPF virtual hackathon was hosted on Discord (digital platform).

- **Context:** SMMEs are currently operating within a highly competitive business environment. Given the current state of our economy and the level of unemployment, this will likely continue for the foreseeable future, leading to limited market access inhibiting their growth. The quest for new business opportunities is the key driver for expansion across industries, but with limited or no marketing activity, SMMEs are bound to remain stagnant.

- **Hackathon focus:** How can tech assist SMMEs to access new markets, reduce business costs and increase efficiencies and productivity?

- 102 young digital innovators in programming, business, finance and marketing from across South Africa participated in solving the challenge by developing tech solutions.
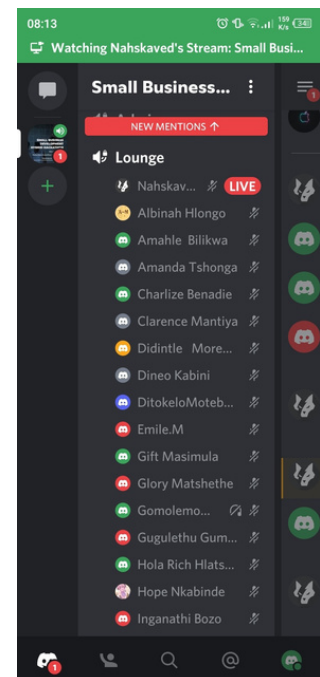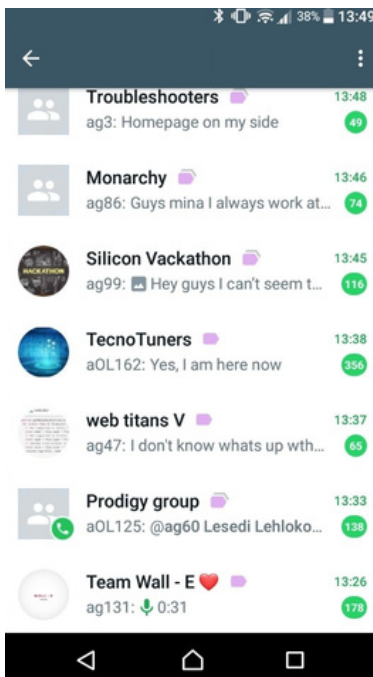
## FAST FACTS

- 19 HOSTED HACKATHONS
- 6 UPCOMING HACKATHONS IN 2022
- 1000+ TOTAL DIGITAL INNOVATORS
- ITWEB NEWS COVERAGE
- 174 SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED
- 18 NEW PARTNERSHIPS SECURED
- 50 KEYNOTE SPEECHES
- 16 INTERN OPPORTUNITIES CREATED
- 10 BURSARIES PROVIDED
- 19 WINNING TEAMS WITHIN OUR INCUBATION HUB
- OVER HALF A MILLION RAND IN CASH PRIZES AWARDED

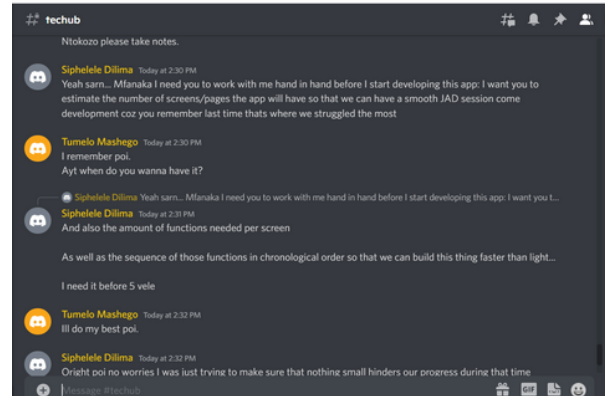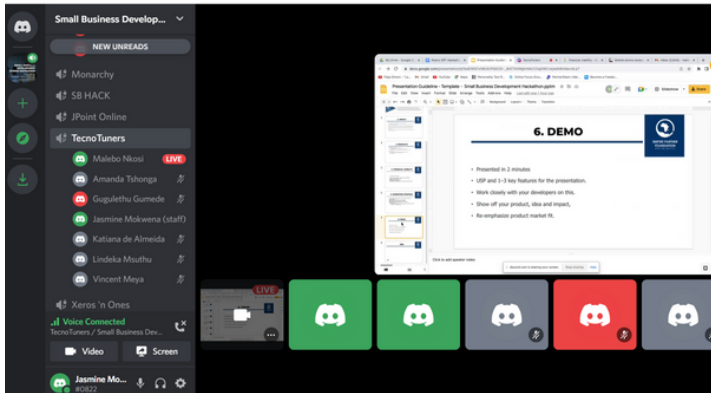**Discord (Digital Platform):**
**Keynote Speech by Mr Mphuthi Mphuthi (Soweto Business Access, Chairman; & Spaza Bank, Founder)**

- The winning team, Monarchy was awarded R8000 cash prize, now join the EPF Incubation Hub, where they will get support to become technopreneurs. Their Team Leader, Sibusiso Magwaxaza says, "It was the problems that we see small businesses encounter in the townships that we come from. Moreover, the previous hackathon that was about unemployment made us realize that another solution to solve the unemployment crisis in South Africa is to introduce business empowerment opportunities using technology."

- The name of the solution is SmartTrade. SmartTrade is a web-based platform that uses an API system to assist SMMEs to access new markets, reduce business costs and increase efficiency and productivity. In addition, We also provide an app that will be integrated with the websites which focuses more on the daily business operations, e.g Service, Sales, Manufacturing and Marketing.

- Gugu Maqetuka, Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer of Self Leadership Academy said, "Small business enterprises are the lifeblood of any economy. Globally, over the last few years more jobs have been created in this sector through the promotion and support of entrepreneurs. At Self Leadership Academy we believe that the psychological health of entrepreneurs needs to be prioritised to enable their success. This is an aspect that has been neglected in the past to our own and our country's detriment. Success as an entrepreneur is more than having the ability to learn business related skills, it's also about building resilience that will ensure sustainability."

- Jasmine Mokwena, the face of EPF and Marketing & Hackathon Coordinator says, "Unemployment is one of the 10 public-sector issues that we at EPF have mandated ourselves in solving through tech. As such, addressing the challenges that Small Businesses face, using tech through our hackathons, will ultimately encourage self-employment and as a result mitigate unemployment rates that adversely affect the economy. Our EPF hackathons provide South African youth the platform to apply the knowledge they learn in university in solving real-world problems, whilst creating an atmosphere of collaborating in teams with strangers, and building the confidence in pitching their ideas."

## Upcoming Hackathons:

- 6 more monthly hackathons to be hosted in 2022 by Empire Partner Foundation. Save the calendar by clicking here: https://cutt.ly/tGn0Ye5
- The next hackathon theme will be announcement on our Social Media platforms to be hosted end of June 2022. Follow us on these handles: https://linktr.ee/epftechhub

**Special thanks to:**

- EPF Tech Fund for sponsoring the Hackathon.
- ITWeb for covering our Hackathon story.
- The keynote speaker: Mphuthi Mphuthi (Soweto Business Access, Chairman; & Spaza Bank, Founder)
- The judges: Pule Mokoena (EPF, Chairman). Simba Mhlanga (EPF, Integration Specialist, Software Engineer). Tshidi Bodibe (EPF, CEO).
- Universities that EPF have partnered with in inviting students to participate: WeThinkCode. Hyperion Dev. Durban University of Technology (DUT). University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal (UKZN). Nelson Mandela University (NMU). University of Fort Hare (UFH).

## PROUD SUPPORTERS