

Press Release

TOWNSHIP SMME DEVELOPMENT HACKATHON

24-26 June 2022

Sponsored by :



Winning Team: Kasi Army

Top Row From Left: Mamello Mofokeng, Alex Thotse, Sinazo Mona (Deputy Team Leader), Nkululeko Nkosi, Mfundo Ntuli.

Virtual Participants Bottom Row From Left: Bongane Mawele, Nonhlanhla Zembe (Team Leader).

- EPF once again proudly partnered with SAtion, Digital SA Nation NPC, to host a Microsoft sponsored Township SMME Development Hackathon. The hybrid event was hosted physically at the EPF headquarters in Illovo Sandton, and virtually on Discord.
- **Context:** It is essential to develop tangible solutions for the challenges faced by SMME. During the SAtion Township SMME Workshop, which took place 27 May 2022, SAtion and the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation identified crucial business information and data challenges faced by Tembisa Township SMME. Participants in the Hackathon thus solved for real-life challenges raised by Township SMME using Microsoft technologies.
- **Hackathon focus:** How can we, through tech, solve for Township SMMEs' business information and data challenges in order to improve their business efficiencies?
- 114 young digital innovators in programming, data science and data engineering (with participants from the Microsoft Datathon), UI-UX, business, finance and marketing from across South Africa participated in solving the challenge by developing relevant data technology solutions using GitHub and Azure.

EPF FAST FACTS

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



- The winning team 'Kasi Army', who were awarded R14 000 in prize money, will join the EPF Incubation Hub where they will receive support to become technopreneurs. Their solution, aptly called Kasi Centric, utilises GitHub, Azure, plus a WhatsApp Biz bot and QR code technology to collect, store and analyse customer info and business transactional data through scanning virtual and physical customer cards. Their solution is envisioned to utilise technology such as MoMO payments and /or USSD capability. This solution has the potential to enable data-driven business decision making; improve business operational efficiencies, provide business performance benchmarking and create business communities.



- Team Leader, Nonhlanhla Zembe says, "After months of trying and trying, with many hackathon attendances, finally getting another shot at number one is truly liberating. Our tech solution was inspired by our own lived experiences of being in the townships. We looked at the problems and worked our way towards a solution. This solution exists to help township owned businesses to leverage technology to offer their products and services to their immediate communities. We leverage various ecosystem partners that are working to provide solutions to the townships to deliver insight-driven value to our people. As much as winning is a bonus, we are very grateful to SAtion, the Empire Partner Foundation and Microsoft."
- The National Technology Officer, Asif Valley, from Microsoft South Africa says, "Microsoft is proud to have been a sponsor of the Township SMME Hackathon and wishes all the participants the very best in taking their solutions forward. It's incumbent on all of us – but especially those businesses with access to global resources and expertise – to open the channels of learning and access in our communities."

- SAtion Programme Lead, Justine Grimmer comments, "SAtion, founded by BUSA, as South Africa's biggest and most dedicated NPO for digital growth transformation is determined to bring together the world's best – from multinationals to grassroots talent – to bridge our country's digital divide and grow our 4IR capability. Township SMME are an integral part of the backbone of communities in South Africa. These SMME provide vital job opportunities and have the potential to make significant contributions to economic growth. This Hackathon, sponsored by Microsoft and enabled by Empire Partner Foundation and the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, is just one way of doing it, and there are so many more catalytic moments to come. "



- Mikhial Mariemuthu, EPF's Senior Manager comments, "EPF is proud to have an opportunity to partner with SAtion and Microsoft in hosting another hackathon! To be able to see young talented South Africans build innovative solutions through the Microsoft platform showed us that, there's a lot of untapped potential in the youth that can change our country for the better! We look forward to working with SAtion and Microsoft on future hackathons and sector related projects!"

Upcoming Hackathons:

- 5 more monthly hackathons to be hosted in 2022 by Empire Partner Foundation. Save the date by clicking here: <https://cutt.ly/tGn0Ye5>
- The next hackathon theme will be announced on our Social Media platforms to be hosted end of July 2022. Follow us on these handles: <https://linktr.ee/epftechhub>
- Keep an eye on the SAtion website for more exciting game-changing events and learning opportunities www.SAtion.org.za

Special thanks to:

- Microsoft for sponsoring the Hackathon.
- ITWeb for covering our Hackathon story.
- The Keynote Speaker: Asif Valley (*Microsoft, National Technology Officer*)
- Guest speakers: Lebogang Madise (*Microsoft, Azure Developer Audience PMM (MEA-HQ)*), Recia Letief (*Microsoft, Territory Channel Manager*)
- The judges: Gareth Owen (*IQbusiness, Data Specialist*). Mpho Nche (*City of Ekurhuleni, Divisional Head*). Bongani Moko (*Tembisa SMME*). Carol Masingi (*Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, Social Science Researcher*). Tshepo Matjila (*IQBusiness, Design Thinking Specialist*).
- Team mentors: Carike Botha (*iSolve, Technology Specialist*). Jacque De Villiers (*iSolve, Technology Specialist*). Rodney Manzini (*iSolve, Technology Specialist*). Fanyana Mthethwa (*Tembisa SMME*).
- SAtion and EPF's university partners that assist in inviting students to participate: WeThinkCode. Hyperion Dev. Durban University of Technology (DUT). University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal (UKZN). Jobox and their university partners.

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