# Silicon Cape, United States Embassy in SA to host hackathon

The Covid-19 crisis and accompanying national lockdown had a dramatic effect on all businesses, but those operating in the township economy were the hardest hit, with 67% being unable to operate at all under stricter lockdown levels and 75% reporting a reduction in their sales.



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Now, with the rollout of the vaccine putting South Africa on a post-pandemic trajectory, revival of the township economy and inclusive economic growth for the businesses within it are vital for addressing fallouts from the pandemic such as unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity.

Silicon Cape and the United States Embassy in South Africa will be hosting a virtual hackathon from 19-20 June 2021, aimed at discovering digital solutions to accelerate inclusive economic growth for local businesses in the township economy. Emerging software developers, IT professionals, civil society organisations, students, academics and professionals with expertise relevant to the theme are all invited to participate.

From 21-25 June 2021, boot camps will be held daily on the US Consulate Cape Town's Facebook page, comprised of lunchtime talks given by experts in an array of fields who will be sharing advice on how to bring township tech solutions to life. Anyone can join the boot camps taking place between 1-2PM to learn more about topics such as rapid prototyping; commercialising and monetising your prototype; and learning how to pitch your winning idea.

The hackathon and boot camps form part of an initiative by the US Embassy in South Africa called Hackathons for South Africa: Digital Solutions for Real World Challenges.

On 27 June, all teams taking part in the hackathon will pitch their ideas to the judges, after which the winning solution will be selected. This team will walk away with R25,000, the runner-up will receive R15,000 and there will be R5,000 in spot prizes up for grabs. What's more, with implementation partner Silicon Cape being an ecosystem enabler for tech-enabled startups, the winner will be connected with accelerators, mentors and other relevant community members such as developers, angel investors and venture capitalists to help bring their solution to life.

Will Stevens, acting Consul General at the US Consulate in Cape Town says: "The Hackathon aims to connect South African entrepreneurs in township economies with the skills they need to drive growth, innovation and digital competitiveness. As South Africa's top economic partner, the United States is proud to support the incredible economic innovation that is driving South Africa's post-Covid recovery."

Silicon Cape co-chairperson, Dr Sumarie Roodt, shares: "Through hackathons like these, we hope to bring real solutions to the fore that could help real people change their reality for the better. We want to instil hope and would like to upskill all participants with new mental models and frameworks that they could apply to other areas of their working or personal lives. Most importantly, we want to build stronger communities and build a bridge between South Africa and the USA."

For more, go to https://www.buildcommunityhackathons.co.za