

Highlights of 2017 SABC Education SA Innovation Summit

The 2017 SABC Education SA Innovation Summit, which took place at the Cape Town Stadium, saw many influential business leaders, visionaries, and startups interacting to share their experiences, demonstrate new technologies, and discuss co-creating a better future for society.



Adriana Marais, head of innovation at SAP and one of the volunteers to join the Mars One mission in 2025.

Following the opening ceremony, breakaway sessions included panel discussions with business leaders, creative master classes, hackathons, inventors demonstrating their prototypes at the Inventors Garage, and startups pitching to a panel of potential investors. Startups and business leaders connected to share advice on how to take an idea to market successfully.

"Innovation happens when you ask 'why?'," said Rob Stokes, chairperson at Red&Yellow and speaker at the Summit. During his talk 'Why creative thinking is the most important skill of the 21st Century', he addressed how we access our inner creative genius to stay ahead of automation and even artificial intelligence.



Resident artist, James Durno successfully captured the 'Innovation Revolution' theme of the conversations taking place at the Summit.



During a CEO panel discussion, Kieno Kammies posed the question: “What toolkit does one require to start a business?”

“One thing that struck me to be essential is to conquer fear, not just conquer it, banish it so that it does not exist; in this way you are just completely focused on your vision,” was founder of Fundamo, supplier of mobile banking and payment solutions, Hannes van Rensburg's answer.

Competition winners

The event ended off with the announcement of winners of the various competitions at the event:

- Winner of the Chivas Regal Venture Pitching Den was Benji Coetzee. Her startup company Empty Trips will be off to compete for a \$1m investment prize at the 2018 Startup World Cup grand finale in Silicon Valley. Empty Trips uses smart algorithms to allow empty transport vehicles on return trips to be used for cargo transport at a lower cost.
- The Santam Hackathon, a 48-hour hackathon to find solutions to some of South Africa's most pressing safety challenges, awarded a first prize of R20,000, and incubation support from idea to launch, to More Eyes. The More Eyes team proposed using biometric data to track employee and retail visitor behaviour (including movement patterns, body temperature and facial recognition) to help predict and prevent robberies.
- The Inventors Garage, an opportunity for inventors to exhibit their prototypes, awarded a cash prize of R10,000, as well as R15,000 in services from Adams & Adams, to the winner: James van der Walt with Solar Turtle. The Solar Turtle is an ultra-secure solar energy solution for off-grid use in high-crime areas.

Speakers at this year's event committed to a change that they will enact and give feedback on over the course of a year, helping to create a greater impact on the economic ecosystem.



“The commitment varied from general collaboration in strengthening the innovation and start-up eco system in South Africa to specific commitments like that of delegate Hamilton Mphidi that committed to creating startup schools in communities to teach future skills,” explains Audrey Verhaeghe, chairperson of the Summit.

"You do not have to be a billionaire to give back"

In his presentation, Pieter de Villiers reminded people that "you do not have to be a billionaire to give back: offer your time and effort. Commitments touched on creation, implementation and enablement of new ideas, capacity building, riding the wave of big data and disrupting industries. Thinking big and scaling of businesses from Africa to the World was a golden thread at the Summit.”

“We are incredibly excited about what the year ahead will bring in terms of measurable societal impact,” Verhaeghe concluded. “It is events like these that act as an important source of inspiration for many to take a great idea and turn it into something that will change the world.”

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