

For Immediate Release: New app to help parents choose best daycare

Cape Town, July 6th: A mobile app, which will assist parents in choosing safe and reliable day care, has won the top innovation award at Cape Town's first ever hackathon for early childhood development (ECD) solutions.

The app was developed through a partnership between CodeX, a Cape Town-based organisation providing full-time computer programming apprenticeships, and the SA Education and Environmental Project (SAEP), a non-governmental organisation providing support to at-risk, young people.

SAEP and CodeX competed in the day long Hackathon for ECD event held on the 27th June at Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business in Cape Town.

Ahead of the event, Cape ECD organisations were asked to put forward their biggest challenges requiring solutions – anything from limited access to nutrition, lack of parental involvement, training for practitioners, and safety considerations. The hackathon paired these organisations with computer programmers and challenged them to find technology based solutions.

The winning app, dubbed as a "Tripadvisor for creches", addresses the problems parents looking for reliable childcare services in their communities face, through a responsive mobile website allowing users to search childcare facilities in their close proximity and to review the centres, building a network of accountability.

The Hackathon for ECD was developed by Stellenbosch University psychology professor and early childhood development expert, Professor Mark Tomlinson, along with the Bertha Centre and the Innovation Edge.

"The Innovation Edge is a platform for testing the feasibility and effectiveness of bold ideas that can fundamentally change the early life experiences for children, giving them the best possible start, right from the start," said Sonja Giese, Innovation Edge programme leader.

"We collaborated on the hackathon because we believe that the coming together of professionals from different backgrounds results in a wealth of cost-effective, practical and, most importantly scalable, solutions to early learning challenges with the potential to affect real change for children."

"Advances in technology offer exciting possibilities for addressing challenges within the early learning space," added Giese.

CodeX and SAEP took home a R10 000 prize, which they plan on spending to develop the app further.

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Notes to Editors:

The Innovation Edge is a project of Ilifa Labantwana, a national programme, initiated and supported by a donor partnership, which aims to provide implementation evidence, build national capacity and galvanise informed political support for the provision of early childhood development services at scale, focusing on the poorest 40% of children under six.

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