

Mic Mann on SingularityU's Southern Africa Global Impact Challenge

 By Jessica Tennant 7 Apr 2017

Mann Made Media is the in-kind sponsor of the PR, content and event production for the upcoming 2017 SingularityU Southern Africa Global Impact Challenge (GIC) for the second consecutive year.



Mc Mann

Owner at Mann Made Media and ambassador of the Johannesburg chapter, Mic Mann, who was fortunate enough to visit Silicon Valley university, says getting into the 10-week SingularityU [Global Solutions Program](#) (GSP) is more difficult than getting into Harvard. But he encourages people with brilliant ideas to apply, nonetheless.

This is an opportunity for South Africans to compete and innovate on a global stage, says Mann. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for anyone who can think big enough and wants to change the world."

Here, Mann shares more about the event and the Silicon Valley-like culture such an opportunity presents to Africa's innovators...

Comment on your role as SingularityU Southern Africa GIC and Johannesburg chapter ambassador.

I am currently the ambassador for the Johannesburg chapter with Nick Walker, and our role is to build a community in So Africa of leaders who we can educate, empower and inspire to use exponential technologies to solve the world's grand challenges.

We have a number of initiatives we are working on for 2017.

We are running a series of events ('The future of...' series) to discuss where various technologies and industries are moving towards. Our first event is 'The future of health', where we will discuss gene therapy, designer babies and genetics. We will do a number of these events throughout the year, such as the future of transportation, work, retail or finance.

We are also working on a schools' programme to bring exponential thinking to school-level so we can empower our youth to be the next big thinkers and creators of tomorrow.

How does the event create a Silicon Valley-like culture in SA?

The topics and discussions we are talking about will start the journey for South Africans and educate them on the power of exponential technologies, such as robotics, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology and others.

Once the conversations start happening, it will engender an innovation culture in SA. Each event will help build the community and 'out of the box' thinking.

■ How has African innovation progressed over the last few years, and what impact do you hope to see in the years to come?

Africa is ripe for innovation and we've seen pockets of innovation across Africa, specifically in Kenya ('Silicon Savannah') South Africa and Nigeria. We are at a critical junction in South Africa and Africa and we need to embrace exponential technology so that we don't get left behind in the next 10 years.

■ Nick Walker won last year's challenge, and will soon be commencing the programme. Comment on his win.

When I read Nick's entry last year, I knew that he was going to win. It was well written, clear and concise, and was a very big idea (to cure HIV using gene splicing technology and blood banks).

He also worked hard on his presentation at the final pitching event and the judges felt he was a great representative from South Africa to send to SingularityU and go through the programme.

I can't wait to see what Nick works on in the next couple of years!

Read our interview with [Nick Walker on his master plan to cure HIV using stem cell technology](#).

For more information on the GIC, visit the SingularityU [website](#), and enter [here](#) before 18 April.

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