

Founders of Millbug invited to visit Silicon Valley

Sabelo Sibanda and Thulisile Volwana, the founders of the Millbug offering, have been invited on trip to America to visit Silicon Valley - the world's most influential dreamland for ICT start-ups.



Sabelo Sibanda and Thulisile Volwana

Millbug - a client of Seda Nelson Mandela Bay ICT Incubator (SNII) in Port Elizabeth - members Sibanda and Volwana also founded another company, Tuse, along with Michael Kyazze. Shortly after the launch of Tuse's public beta version of the Tuse application on the Google Play store, they were invited to join Founders Space in Silicon Valley.

"Founders Space is one of the top ten start-up accelerators in Silicon Valley, according to Forbes magazine. During the course of the programme, we will interact with corporates, angel investors and the top venture capitalists in Silicon Valley to hopefully take our offerings to the entire world," said Sibanda.

Android app

The Tuse application, which launched earlier last year, is an Android app that allows people to communicate freely without the need for traditional telecommunication infrastructure. "The Tuse app had a public beta launched and the feedback the company received from more than 250 beta testers has helped us design the final product was released in late December last year. An iOS version of the Tuse app is also being developed," said Sibanda.

"We hope our stay at Silicon Valley will help us build a large network of partners and experts who can help Millbug rapidly deploy our innovations. The problems we are solving are unique and will need significant resources to deploy at scale."

Millbug developed the solar powered Vuya Tablet PC in 2013. The tablet uses wi-fi only for connectivity and takes at least eight hours to charge. After joining SNII three years ago, Millbug today still benefit from the incubator's expertise. "SNII have been of great assistance in getting the Vuya Tablet tested and certified for sale in compliance with South African law," said Sibanda.



Tuse app

Internet ubiquity

"All smart cities, traditionally, begin with internet ubiquity. This is reliant on the availability of traditional telco infrastructure or open wi-fi initiatives. The wide adoption of the freely available Tuse application would cover a region at almost no cost and ensure safe, decentralised and free communication.

"Running on our solar powered tablet PCs, we can have a green and smart city through technology which is starting to happen in Port Elizabeth where we have built the required solutions. But there is a long way to go," Sibanda said.

Sipelo Lupondwana, SNII centre manager, congratulated the Millbug team for being selected to visit Silicon Valley. "Millbug's Vuya tablet was successfully commercialised through incubator support last year. The device received various international media attention. Our enterprise development team all played a crucial role in successfully commercialising Millbug Vuya," said Lupondwana.

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