

GE launches Africa Innovation Centre

GE has been committed to the development of sustainable solutions for some of Africa's greatest healthcare challenges for nearly a century. With a long track record in developing innovations for emerging markets, GE recently launched the GE Africa Innovation Centre (GEAIC) in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is GE's centre of excellence for innovation and technology on the continent and it is the first for GE in Africa and the 10th GE innovation centre globally.



The GEAIC houses the new headquarters for GE Healthcare, which has established a "Healthcare Experience Centre" on site. Its main purpose is to identify core areas for improvement in healthcare as well as infrastructure development to find creative and practical solutions. The centre reflects the ethos and spirit of Africa, and is home to rapid, creative and effective African innovation.

The ground floor houses the customer experience area, which includes the virtual reality and simulation sections. Healthcare occupies the first floor, which includes office space as well as the healthcare experience area, and the second floor houses the project/prototyping lab area as well as the learning and development spaces.

The AIC's emphasis is to innovate on ideas with the potential for practical applications that will improve the lifestyles of people living in Africa. The healthcare facilities are designed to mimic different care areas in a hospital environment and boast machinery used in cardiology, oncology and radiology as well as maternal and neonatal care.

The prototyping laboratory is a flexible workspace where innovators and collaborators can focus on developing ideas that

provide real solutions. Once the ideas are finalised, state-of-the-art 3D printers are used to create prototypes which allow ideas to flourish into real concepts that can be tested, adjusted and perfected.

Gunter Halfar, the head of the GEAIC, says: "The whole idea is to get people away from a rigid way of thinking. We want them to be more creative... but we also like to challenge them to find innovative solutions to big problems and to also share information with each other so we can start to build a pipeline of talent, and innovation."

The centre uses augmented reality displays for training and to allow visitors a hands-on feel for the interconnected technology being developed. Additionally, there are a range of tools such as handheld scanners which are used for treatment in rural settings.

One of the core drivers behind the success of the GEAIC is to boost technological development and channel talent towards sustainable projects relevant to Africa's evolving needs. An example of this is the support the centre provides to the development of small businesses capable of supplying the local market and potentially GE's global supply chains.

Access to the centre is open to everyone including engineers and innovators from every walk of life to use the facilities as an area to brainstorm ideas and challenge each other on creative solutions.

The GEAIC has also formed partnerships with local businesses to help improve their skills and to encourage the development of small to medium enterprises by using technology to empower the communities in which they operate.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>