

International Women's Day 'Redefine Possible': Women Techmakers 2025 – Event Report

Background

The 2025 event themed *Redefine Possible* was hosted by Google Women Techmakers to commemorate International Women's Day under this year's global theme 'Redefine Possible.' This theme called upon women in technology and innovation spaces to break barriers, reimagine limits, and take steps towards redefining the future of tech.

The event took place on Saturday, 21st June 2025 at Cavista Technologies Botswana headquarters. The event was organised in partnership with Cavista, Modisar, Spectrum Analytics, UniPod, Google Developer Groups (GDG) Gaborone, and GDG on Campus University of Botswana. With support from these sponsors and partners, the event brought together attendees comprising developers, creatives, innovators, analysts, data scientists – all united under one goal: to unlock the potential for women in tech and facilitate meaningful, inclusive innovation.

The day was structured into two key segments:

- A speaker series featuring three women leaders across tech, policy, and innovation.
- A Solvathon where participants formed teams and developed rapid solution prototypes to real-life challenges faced by women in tech.

Objectives

The core objectives of the *Redefine Possible* event were as follows:

- To empower women in tech, design, and entrepreneurship to believe in their capacity to lead innovation.
- To foster visibility and representation by providing a platform for women to speak, connect, and influence the tech narrative in Botswana.
- To encourage hands-on problem solving with a sprint-style solvathon to showcase participants' ability to think creatively under pressure.
- To connect participants with growth opportunities, including mentorship and incubation through strategic partnerships like UniPod.

- To inspire movement and action towards inclusivity by highlighting real issues (like online harassment, bias, re-entry into tech careers after a break) and initiating tangible and feasible solutions for them.

What was Achieved

Event Participation and Impact

- There were attendees with a strong female majority and wide representation from students, early-career professionals, and established developers.
- Participants from a variety of disciplines attended, showing strong interdisciplinary collaboration between tech, design, business, and data science.
- The speaker session tackled critical issues such as gender bias in the workplace, mental well-being in tech, and the importance of ethical and inclusive AI.

Speakers included:

- Katlego Arnone, General Manager, Cavista Technologies Botswana
- Malebogo “Lebo” Khanda-Wiktor, Secretary General, Botswana Information Technology Society
- Lesego Kebokilwe, Business Analyst, LeveragePoint

Solvathon Highlights

Participants were grouped into teams of 3-5 members and presented with the following prompts:

1. Redesign the job application process for women returning from a career break.
2. Design a better way to deal with online harassment.
3. Balance family expectations with tech career goals.

Using tools such as Figma, Canva, Miro etc. teams had 45 minutes to define their problem statement, build a low-code or no-code prototype, and prepare a 3 minute pitch for the judges. The energy, collaboration, and creativity displayed by participants was extraordinary.

Winning Teams and Ideas Selected for Incubation

Following the presentations, the judges announced two winning teams whose ideas will move forward to incubation:

1st Place – Team Tech 5

- **Prompt:** Design a better way to deal with online harassment.
- **Problem statement:** Online harassment in both English and Setswana is rising, with users using mixed-language insults and cultural slang to bypass moderation. Current systems fail to detect and address abuse in Setswana, leaving victims, especially women and youth, exposed to harm with little protection or support.
- **Solution Overview:** Text mining solution that creates a safer online interaction.
- **Solution Name:** SafeNet
- **Impact:** To create a safe online environment for everyone.

2nd Place – Team Break-Through

- **Prompt:** Redesign the job application process for women returning from a career break.
- **Problem Statement:** The current job application process often presents significant barriers for women returning to the workforce after a career break, leading to a substantial underutilization of their talent and experience. This issue is particularly acute for women who have taken time off for caregiving responsibilities, as traditional application systems and recruiter biases frequently penalize gaps in employment, undervalue transferable skills gained outside of formal work settings, and lack mechanisms to effectively showcase updated skills or a renewed career focus.
- **Solution Overview:** Our solution, "EmpowerHer Pathways," is a multi-faceted mobile app platform designed to revolutionize the job application process specifically for women returning from career breaks. It aims to reframe how experience is valued, provide tools for confidence building and skill articulation, and connect these talented individuals with inclusive employers. The platform will utilize AI-driven resume analysis to mitigate bias against employment gaps, offer interactive skill-mapping tools to highlight transferable abilities, and provide a personalized space for candidates to tell their unique career re-entry story, directly addressing the limitations of the current application process.
- **Solution Name:** EmpowerHer Pathways

- **Impact:** For women, increased confidence, reduced job search time, higher success rate in securing meaningful employment, and validation of their non-traditional career paths.

Additional Idea Selected for Incubation

- **Title:** Botswana AI Macroeconomics Modelling
- **Concept:** A system containing Machine Learning models capable of analysing Botswana's historical economic data and identifying and quantifying the relationships between economic variables (such as GDP, unemployment rate, economic growth, inflation etc.) and macroeconomic policy instruments (such as government expenditure, taxes, money supply, interest rates) and using the weights and relationships established to produce optimal macroeconomic policy recommendations based on target goals for variables. The recommended policy is then fed back into the model, and it predicts the outcome of the recommended policy on economic variables. The model can also forecast outcome of economic variables based on trends identified in historical data. The system also allows for scenario analysis by allowing the policy makers to input policy combinations and the model uses its predictive capability to then output the predicted impact it will have on each economic variable. Graphical outputs are included in to enhance interpretability and transparency. Economists can also upload their own models and datasets to the system through the intuitive dashboard designed for ease of use.
- **Submitted By:** Trudy-Lynn Dube (GDG on Campus University of Botswana Lead)
- **Impact:** Empowers the government and researchers with intelligent policy recommendations, forecasting, and hypothetical policy scenario analysis.

Next Steps

We are excited to collaborate with UniPod to bring these ideas to life through your innovation incubation programs. We propose the following as next steps:

1. **Confirm the Incubation Format:** This includes the timeline and duration of the incubation, whether sessions will be physical or virtual, as well as what the support services include (such as mentorship, technical training, marketing, legal, etc).

2. **Define Team Commitments:** What is required from each team member (time commitments, meetings, etc.) and what the key deliverables be during the incubation will be.
3. **Feedback and Refinements:** An onboarding session or feedback to help refine the submitted ideas before incubation begins.
4. **Progress Milestones:** Any phases that can be defined (e.g. discovery, development, pitch to funders, etc.)

We kindly request that UniPod shares:

- A brief incubation onboarding guide or checklist
- Any documentation of forms needed from participants
- Preferred start date and duration

Conclusion

The *Redefine Possible* event was more than just a tech event for attendees to listen to speakers and participate, it was a launchpad. It helped with redefining what is possible when we create inclusive, intentional spaces for women to collaborate, create, and challenge status quo. As we move forward into incubation and beyond, Women Techmakers Gaborone remains committed to creating more spaces like this – spaces that give women not just a seat at the table, but a place to build the table themselves.