



THE FINHUB

DECEMBER 2023

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

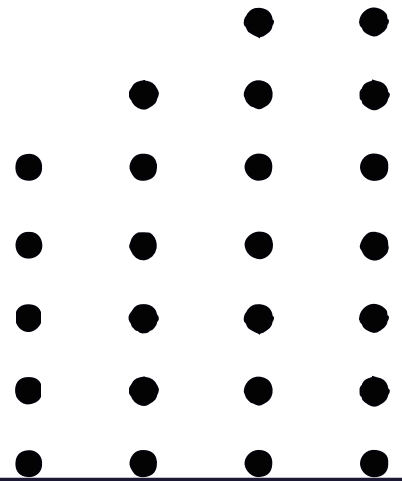
02 *Deep Dive Into Blockchain*

05 *Apex 2023*

08 *Solcon Infinity: DePIN as a Communications*

Game-Changer

10 *GenesisBloc Launchpad*



Volume 5

Deep Dive into Blockchain

Zürich, Switzerland

Five MPhil in Fintech students journeyed over to the University of Zürich and joined over 80 students across the world to participate in the *Deep Dive into Blockchain* summer school programme as part of this year's study tour. From June 30th to July 21st, Adam Mosam, Gregory Andrews, Ndakondja Shilenga, Donel Chihoma and Zaheer Randera were part of a transformative educational experience, delving into the intricacies of blockchain technology.

The course, renowned for its high-quality, interdisciplinary syllabus, explored blockchain from economic, legislative, social, physiological, and technical perspectives. It attracted bright minds from all corners of the globe, with our students standing out as top performers in this internationally acclaimed cohort.



The programme covered various topics, including consensus mechanisms, cryptocurrencies, smart contracts, blockchain taxonomy, DeFi, tokenisation, NFTs, the Metaverse, Web3, and DAOs. It also provided insights into the legal landscape surrounding blockchain technology.

Invaluable industry sessions with leaders from blockchain projects like Algorand, Polkadot, BNB Chain, Cardano, Hedera, and Polygon offered real-world perspectives. Field trips added to the richness of the experience, including visits to Bitcoin Suisse in Zug and Dfinity in Zürich, where students explored cutting-edge technology and the decentralised internet.

Moreover, hands-on sessions allowed students to create and mint tokens, delve into NFTs using tools like Metamask, and engage with the metaverse through virtual and augmented reality. These experiences highlighted the potential of blockchain for real-world applications.





Social programmes and leisure activities, such as exploring Bern and enjoying traditional Swiss dinners, fostered camaraderie among participants and a deeper appreciation for Swiss culture.

In conclusion, the UZH Blockchain Summer School was more than just an educational tour; it was a holistic experience combining academic excellence and cultural exploration. Our students returned with enhanced technical knowledge and invaluable life experiences, ready to apply their learnings in advancing the blockchain field.

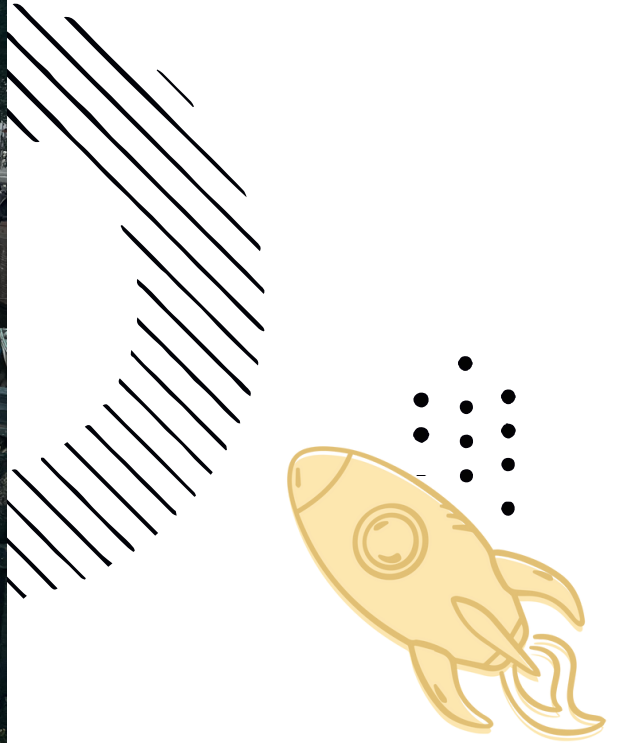
The annual MPhil in Fintech study tours demonstrate the Hub's commitment to nurturing future leaders in the blockchain domain. The students' participation in this prestigious programme underscores UCT's position at the forefront of technological education and innovation.

"This was an unforgettable journey of discovery, knowledge, and camaraderie. The impact of this experience extends far beyond the three weeks we spent in Switzerland. With hearts full of gratitude and minds brimming with inspiration, we eagerly anticipate the positive changes we will effect as we harness the transformative power of blockchain in our lives and the world around us." -

Zaheer Randera.

Apex 2023

Amsterdam, Netherlands



The annual Apex XRPL Developer Summit by Ripple, held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, was a landmark event from September 6th to 8th. Gathering over 60 developers, innovators, businesses, and investors, the summit offered three days of dynamic discussions centred on blockchain technology and the XRP Ledger.

Key announcements at the summit included the introduction of significant XRPL features. Notably, the Decentralised Identity on XRPL (XLS-40d) now supports World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Decentralised Identifiers (DIDs) on the XRP Ledger. This feature enables an XRPL account holder to create and manage their decentralised identifiers autonomously, ensuring complete control over their private keys and identity object contents.



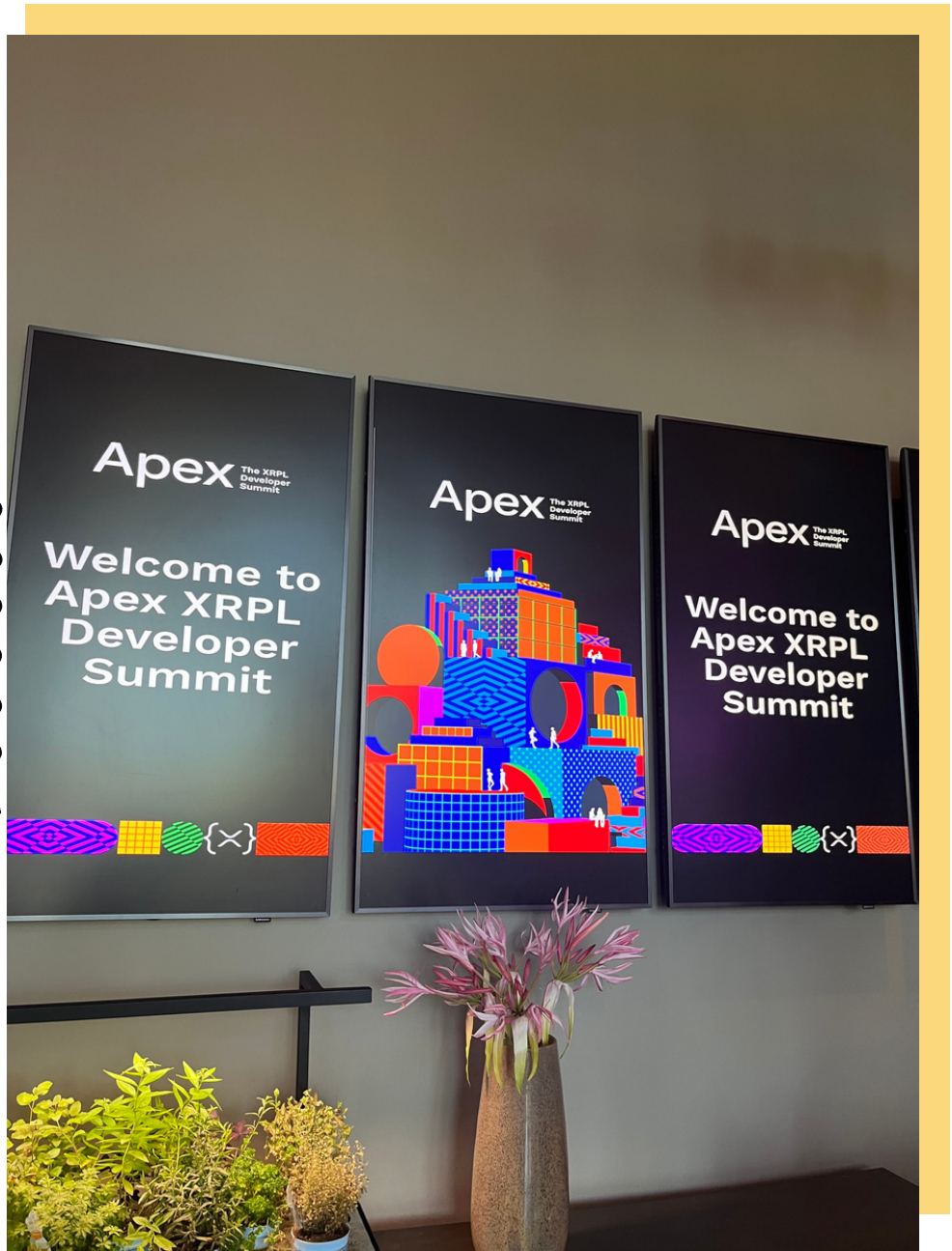
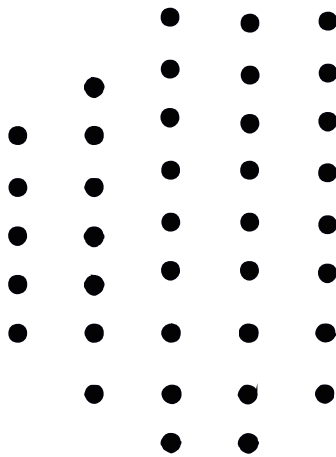
Another significant introduction was the Automated Market Maker (AMM) on XRPL (XLS-30d). This protocol transforms the existing XRPL Decentralised Exchange (DEX) by replacing manual market-making and traditional order books with an algorithm-based pricing system. This innovation will enable users to exchange tokens freely and efficiently without seeking a counterparty, enhancing the DEX's functionality.

The summit also spotlighted efforts to expand and support the XRPL community, with presentations on the XRPL Foundation, XRPL Accelerator, XRPL Grants, and XRPL Commons.

Diverse breakout sessions added to the summit's vibrancy. These ranged from technical workshops, such as creating a bridge to the EVM sidechain and using XRPL Hooks for decentralised crowdfunding platforms, to non-technical discussions about payments in emerging markets. Topics included the utilisation of CBDCs, stablecoins, and semi-offline payments via text messages in regions like Brazil and South Africa.

Julian Kanjere, reflecting on the summit, noted, "Leaving Apex 2023, I was struck by the promising utility of XRPL and the momentum the community is gaining, especially with the emerging regulatory clarity around the XRP asset in the United States."

The 2023 Apex XRPL Developer Summit showcased cutting-edge blockchain technology developments and reinforced the growing strength and unity of the XRPL community.



Solcon Infinity: DePIN as a Communications Game-Changer

Johannesburg, South Africa

The Solcon Infinity Conference, held on October 25th in Sandton, Johannesburg, was a pivotal gathering of visionaries and thought leaders exploring the impact of Decentralised Physical Infrastructure Networks (DePIN) on global communications. Anda Ngcaba, our co-director, was a key participant, shedding light on the transformative potential of DePIN alongside notable experts.

John Kamara, a prominent figure in the African tech landscape and founder of Adanian Labs and Afyarekod, moderated a critical panel titled *Building the Future of Communications: Exploring the Potential of DePIN*. Under Kamara's guidance, the panel, including Anda, Pramod Venkatesh, CEO of Solcon Capital, and Irene Phoebe Kiwia, co-founder of Adanian Labs, engaged in a rich dialogue about the far-reaching implications of DePIN in enhancing security, connectivity, and access to information.



Anda, leveraging his experience at the Hub, emphasised DePIN's crucial role in addressing Africa's digital divide. He highlighted how Mobile Network Operators' (MNOs) profitability concerns often leave underserved regions without internet access. In this context, he stressed DePIN's potential for fostering inclusive growth. He also encouraged young African entrepreneurs to seize the opportunity to develop homegrown DePIN projects, citing the success of similar initiatives in other regions.

The panel showcased the Hub's dedication to transforming academic research into practical solutions. Anda's insights painted an optimistic future, particularly in our various workstreams. His vision was clear: a future where communication barriers across Africa are progressively broken down through innovative DePIN initiatives. The Solcon Infinity panel highlighted the importance of collaboration and the pivotal role of innovative technologies in bridging communication gaps.



Solcon Infinity

GenesisBloc Launchpad

Cape Town, South Africa

We're proud to announce the launch of our first pre-incubator programme, GenesisBloc. The Hub designed this ground-breaking initiative to nurture aspiring entrepreneurs by transforming innovative blockchain concepts into thriving businesses. GenesisBloc provides a unique launchpad for startups, igniting the flames of innovation and entrepreneurship.

In collaboration with SENSE, facilitated by the Swiss Embassy, the programme spans from August 2023 to June 2024. This 10-month pre-incubation journey is dedicated to supporting and enabling the success of up to four student-led innovation projects.

We invited participants who wished to continue refining their hackathon ideas and turn them into viable products to apply for the GenesisBloc programme. As part of the FinHub Hack Series, the Hackathon was uniquely Web 3.0-focused and fostered an environment for participants to develop sustainable blockchain solutions. The first



series, themed *Blockchain for Sustainability: Hacking Solutions for the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, aligned with the global agenda to address social, economic, and environmental challenges. The series supports innovative approaches to achieving the SDGs by recognising blockchain's potential in enhancing transparency, security, and accountability.

This cohort includes:

- **Tata-iMali:** A blockchain micro-finance platform to offer affordable micro-credit in underserved African communities. It employs a FIAT-backed South African Rand stablecoin for efficient and transparent fund distribution.
- **TruTec's FairChance:** An Algorand blockchain-based solution ensuring integrity and authenticity in justice systems. It extends to sectors like insurance and healthcare, fostering trust and preventing fraud.
- **Procurelink:** A blockchain-powered procurement platform addressing transparency, efficiency, and collaboration in procurement processes. It leverages smart contracts for secure and streamlined transactions, reshaping procurement practices.
- **Torquinox:** A blockchain-backed voting system using smart contracts for secure and transparent elections. This innovation aims to transform the African electoral systems, ensuring integrity and confidence in the democratic process.



GenesisBloc is more than a programme; it's a movement. It's a space on the UCT campus dedicated to fostering entrepreneurial exploration beyond traditional academic settings. This incubator creates forums for idea exchange, connecting students with startups, experts, mentors, and collaborators. It's a community where resources and physical space coalesce to nurture effective entrepreneurial growth.



GenesisBloc is strategically designed to transition academic excellence into practical, market-ready innovation. Through GenesisBloc, we aim to empower student entrepreneurs with the necessary tools, resources, and support to develop and commercialise their blockchain solutions. This programme will assist them in validating ideas, developing business plans, and identifying potential customers, users, and investors.

GenesisBloc marks a significant milestone in our commitment to harnessing blockchain technology for impactful and sustainable solutions. It embodies our dedication to bridging the gap between academia and industry, fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs poised to revolutionise the blockchain landscape.

