



OPEN CITIES LAB

The Durban EDGE Open Data Portal

Data-Driven Cities: Conference for the Urban Common Good

CREATED BY:

Richard Gevers (@richardgevers)

“We believe that through empowering citizens, building trust and accountability in civic space, and building capacity with government, we will enable participation in decision-making, evidence-based urban intervention, and inclusive co-design that will improve the lives of residents in urban spaces.”

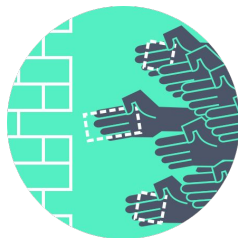
opencitieslab.org

What We Do



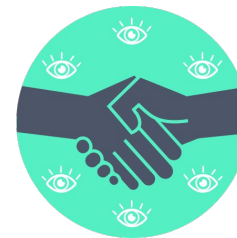
CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

We empower citizens to know their rights and understand the data, knowledge, mechanisms and processes they can use to make their lives, and those of their communities, better. 'Better' means more inclusive and participative, both in 'hard' topics such as service delivery and built environment, as well as social cohesion, dignity, place making, and community building.



BUILDING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY

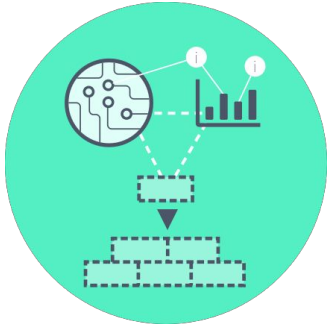
We work proactively with the government to build capacity for informed decision-making and evidence based policy and planning, with a focus on areas where this can uplift vulnerable and excluded communities. We enable co-design of existing and new processes and mechanisms for including citizens in decision-making, including sharing and opening data and information, and 'crowding-in' of intelligence and insight.



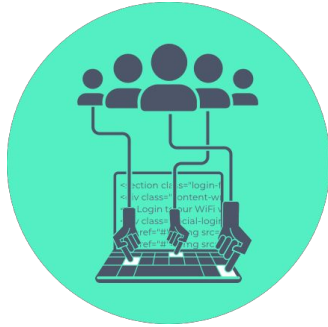
TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY IN CIVIC SPACE

We work with key actors including communities, the media, academia, and government to build accountability and trust in civic space. This includes fair and independent media, monitoring and transparent oversight of power, such as state-owned enterprises, and increasingly, the use of AI and machine learning in areas that affect privacy and democracy.

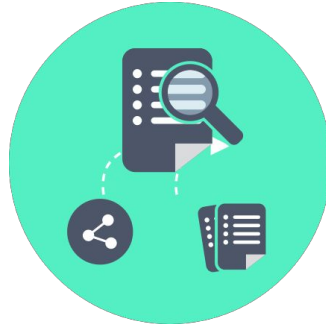
What We Do



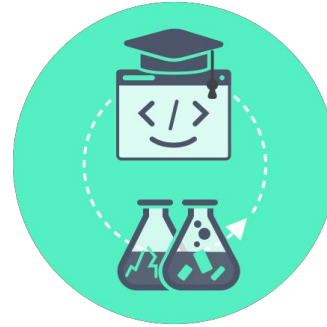
TECH & DATA
LITERACY
& CAPACITY
BUILDING



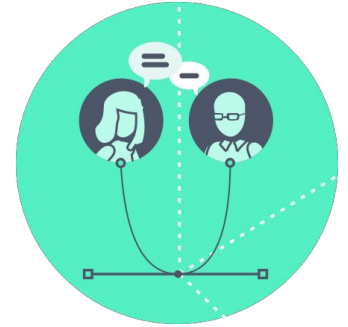
CIVIC
TECHNOLOGY



ACTION
RESEARCH



MACHINE
LEARNING
& DATA
SCIENCE



ENGAGEMENT
& CO-DESIGN

The Durban EDGE Open Data Portal

THE DURBAN EDGE

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The latest Data Story

December 2023

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS UP IN DURBAN FOR Q3 2023

[Read this data story](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (DURBAN) **22.5%** (Q3 2023) [View our Dashboard](#)

GDP GROWTH RATE (DURBAN) **0.5%** (Q2 2023) [View our Dashboard](#)

PROPERTY VALUE (DURBAN) **R582.7 BN** (2022) [View our Datasets](#)

December 2023

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS UP IN DURBAN FOR Q3 2023

December 2023

CENSUS 2022 INSIGHTS INTO DEMOGRAPHICS, ECONOMY, AND POTENTIAL

November 2023

DURBAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RISES FOR FOUR CONSECUTIVE QUARTERS

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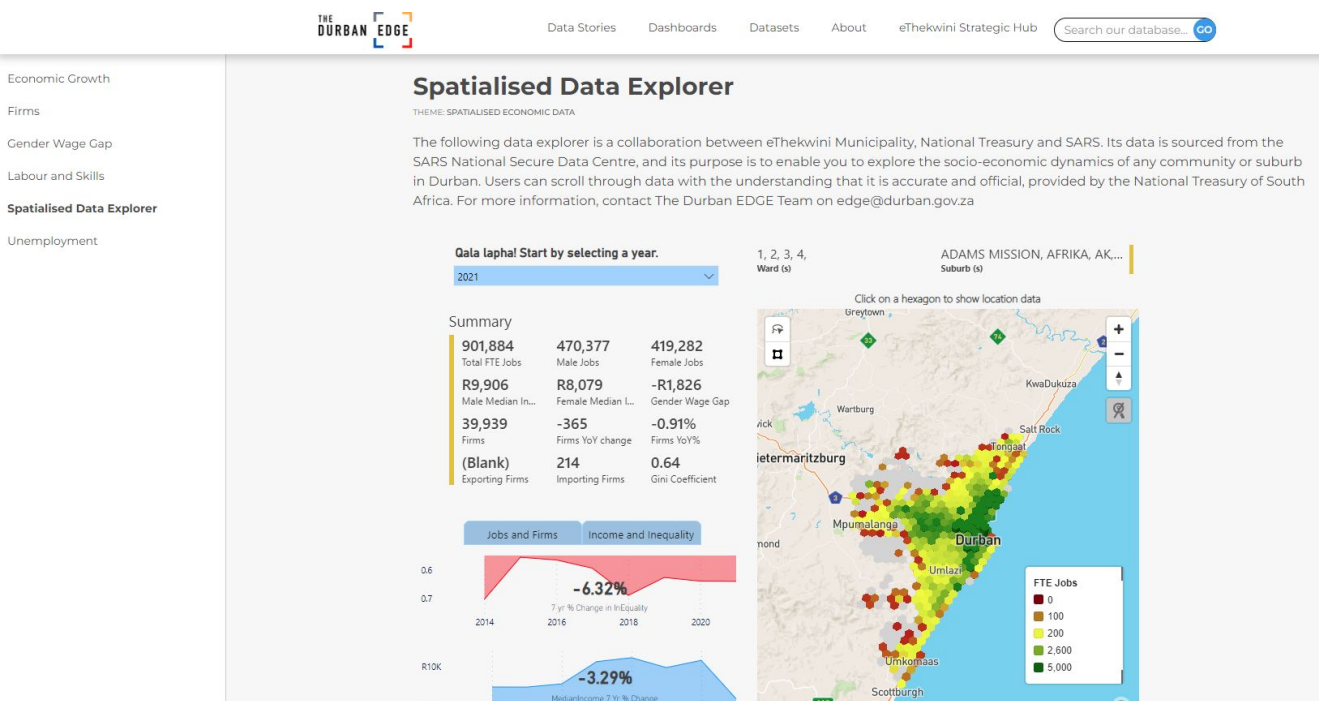
POWERED BY: [ckan](#)

- Latest content highlight
- Snapshot of key indicators
- Data stories in English and isiZulu
- Full CMS via Webflow



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The Durban EDGE Open Data Portal



- Dashboards produced on PowerBI and uploaded by the City team using Webflow CMS
- Local spatialised tax data made available by National Treasury's city support programme
- Hosting by OCL

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The Durban EDGE Open Data Portal

The screenshot shows the Durban EDGE Open Data Portal interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'THE DURBAN EDGE' on the left and 'Log in Register' on the right. Below the logo, there are links for 'Dashboards', 'Datasets', 'Organizations', 'Groups', and 'About Us'. A search bar is located to the right of these links. The main content area is titled 'Datasets' and features a sidebar on the left with sections for 'Organizations' (The Durban Edge (24)), 'Groups' (Property (3), Labour (2), Municipal Utilities (2), Business (1), Education (1)), and 'Tags' (durban (4), durban economy (3), Durban GDP (2), economy (2), office vacancies (2)). The main content area has a search bar, a '24 datasets found' indicator, and an 'Order by: Relevance' dropdown. Three dataset cards are visible: 'Repository of Datastories' (Updated December 7, 2023 | Created October 6, 2020), 'EThekwini Labour Force' (Updated November 15, 2023 | Created April 8, 2019), and 'EThekwini Building Plans' (Updated October 26, 2023 | Created April 8, 2019). Each card includes a description and file format icons (PDF, DOCX, XLSX, XLS).

- Raw datasets uploaded by the city team via CKAN data management system
- All publicly available and sourced via StatsSA, and other national, provincial and local data custodians
- No sensitive data
- Curated to the needs of stakeholders according to frequent requests

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Platform User Problem Frame

- Researchers from the eThekweni Economic Development Unit were sharing economic information via PDF
- Needed to expand accessibility of the information and improve data curation
- User interviews conducted including local chamber of commerce, counsellors, departments and academic institutions before designing the portal.
- Feedback from users essential and encouraged via buttons

“Thank you for this data. I use it every quarter to plan our business strategy.”

Large SA bank.

“Thank you for this data. I use it to plan our projects”. Provincial Department of Economic Development

email us: EDGE@durban.gov.za



Learnings



- Use cases lead to strategies and policies, which lead to more and better use cases
- Early Open Data Champions have to 'break the rules' and are often seen as 'mavericks'
- Use cases won't lead to city-wide change without intentional cross-departmental data governance interventions
- IT Departments can block use cases if a centralised approach to data management is favoured over distributed - digital governance capacity building is needed
- KPI changes from PDF releases to digital uploads were essential to the sustainability of the platform beyond the original champion
- City team having full autonomy and capacity over platform content creation essential

Data Characteristics

- Open Access, Open format, Anonymised Data
- Manual upload via CKAN DMS and PowerBI
- Secondary data collated from publicly available information, manually processed for the local context (i.e. calculations performed to create indicators relevant to requests received)
- Data collected from various organisations, including official public statistics, industry bodies, local departments
- Temporal and spatial data (2D)
- Mainly quantitative but some qualitative information in data stories
- Currently data is static and updated according to a release schedule. Option to automate if the need arises.

Thanks!

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OPEN CITIES LAB



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Open Cities Lab is a non-profit organisation (229-096NPO / PBO: 933054732) established by a group of founding members who desire to serve the common good through the advancement of transparency.