

Seedstars World returns to Africa

Seedstars World, the largest early-stage startup competition for emerging markets and fast-growing startup scenes, returns to Africa for the seventh time. The Seedstars World Tour will visit 26 sub-Saharan African countries this year and will visit Sierra Leone and Cabo Verde for the first time.



Argentinian edtech startup Blended has been crowned 2019 Seedstars Global Winner

This year, Seedstars World has implemented some significant changes to the format and will organise a number of side activities:

- **Bootcamp for more:** In each country, prior to the pitching event, Seedstars Will organise a local boot camp inviting up to 30 pre-selected startups to participate.
- **More women:** Seedstars Africa will aim to achieve gender balance on all levels through inviting more women as part of mentors, jury panels, speakers and increasing the number of women startups.
- **Local Investor workshops:** In partnership with EBAN, Seedstars will host a series of workshops specifically targeted at local investors.

- **More prizes:** In 2019 Seedstars aims to work with more local entrepreneurs. Therefore, Seedstars will award access to the Investment Readiness Program, a non-time bound personalised and data-driven acceleration program which will connect the entrepreneurs to global experts and mentors, emerging market-specific training materials based on best practices and access to the Seedstars Global investor network. Seedstars will award at least 1-month access to the top 10 startups invited to pitch locally.
- **100 million USD Seedstars Africa Ventures investment fund** will be active later this year, making all applicants eligible to receive early stage investment. In addition, this fund will also cater to the Seedstars Alumni startups from the previous years.

“Over the past six years, we had an opportunity to learn from the best practices in building sustainable businesses in over 88+ emerging markets and 25+ countries in Africa. These learnings are the foundation to ensure that Seedstars continues to create value for its core stakeholders, which are the entrepreneurs. And this year, through a combination of offerings such as the Investment Readiness Program, we are able to support more startups beyond the event. In addition, with the launch of the US\$100 million fund, it will become even more important to make sure that we meet the right entrepreneurs and the competition serves as a tool to discover the most promising entrepreneurs to potentially invest in.”, says Claudia Makadrsto, regional manager for Africa at Seedstars.

The companies invited to the training session and to pitch during the Seedstars World events must have raised less than US\$500,000 in funding and built a minimum viable product, ideally with existing traction. The Seedstars team is searching for one additional criterion: potential for regional and global scalability. Besides representing their country at the Seedstars Africa Summit, the winner will get a chance to win an all-inclusive trip to Switzerland, to compete at the Seedstars Summit for the title of Seedstars Global Winner and up to US\$500,000 in equity investments and other prizes.

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The applications are open for several cities and startups are invited to apply at www.seedstarsworld.com/competition. After careful screening, the Seedstars team will shortlist up to ten of the best seed-stage startups per city to participate in training and 1:1 meetings with investors. Africa was previously represented at the Global competition by Cowtribe which is Africa's first last mile animal vaccine delivery platform.

Founded in 2016 they deliver safe vaccines to farmers in hard to reach. Other participants also include Benefactors, a factoring firm offering unsecured working capital products, for increased SME resilience, growth and job creation; Bluewave Insurance which creates an innovative mass market, microinsurance products accessible via mobile devices; and a host of other innovative companies providing incredible solutions across the continent.

Over the years, Seedstars World has had support from various organisations such as Merck, Google, Microsoft 4Afrika, Standard Bank, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation amongst others.

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