

Why my startup scene is better than yours: Uganda

By  Tom Jackson

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TechCrunch Startup Battlefield is returning to Africa to find the next wave of early-stage startups tackling big ideas following last year's inaugural edition on the continent.



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Disrupt Africa has been talking to stakeholders from a host of African tech startup ecosystems to find out what it is that makes them tick.

We have already heard from ecosystem players in [South Africa](#), [Kenya](#), [Nigeria](#), [Egypt](#), [Ghana](#), [Tanzania](#), [Senegal](#) and [Rwanda](#), and now it is time for stakeholders in the Ugandan tech space to have their say.

Richard Zulu, founding partner of Outbox

“Uganda has been dubbed as one of the most entrepreneurial countries due to the resilience and entrepreneurial attitude of its people. This provides an environment of experimentation, failure and learning – thus offering the opportunity to create more successful companies.



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“Education is one of the key investments Ugandans make in each other, with a large number of individuals having basic numeracy and literacy skills. This investment in talent development places Uganda as one of the best destinations within which to set up a startup as its young population comes of age.”

Benedikt Kramer, co-founder and CEO of awamo

“Kampala’s startup ecosystem is not as crowded as the one in Nairobi, which has multiple benefits especially when you are in early stages of starting up. It is very easy to get into the community as everyone knows everyone. Additionally, startups

have a higher visibility to investors early on, even though access to money is still a challenge as most VCs are based in Nairobi.

“Especially in the last two years, the Ugandan startup ecosystem leapt forward enormously. With Design Hub and The Innovation Village, Kampala got its own major centers for creative minds and tech-companies to foster co-working and exchange.”

Chrispinus Onyancha, CEO of clinicPesa

“Despite the fact of limit resources, startups in our ecosystem have showcased a magnitude of great successes. If they had access to the same resources as in other ecosystems, this ecosystem would be considered among the best in Africa. This success is majorly attributed on calling to each other and great team compositions, meaning we have very resilient and vibrant innovators.



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“I believe our ecosystem is still fresh and full of opportunities, with big companies opening up to work with innovative startups more.”

Manon Lavaud, co-founder and CEO of Musana Carts

“The Ugandan ecosystem is one of the best in Africa for two reasons: the very entrepreneurial and young spirit, and the pride in the local culture.

“Half the population is under the age of 15. We have to solve our problems and come up with opportunities and avenues for all. Young people must create jobs for themselves and their peers. This is the only way to solve the unemployment crisis on our hands, and the best way to empower our people. The fact is that people want to promote Ugandan culture, and drive this entrepreneurship spirit.”

Nassuru Mugega, founder of Ayoyo Electronics

“The startup environment in Uganda is very favourable to new businesses due to it being an open economy whereby anyone is allowed to sell and buy anything. There aren't many regulations – if the public approves your product, then the authorities won't have problems with you apart from the normal paperwork.



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“There are a large number of innovation hubs, which give support to startups in terms of providing mentorship and sometimes resources like space. Innovation hubs also provide linkages between startups and investors.

“Political stability in Uganda, is also a guarantee that your business will succeed if you put in enough energy. There are a lot of universities and other tertiary schools which have given skilled labour to startups. There are also government institutions in charge of innovation that support startups.”

Joshua Mugisha, co-founder of Qwicart

“The Ugandan ecosystem is one that presents entrepreneurs and investors alike with a rather complex enigma in trying to understand the dynamics necessary to winning. With a population of 40 million and over 60% of it being youth, prospective businesses have the opportunity to tap into a growing user base.

“However, due to the endemic illiteracy levels and slow internet growth, the path to success is rather very slow and tedious. The take home from this is that success in our ecosystems is synonymous with patience. The opportunities are there but will take time to materialise.”

ABOUT TOM JACKSON

Co-founder @DisruptAfrica. Tech and business journalist in Africa. Passionate about the vibrant tech startups scene in Africa, Tom can usually be found sniffing out the continent's most exciting new companies and entrepreneurs, funding rounds and any other developments within the growing ecosystem

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