

2021 Anzisha Prize applications now open

Mastercard Foundation and African Leadership Academy call on young African entrepreneurs to join the 2021 Anzisha Prize Fellowship program.



The Anzisha Prize launched the 2021 call for Africa’s biggest award for young entrepreneurs between, 15 and 22. Applications have now opened for the latest cohort, with successful entrepreneurs standing a chance to win a shared prize of US\$100 000 and join the prestigious Anzisha Prize fellowship program. As the Covid-19 pandemic disrupts the world, young entrepreneurs are building opportunities for their communities and peers.

Last year the Anzisha Prize, a partnership between African Leadership Academy and Mastercard Foundation, celebrated 10 years of supporting Africa’s youngest entrepreneurs. To date, the 142 business owners in the program have created more than 2500 jobs. Youth employment continues to be a key challenge in many countries and Africa’s high unemployment rate is one of the leading barriers to growth prosperity on the continent. Young entrepreneurs are an indication that the youth demographic could be the asset needed to transform the continent’s employment climate.



#Anzisha2020: SAYNA brings digital studies to Madagascar

Evan-Lee Courie 27 Oct 2020



“The world of work has drastically changed as we experience a global pandemic. Young entrepreneurs have remained steadfast and have supported their communities through difficulties. We’re thrilled to celebrate the next 20 young business owners who are, no doubt, paramount to job creation on the continent,” says Melissa Mbazo-Ekpenyong, deputy director of the Anzisha Prize.

Young entrepreneurs are among the hardest hit during the Covid-19 crisis. An international Survey from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that nearly 90% of young entrepreneurs report a negative impact on their business, including reduced customer demand, supply chain disruptions, and distribution disruptions.

Despite this, many young entrepreneurs are still creating opportunities and jobs for their communities. 21-year-old Egyptian Alaa Moatamed, last year's Anzisha Prize winner and the co-founder of Presto - an automated, delivery system that connects vendors with customers and suppliers, was able to increase the business revenue by providing delivery services to smaller businesses to cope with demand during the outbreak of Covid-19. She currently employs 11 under-25 employees and plans on increasing that number.



#Anzisha2020: Supreme Sparkle brings beauty services to Cameroon

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While some entrepreneurs were forced to change their business models, the pandemic highlighted the need for some services to be increased. 22-year-old Madagascan Matina Razafimahefa, who received US\$15 000 as the 2020 first runner-up, is the founder of Sayna – an Edtech venture school in Madagascar. The business sources, trains, and produces highly equipped young Africans in industry-specific digital skills. Despite some loss in revenue due to Covid-19, the business was able to pivot to online learning platforms, which supported their growth. To date, Sayna has trained and placed over 2000 people in jobs across multiple African countries.

“To drive economic recovery on the continent, we have to tap into every available resource. That includes young entrepreneurs, including young women entrepreneurs. Doing so takes intentionality. The Anzisha Prizes’ commitment to identifying and supporting very young entrepreneurs has only become more important in the wake of the pandemic. And the creativity, agility, and resourcefulness of young people has only become more valuable,” says Daniel Hailu, regional head, Eastern and Southern Africa, Mastercard Foundation.



#Anzisha2020: Minute5 offers a convenient service to customers in Uganda

Evan-Lee Courie 27 Oct 2020



During the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, women-led businesses on the continent are more susceptible to closure than those led by men. To boost support of female entrepreneurs, the program is encouraging young women to apply to access various offerings of the fellowship and become role models for other young women who want to pursue entrepreneurship.

As the future of work is altered by a global pandemic, job creation by young entrepreneurs remains an important solution for youth unemployment. Supporting and investing in young entrepreneurs is smart business for an economically strong future.

Download the application guide or apply for the prize at anzishaprize.org/apply.

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