

Finalists announced in the MTN Entrepreneurship Challenge powered by Jumia

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Following a rigorous selection process, involving more than 700 applicants from 26 countries across Africa, the top three finalists in the [MTN Entrepreneurship Challenge](#) powered by Jumia have been revealed.

The challenge, which aims to boost entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as build a stronger and more sustainable business environment on the continent, kicked off in February, and is a joint initiative between MTN, Jumia and the [MTN Solution Space](#) based at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business.

Through the entrepreneurship challenge, students were invited to develop a unique digital application or smart solution to address a problem faced in Africa. Applicants heeded the call and hundreds of original ideas covering the areas of E-Commerce Marketplaces, Education Technology, Smart Cities and Solutions, and Health Technology were received.

Over the past few weeks, the ideas were narrowed down, with 11 Live Pitch events taking place from Cameroon to South Africa, to shortlist the top candidates who will eventually pitch their business ideas at the Entrepreneurship Festival in Cape Town in May 2016.

The three finalists are:

Pass.ng (Nigeria)

Pass.ng is a web, desktop and mobile-based CBT examination preparatory and testing platform, with a vision to help candidates excel in all the major Nigerian Examinations and tests.

MedRX (Ghana)

MedRx app is an interactive health platform for all users who have health needs. The app connects users to health personnel from various fields of practice including hospital, pharmacy, laboratory and academia.

Vicoba (Tanzania)

Village Community Banks (Vicoba) are an important instrument of development work, allowing people who do not have access to conventional bank accounts, to access informal investment groups. Vicoba app creates a collaborative platform that includes existing tools for financial and task management in a way that is adapted for the African market.

MTN Solution Space Manager, Sarah-Anne Arnold, congratulated the winners and commented: "Universities are resource-rich, highly networked and create opportunities for students to find like-minded co-founders and explore and develop new opportunities together, and are therefore the ideal environments to encourage entrepreneurs. This was shown by the amazing talent that emerged during the incredible week of Live Pitches which took place across campuses in 11 countries, in collaboration with partner universities and sponsors. Congratulations and best of luck to the finalists".

The top two applications from each region were selected for the semi-finals and awarded the opportunity to undertake a short course from [GetSmarter](#) in order to build new capabilities in areas such as Search Engine Optimisation or digital marketing.

The finalists will face a panel of experienced business leaders at the Entrepreneurship Festival, where the winning team will be named. The panel includes Jeremy Hodara, co-CEO Africa Internet Group, Professor Walter Baets, Director of the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, and Herman Singh, MTN Group Chief Digital Officer.

“We are incredibly impressed with the calibre of applicants and the level of innovation shown. We are looking forward to the finals and wish our contenders the best of luck. We are certain that whichever team emerges victorious, it is the continent that will be the biggest winner, as entrepreneurship and locally developed solutions are what will enable the growth and development of this continent,” says Singh.

Bankole Cardoso, the Head of Communications at Africa Internet Group added, “From the application phase, we were very impressed with the high quality business models and it was not at all easy for the judges to select from so many promising businesses. Over the last week, we have held over 100 live pitches and given young entrepreneurs across the continent a platform to showcase their business ideas and even more importantly, to receive critical feedback from experienced professionals on our judging panels. The gaps in the African entrepreneurship ecosystem are in capital and mentorship so it was great to undergo an exercise like this that will no doubt force them to improve. I now look forward to working closely with these three finalist teams to prepare them for what’s to come in Cape Town. It is an incredible opportunity for all of them to propel themselves to the next level.

The winners will be announced at the Entrepreneurship Festival with the top team being awarded the opportunity for incubation at the premises of either MTN Solution Space at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, or at one of nine Jumia offices across the continent. The winner will also win a cash prize of \$25,000 towards their start-up and have access to a Facebook Start Programme to the value of \$15 000, which includes tools and services needed to build mobile applications.

MTN EC by Jumia in numbers

- Collaborated with more than 60 universities in 13 countries in Africa
- Received over 700 applications, including 345 videos, from 26 countries in 3 languages - English, French and Arabic
- More than 1,000 students applied to the competition
- Top categories are E-Commerce Marketplaces, Education Technology, Smart Cities and Health Technology
- Organised 11 Live Pitch events from Cameroon to South Africa, in partner universities or Jumia offices
- Met more than 250 young entrepreneurs during Live Pitch events all over Africa
- Top three countries in number of applications: Nigeria, Ghana and Cameroon

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