

Ubuntu - a crowdfunding app for startups in SA



By Evan-Lee Courie

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In one hand, you have your business funding application being rejected for various reasons and on the other, a South African who wonders how they can contribute to the entrepreneurial ecosystem even though they too don't have access to millions of Rands. Ubuntu startup fund is a crowd funding mobile app developed to inspire the entrepreneurial spirit in South Africans by allowing them access to cheerleaders who not only believes but are willing to financially back your ideas to make them real. Ubuntu is currently available for download on [Apple's AppStore](#), [Android's PlayStore](#) and the [Huawei's AppGallery](#).



Jonson Ncube, the developer of Ubuntu

Jonson Ncube, the developer of the crowdfunding app, shares more...

■ ***Can you tell us a little more about Ubuntu?***

Ubuntu fund is a crowdfunding app for startups, which embraces the idea to bring together a diverse and radically creative group of people to support, inspire and co-fund each other's businesses projects irrespective of the nature of the project or idea.

The philosophy behind the app is that we can simply do more in community than we can do alone.

■ ***When, how and why did you get started?***

As an entrepreneur for the past 12 years and having created three failed startups in that period, I am a true statistic on how companies don't make it past the first five years.

This is the purpose of Ubuntu startup fund - to help entrepreneurs with micro-funding and mentorship. The app is currently in its beta stage, only having launched the first week of October.

▣ ***What is the core function of Ubuntu?***

The core of Ubuntu is leveraging social capital to empower entrepreneurs, restore livelihoods and develop occupational diversity of the marketplace. Through a streamlined to offer financial support, priceless business advice and insight.

▣ ***Could you explain how ubuntu works?***

Ubuntu startup fund is a micro-funding platform that allows you to raise from R1000 to R30,000 per funding round, just by creating a campaign on the system.

As self-employed or small business owners our biggest challenge is accountability. So having people you can account for gives you a management structure and this is what the Ubuntu community offers to entrepreneurs.

For supporters: You can support any entrepreneurial project on the platform that resonates with you from a minimum of R50. Your contribution gives you access to the entrepreneur and they become accountable to you about the overall budget usage as well as make you a part of their advisory board.

If entrepreneurs fail to account for their budget, sponsors can prohibit them from getting another round of funding and their profile is affected negatively.

For entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurs get priceless insight and counselling from people who want them to succeed and some have experience in the industry you operate in but just as important they get financial backing towards their ideas.

▣ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to face since you started?***

So far it's only been technological barriers. We had to refactor the app to make it much more user-friendly and offer tips on how to correctly pitch your project, prior it had proven a bit challenging for some users the app.

▣ ***Have you received any funding to get this app up and running?***

Not at all. We all had to work around the clock to get to this app running from our personal finances.

▣ ***Could you share any success story?***

Since launching, we managed to successfully raise funds for a small project as well as raise half the funds needed for two

more projects. It's was a total of R8,000 in the first week of launching, which is not bad considering most people offered a minimum of R50 to support a project.

▣ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

Research your goals deeply, understand all the potential impacts of your enterprise in the whole economic ecology and never underestimate how crucial the ability to raise capital is for any entrepreneur.

▣ ***As an entrepreneur, what would you like to see changed in the South African landscape?***

A more coordinated ecosystem for fledgling businesses with access to free information, data, partners and resources... I guess this is exactly what Ubuntu offers.

▣ ***Where would you like to see Ubuntu in the next five years?***

Being received internationally and hopefully as the best-loved, most used and deeply trusted mobile crowdfunding app to ever come from South Africa.

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