

Local student startups start SIMcubator incubation program at Norrsken House Kigali

A total of five social student startups have been chosen to participate in the program and get the chance to win up to 10,000 USD to further scale their business.

Kigali, 18-20. February 2022

SIMcubator is an incubation program which is run and sponsored by students of the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. After the great success of the program in Bangladesh, SIMcubator has now expanded to Rwanda, basing their newest program at Norrsken East Africa's entrepreneurship venues in Kigali. The program aims to enable local change through fostering social student startups in the area and developing young entrepreneurs to create jobs in Rwanda.

The five participating teams were selected out of over 300 applications and address business areas such as agriculture to education technology or health. Many of the participating teams consist of students and alumni of the African Leadership University (ALU), or the University of Kigali. After a first bootcamp that took part last weekend, featuring a mix of keynotes, lectures and practical pitch sessions, each team will now be paired with experienced local mentors and take part in weekly sessions on entrepreneurship, legal and financial matters or leadership development. On the final pitch day in early May, one of the teams will get the chance to secure funding from investors and win a prize of 10,000 USD from SIMcubator.

The five participating teams are: Tech4Change, Zua, The Ubuzimabwiza Initiative, The Talking Podcast, and HUMEKA.

Tech4Change aims to provide technology skills like programming, web design, or digital marketing to students starting from an early age.

Zua is building an eco-friendly cold food storage room, that shall keep farmer's and retailer's perishable crops fresh in order to prevent food and resource waste.

The Ubuzimabwiza Initiative targets the improvement of health of among underprivileged communities through education and support structures.

The Talking Podcast shall inspire and educate aspiring entrepreneurs through the provision a digital talking platform. By hosting inspiring leaders, businesses and success stories, the founders want to provide listeners with qualitative content and information on the topic of Entrepreneurship.

Lastly, HUMEKA develops a real-time indoor air quality monitoring system, which analyses and alerts users of negative changes in air quality, and thus improving the health of individuals in public institutions, transportation or private homes for the better.

The event was hosted in collaboration with Norrsken East Africa. The Norrsken Kigali House is set to become the largest hub in East Africa for entrepreneurship and innovation, forming

an ecosystem that enables entrepreneurs to tackle the world's toughest problems. Norrsken's Isimbi Fatina facilitated the Bootcamp at Norrsken House. She commented:

“Kigali's startup scene is flourishing. We see many East African entrepreneurs who are driven to strengthen Rwanda's economy, create jobs, and have a long-lasting impact. We are excited to be working with the SIMcubator team, from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, to fuel this trend with our incubation program for students and recent graduates. We are proud to support a cohort of young and motivated entrepreneurs who are ready to disrupt industries such as education and healthcare.”

“The bootcamp was a successful kick-off to the cohort's journey and we are already looking forward to the teams' final pitches in May.”, Isimbi added.