YSiG Awards in the Observer Publication June 27, 2016


Uganda wins big in Eastern Africa innovation grants

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Last week, Uganda scooped big in the Eastern African portion of the Youth Spark Innovation Grants (YSiG) with 11 of the 17 winners in the region from Makerere University.

According to organizers of the award Makerere’s Resilience Innovation Lab, over 400 applicants were received for the YSiG call, early this year. The applicants were drawn from Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The competition coordinator, Nathan Turnaharwe, reported that Uganda won 11 awards worth $6,000 (shs 17.5m), while three went to Tanzania, two to Rwanda and one to the Democratic Republic of Congo for the initial six-months incubation period.

Nathan Turnaharwe, project instructor

“The applicants presented projects that we expected to address the resilience challenges facing Africa, in the areas of climate change, public health, improving water access, chronic conflicts and entrepreneurship.” Turnaharwe explained.

Presenting the awards, the chancellor of Makerere University, Prof George Monyo Mugerwa, charged the innovators to share the solutions in the Western world.

“The lack of confidence in our researchers has been the biggest problem for Africa ... I want to encourage you to work harder than those who don’t take you seriously. Always match them or get better and the sky will be the limit,” he said.

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The creators of Matibabu, a malaria diagnostic tool, have won a funding worth £25,000 (about Shs 100m) to inject in their project.

The Matibabu project, comprising Makerere University's best talent in recent times, is currently undergoing incubation at the school of Public Health Resilient African Network (KAN).
A pitch session in Germany PHOTO/RAN

represented by Josiah Kavuma (Lead Developer) and Shafik Sekito (Business Analyst) made presentations at the Merck Innovation Center in Germany on March 14 2016. They consequently won the pitching competition, bagging the much-needed funding and a slot on the Center’s coveted accelerator programme.

The Mattabu team will now test the malaria testing device as they prepare to have it rolled out.

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