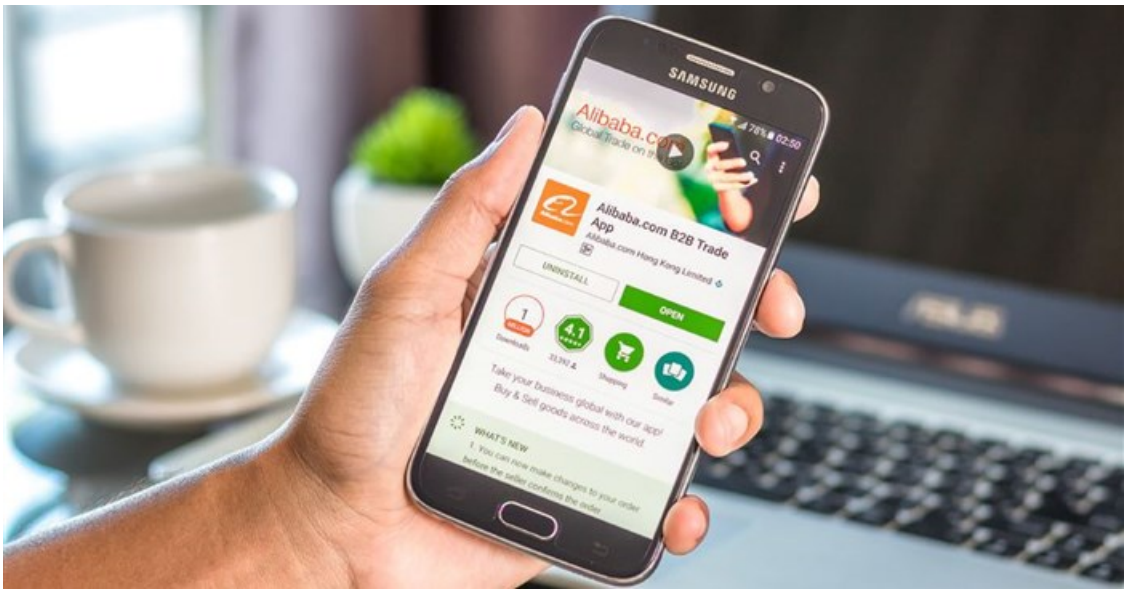
African entrepreneurs join Alibaba's eFounders Fellowship in China

By Gabriella Mulligan

6 Jul 2018

Twenty-nine (29) African entrepreneurs have completed the two-week eFounders Fellowship programme in China, an initiative run by Alibaba and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to support African entrepreneurs succeed in the digital economy.



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The eFounders Fellowship is part of a pledge by Jack Ma, Alibaba Group's executive chairman and a special adviser to UNCTAD on young entrepreneurs and small business, to empower 1,000 entrepreneurs from developing countries in five years.

The current cohort marks the third round of African entrepreneurs to participate in the Fellowship.

The 29 founders all operate platform-based ventures in the e-commerce, logistics, fintech, big data or tourism industries in Africa; and travelled to Hangzhou, China, to participate in the two-week intensive programme offering business training, and introductions to Alibaba executives and local practitioners.

The third cohort represents 11 African countries: Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zambia, Egypt, Uganda, Algeria,

Chad, Cameroon, and Tunisia.

Participants included Olugbenga Agboola of Nigeria's Flutterwave; Alloys Meshack of Kenya's Sendy; Rwanda's Leah Uwihoreye of Golden Thoughts; Bright Chinyundu of Zambia's Kodipay; and Cedric Atangana of Cameroon's Wecashup; to list a few.

"Together with UNCTAD, we want to empower Africa's young entrepreneurs to not only succeed in their own ventures, but to return home and demonstrate to others how to build inclusive business models for the digital era," said Ma.

Ma's initiative is based on his own experiences launching Alibaba back in 1999, with the company facing many of the same barriers and lack of infrastructure that entrepreneurs in Africa face today. This, he feels, makes Alibaba uniquely suited to share its experience and lessons learned with entrepreneurs looking to build technology companies in Africa.

In addition to the Fellowship, last year Ma also announced the creation of a $10 million African Young Entrepreneurs Fund, as well as saying he wants to partner African universities to teach internet technology, artificial intelligence and e-commerce.

Read the original article on Disrupt Africa.

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