

First team of Amplify storytellers graduate in East Africa

Amplify, a paid fellowship for content creators launched in 2016, has seen its first graduates qualify. Three teams of young storytellers from Rwanda, Kenya and Nigeria presented their final projects to a judging panel, comprising Professor Bitange Ndemo, Pamela Sittoni of Nation Media Group, Patricia Obozuwa of GE Africa and Google Kenya's Charles Murito.

The panel described the presentations as a bold, dynamic and provocative approach to storytelling. Each country cohort was tasked with creating a branded content campaign for GE Africa. The judges singled out Kenya in particular for their attention to detail and their ability to bring to life some compelling stories about the impact GE Africa was having in Kenya.



Zain Verjee, aKoma co-founder.

Zain Verjee and Chidi Afulezi, co-founders of aKoma, a content and storytelling platform focused on Africa, created Amplify in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, to develop a fellowship of young, dynamic multimedia content creators who will create compelling stories about Africa.

Launched in September 2016, the intensive six-month fellowship saw 25 fellows – writers, photographers, animators, and videographers – learn technical, creative and business skills to enhance their careers in content creation for Africa.

Verjee says, "Seeing our first group of Amplify fellows flex their creative talent and take storytelling to new levels in their final presentations, both creatively and technically, has been an incredible experience. Our fellows consistently delivered stories and insights from across Africa that are generally ignored by international media outlets. The entire process of this inaugural fellowship has revealed the dynamic talent bursting out of every seam of the continent."

"Stories are important to our perception of one another and our understanding of us," says Jamie Farshchi, editorial manager, The MasterCard Foundation. "Through aKoma, the Amplify fellows are broadening our understanding by telling stories that may not otherwise be heard."

Patricia Obozuwa, director of communications and public affairs of GE Africa expressing excitement at the graduation said, "We are committed to skills development in Africa and as such, are proud to partner with aKoma on this first of a kind training initiative. There is no better time than now to invest in developing content creators who can help tell the African story in new and exciting ways."

Verjee concludes, “Together with our partners, The Mastercard Foundation and GE Africa, we have been able to deliver mentorship, facilitate pan-African collaboration between young creatives and foster a community of learning, shared interests and importantly passion for authentic African storytelling. The Amplify Fellows are the next generation of influencers and thinkers for Africa, and we are thrilled to have been a part of their journey.”

Founded by CNN alumni Zain Verjee and Chidi Afulezi, aKoma is an open source content platform and storytelling community where a combination of user generated and original content about Africa and its diaspora are created, published and shared with the world.

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