

African developers take the world stage at F8

Facebook announced at its annual F8 developer conference, held in San Francisco last week, 12-13 April, that the company partnered with many African developers to launch products for the global market.



Sheryl Sandberg with young Malawian developers

Facebook, with its global reach and scale, is including African developers in its beta testing programme for the launch of new global products and features as it increases its presence and deepens its partnerships across the continent.

F8 hosted more than 2,600 people and hundreds of thousands of people watching via Facebook Live for two days of new products, tools, interactive demos and speakers to help developers build, grow and monetise their apps. And, more than 70% of Facebook's developer partners are located outside the United States and about a third of the attendees at F8 joined us from abroad.

"We believe that local entrepreneurs and developers will be the ones to meet the needs of their immediate community, and we are working with developers to know how we can support them in doing so," said Eme Afigbo, strategic product partnerships manager at Facebook. "We are listening to our developer partners in Africa, and the strong showing for F8 is a reflection of our commitment to doing more with our partners across the continent to help them build products and businesses."

African developers who partnered with Facebook to launch products at F8 include Afrinolly (Entertainment, Nigeria), GumTree South Africa (Classifieds, South Africa), vZikoko (Entertainment, Nigeria), Jobberman (Jobs, Nigeria/Ghana), The Net (Entertainment, Nigeria) and My Music (Media, Nigeria).

In addition, this year Facebook brought F8 to developers around the world through F8 Meetups hosted with tech hubs around the world. In Africa, the social media giant hosted F8 Meetups in Nairobi, Lagos, Cape Town and Morocco where participants watched the sessions in San Francisco.

Two developer teams from Malawi won a developer challenge supported by mobile operator TNM Malawi and Facebook, and were featured on F8's international stage. *Matemitech*, founded by three 22-year olds

Walter Moyo, Thandie Magasa, and Daniel Mvalo, provides educational information aimed at combating Malawi's high under-18 pregnancy rate. The team was featured in an international livestream interview.

Talk To Me, an app created by 10-year old Panashe Jere, who learned to code at a Coding for Kids session at Malawi Hub. This app converts input text into voice so children always have someone to talk to. Both teams were congratulated by Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg personally for their achievements.

Sandberg wrote on her blog: "Today we kicked off Facebook's global developer conference, F8. I met some of our most important partners and [Mark](#), [David Marcus](#), [Ime Archibong](#), [Deborah Liu](#) and [Chris Cox](#) talked about how we're building technology for the next 10 years.

"One of the best parts of my day was meeting these four incredible young people from Malawi. Panashe is 10 years old. He learned to code and built an app that converts text to voice, so that children always have someone to talk to. Walter, Thandie and Daniel are 22. Malawi has one of Africa's highest under-18 pregnancy rates, so they created Maternitech, an app that provides essential information about pregnancy and contraceptives to Malawian women.

"More than half the world is still offline. This is why connecting everyone matters - because when more people can contribute their experiences and ideas, everyone benefits. [#F8](#)."

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