

SA edtech startup Koa Academy wins MEST Africa Challenge

Koa Academy has won the 2023 MEST Africa Challenge held in Accra, Ghana in March 2024. Koa started out as one of five regional winners and was one of two edtech startups in the finalist stage. MEST Africa nurtures aspiring and early-stage tech startups across Africa through training programs, seed funding and access to a network of hubs in the continent's entrepreneurial ecosystem.



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The competition drew applications from hundreds of early-stage tech startups, rigorously assessed on criteria such as innovation, scalability, and team strength.

Finalists from Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Kenya competed in the grand finale, demonstrating their unique solutions and business models to a panel of esteemed judges, including investors and industry experts.

The startup impressed the judges at the MAC Finale showcasing significant market potential, revenue growth, and social impact.

"Winning the MEST Africa Challenge has been an amazing experience for the Koa Academy team. It highlights the hard work and dedication that everyone has put into growing Koa. This recognition is not just an award; it's a testament to the passion and perseverance that drives us every day. Amidst the challenges, this journey has brought us closer to others across the continent, forging relationships and connections that fuel our mission even further. We are reminded that we're not alone in this endeavour and are incredibly grateful for the support and learning opportunities this challenge has presented," said Lauren Anderson, co-founder and CEO, of Koa Academy, expressing gratitude and optimism for the future of tech startups in Africa.

As far the business direction goes, Koa is looking towards expanding its horizons. Anderson concludes, "We're starting now to look at expanding in terms of other curricula and other languages, and to extend Koa's reach beyond South Africa. The online space is ideal for this. We already have our South African school learners engaging daily with teachers who are based outside of SA, and some of our learners are also living abroad. We're really excited about where education is going and about the growing worldwide movement into online spaces. It's fantastic that we can reach anybody, anywhere with quality education, and to teach children in new, tech-supported ways that are relevant and engaging.

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