

# MY BRIGHT IDEA

## CONNECTING CLIENTS TO METAL FABRICATORS

By Derrick Kyatuka

Engineers at the Innovation Consortium, located in Buto, Bweyogerere, Wakiso district, have developed a mobile application (app) that will help connect customers to metal design developers and fabricators in the country. The app aims at saving the customers from moving long distances in search of metal fabricators.

According to Pidson Abaho, a graduate of mechanical engineering from Makerere University and one of the app developers, this comes at a time when most of the renowned metal fabricators, especially in downtown Kampala, have been evicted by real estate developers.

"I went to Kisenyi to fabricate metals for a client. We had our machine designs ready and I knew where the workshop was located, but when I got there, the structures had been razed. I could not find what I wanted on time. When I called the welder, he told me that he had relocated to a distant place," Abaho said.

Abaho and friends at the innovation hub thought of a solution to this problem, because more people are facing sudden evictions. The team developed a mobile app that enables a customer to connect with the metal fabricators without having to physically go to the workshops. At the same time, it helps save time and transport. The advantage for the fabricators is that they stay connected to their client base even if they shift to new places.

"We hope that through this application, we are going to keep the cottage industry in Uganda active and we can improve industrialisation," he said.

They sensitise new metal fabricators they meet to be added unto the app. The team ensures that only genuine people are maintained on the app. So far, they have uploaded information about all metal fabricators in Kisenyi and this month, they will start on Kiseka Market, Ndeeba and Katwe.

### HOW THE APP WORKS

*The app is called Byuuma and it can be accessed by people using Android mobile phones and downloaded from Google playstore. After installing the app, the user can search for the service providers they want.*

*For instance, when a customer wants a fabricator who makes popcorn machines, a list of service providers are displayed showing their location, phone numbers and the other services they provide. The client, therefore, makes direct contact with the service provider.*

### DIVERSIFYING THE APP

Abaho explained that the team is working round-the-clock to upgrade the app. "After registering metal fabricators, we want to move into agriculture because farmers are facing the same challenge. They have products, but they do not know the potential customers. We want to connect customers to farmers and help farmers do away with extra costs paid to middlemen to find them market. We hope to start on the project by the end of this year," he said.

