

BY AMOS NGWOMOYA
angwomoya@ug.nationmedia.com

Building apps propelled Kasujja into innovation

When Imran Kasujja, 26, built his first MakApp about Makerere University's map in 2016, he never imagined it was the gateway into the world of technology. Kasujja graduated with an arts degree in Economics but this has not prevented him from venturing into the world of technology, which is mainly associated with sciences. While at school, his desire was to work as an economist but as destiny would have it, Kasujja is now building a versatile contribution to technological innovations. "I decided to give it [technology] a try so that I could prepare myself for the job market and also make myself relevant," he says.

Breakthrough

Kasujja is quite charming and his story of apps building has rolled him into a world that requires him to constantly innovate.

Currently, he is building a transport app, as he says, will help travelers to know the cost and distance involved in their journey.

At Makerere University, Kasujja was just like any other student. He was a representative on the students' guild for the School of Business and a guild minister in charge of ICT.

This was one of the stepping stones that propelled him in the world of technology as some thought it was wrong for an arts student to be appointed ICT minister.

"I wanted to disapprove the naysayers. And that is when I started thinking of what innovation I could bring on board," he says.

"Based on my experience as a fresher, I realised that an app of a map of Makerere University would help students but tourists and researchers to locate directions within campus," he says.

The MakApp

Through his collaborations with Vincent Ssematya, the Makerere University director of quality assurance, the idea was mooted leading to the creation of the MakApp.

The app, he says, contains a lot of information about Makerere University that is accessible through



only a click. "I am happy that many people have found it useful. Makerere University is a big institution whose records are needed by many people," he says.

The app is a downloadable mobile phone additions that offers search options for instant direction of any

Imran Kasujja shows off some of her app innovations that are downloadable on mobile phones.
PHOTOS BY GODFREY LUGAAJU.

University politics

In 2015, Imran Kasujja was elected as the GRC representative of the School of Business. He was later appointed guild minister for ICT.

In 2016, he was elected the guild speaker and was later elected speaker of Uganda National Students association.

He wish is to extend his political ambition into national politics as

Lubiri Secondary School for his secondary education.

He joined Makerere University to study a Bachelors degree of Arts in Economics.

Currently, has plans of enrolling for a masters programme to study Economics at an international university.

He also hopes to set up an ICT training centre to train more students



location within the university. At his office in Legacy Towers on Kyadondo Road, Kasujja goes about his business with such ease passing off for an expert.

"I want to build apps that solve problems. That is when I will understand that my work is having serious impact," he says.

What he is working on

Currently, Kasujja is working on is a transport-related app that he believes will ease transport within Kampala City.

"Many travelers get stuck because of our disorganised city. The app will basically look at the basics such as where to find the bus parks, routes and destinations of particular buses and charges," he says, as he turns his computer to show me the graphic work of the App.

Travellers, he says, will be able to use the app to book in advance and will be able to know their seat number, time of departure and arrival as well as showing traffic on different roads and offering alternatives.

"Technology will less demanding and it actually makes work easy. With passion for technology, I am always challenged to create solutions to the prevailing problems," he says.

His innovations are collaborated with expert assistance and donor support.

"Funding is always be available as long as your work is appreciated," he says, emphasising that is high time Uganda started taking technological innovations seriously.

Technology and economics

According to Kasujja, every growing economy today, is highly dependent on technology, which gives innovators an opportunity to offer new solutions.

Look at how every sector in Uganda such as banks, schools and media houses are adapting to new technology," he says.

Developing a country, he says, must be long term and this where government needs to step in with proper planning.

"We cannot run away from technology because it is what rules the world now and this is what Ugandans must embrace," he says.

His two cents

Kasujja believes students should not be prisoners of what they study at school as they should be encouraged do things that are totally out of their professions.

"For instance, when my friends said I could not handle the ICT ministry [Makerere University Guild], I

Uganda and innovation

Uganda ranks high among advanced technological and innovation capabilities in Africa, according to a study conducted by Martin Prosperity Institute of US. In 2012, Uganda was ranked second after South Africa and Madagascar.