



Information Pack

Overview

We know that sometimes your internet connection can be really bad and it is hard to get the information you need from a website. This very short pack gives you a bit of an insight into the Spark* support that you can get as an entrepreneur.

What is our model?

Accelerate.

From the hundreds that apply for each intake, Spark* selects twelve entrepreneurs for the accelerator. If you are selected, you go participate in a live-in, week long program where you strip your business model right back to its basics to determine whether you have a strong foundation to move forward with. Your strategy will be pulled in lots of directions, tested, challenged and built up by the Spark* team and other entrepreneurs in the program. We also provide you with training in a whole range of areas to help you grow your business including pitching, raising funds and investment, how to lead and manage your team, acquire customers and build your brand. By the end of the week you will pitch your idea to a room full of investors, partners, philanthropists and potential clients. There is no charge to attend the accelerator.

Support.

After the Accelerator Spark* provides twelve months of rapid support to help you move forward with the momentum you take out of the accelerator. There is no cost to you for this support and over the year you get access to:

- Our graphic design and web team that help you build you brand and online presence.
- Strategy mentoring with our business strategy advisers, all of who have built impact enterprises in your country or around the world.
- Rounds of quick grants (\$500 Australian dollars per grant) which you can use to test ideas to help you prove your model and grow your venture.
- Our legal and accounting partners that provide pro-bono support to you and your venture.

Grow.

The best Spark* entrepreneurs move into the growth, where we provide larger amounts of support to help you grow a model that have proven in the startup phase. At this level you can access larger grants of \$25,000 Australian dollars, are connected directly to our investor partners and our team work closely with you to strategise specific approaches that will help you dramatically increase your impact and sustainability. Approximately one in every 25 Spark* entrepreneurs gets through to this stage, so it is very competitive.

What kind of entrepreneurs are we looking for?

Selection to get into Spark* is always very competitive and you can expect that at least ten people will apply for every position. What we are looking for is very specific:

1. That you are an entrepreneur: You have come up with an idea that is different and has real potential to make a difference.
2. That you understand the context you are working in: We look for people who are born in the country they work in, or have at least spent years working there.
3. That you have started: You have to have launched your venture and it needs to have its first customer. If it is just an idea, we encourage you to get out there, get started and then apply.
4. That you are in startup: The entrepreneurs that we back have usually impacted less than 100 people in a significant way. We love supporting entrepreneurs who are in their early stages of a great idea.
5. That you are improving lives: At the end of the day, we exist to improve the lives of people living in poverty. If you believe that your venture is improving the lives of people living in poverty, then we encourage you to apply.

If you don't hit all of these criteria perfectly, we still encourage you to apply as you may still be considered.

How are we different?

1. We don't charge you: Many entrepreneurship programs charge you to take part. We run our own companies in Australia that bring in revenue to allow us to do what we do. So if you are successful in becoming a Spark* entrepreneur, you get all of the support we provide for free.

2. We don't take a chunk of your company: We don't take any equity in your company. Our goal is that because of our support you are able to change more lives.

3. We are all entrepreneurs: All of our staff and facilitators are proven entrepreneurs who have led ventures that change lives. So when we are spending time with you and supporting you, you can be assured that we know how it feels to be an entrepreneur hustling to build a company.

4. We provide best practice support: We are members of ANDE (a global network of best entrepreneurial support organisations), members of the ViCap Communities, and have won a stack of awards for our work. We have backed hundreds of entrepreneurs, 90% of them have at least doubled their revenue and impact and seen hundreds of thousands of lives changed by their ventures (remember they have less than 100 customers before they come to us).

What do the entrepreneurs say?

Always great to chat to a strategy mentor like you. At times I feel I'm losing it, but these chats always help me get my venture back on track.

Eliot Chisango

Thank you so much for all the incredible information you've invested in me. Everyday as an entrepreneur I use every single thing I learnt at Spark. I can see my strategy so clearly now and I'm a lot more confident of my impact.

Murendeni Mafumo

I cannot express enough the absolute joy that I have, for the visibility that Spark has given me and for the networks and collaborations. You have surrounded me with the right people to fulfil my vision, put me in relationships with people who are like-minded and pointed me toward a new mission for the people that I work with. Asanteni Sana!*

Teresa Njoroge

Because of Spark I just landed a chunk of funding. I am so excited and focused!*

Martha Chumo

Sometimes I have to pinch myself to see if its true, because at times it doesn't seem real how far I have come since I joined Spark eighteen months ago.*

Sitawa Wafula

By the way, I was on this ten week accelerator. There were ten sessions. I went to two, realised it was no-where near as good as Spark and missed the rest. I snuck in for the big pitch day on the last night, and we won out of the 25 companies! Thank you Spark!*

(We won't give the name of this cheeky entrepreneur).

I am very chuffed about Spark. Beyond my expectations. Thank you.*

Paul Talliard

What kind of entrepreneurs have we backed?

When you can access better internet, check out some of the entrepreneurs we have backed (these are just a handful of the hundreds we have worked alongside).

- Totohealth <http://totohealth.org/>
- Lady Liberty <http://csiboutique.com/lady-liberty/>
- My Mind My Funk <http://mymindmyfunk.com/>
- Ukama <http://ukama.co.za/>
- African School for Excellence <http://ase.org.za/>
- Brothers for All: <http://www.brothersforall.org/>
- Unconventional Media: <http://www.unconventionalmedia.co.za/>
- Mothu Network: <http://mothotlungnetwork.com/>

- Grab a Book: <http://www.grababook.org/>
- Mamlaka Health Clinic: <http://www.mamlakahealth.com/>
- Food for Education: <http://food4education.org/f4e/>

Who are we?

Spark* was founded in 2011 by Aaron and Kaitlin Tait, and in 2015 we merged with YGAP which is the fundraising and movement building arm of the organisation, headquartered in Australia. If you want to see what YGAP gets up to, visit YGAP.COM.AU.

Katleho Tsoku - CEO Spark* South Africa

Katleho has studied and worked in Australia, Europe and the United States and brings a strong background in entrepreneurship particularly with her experience launching and growing restaurants in South Africa. Katleho came through the Spark* Accelerator program with her venture, Her Bliss, which exists to empower female entrepreneurs, has been profiled by Destiny Magazine and is a TedX South Africa fellow. She works from our offices in Maboneng, Johannesburg.

Carol Kimari - CEO Spark* Kenya

Carol is a Kenyan social entrepreneur and the founder of Grab a Book (<http://www.grababook.org/>) which provides library services to thousands of Kenyan children. She has worked in the United States and Australia, is a former stockbroker on the Kenyan stock exchange and with ten years of experience as an entrepreneur brings a wealth of knowledge on East African social enterprise. Carol is a Spark* alumni, an Unreasonable Institute fellow and works from our offices in Nairobi.

Shazeeb Islam - CEO Spark* Bangladesh

Shazeeb is a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur and the founder of SBYA Global which has worked with hundreds of young entrepreneurs in the country. He is an MBA graduate from the University of Dhaka and is mentored by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus. He has worked across Europe and Asia with groups including the Grameen Foundation, British Council and One Young World.

Kaitlin Tait - Global General Manager of Impact

Kaitlin is the co-founder of Spark* International, and following a 2015 merger, is now the Global General Manager of Impact for YGAP. Her nine years of international development experience began with her leading a school for street-children in a Tanzania slum and managing an HIV orphanage in a Kenyan village, before launching Spark* and growing the model across Africa and the Asia Pacific. Kaitlin was the 2015 Foundation for Young Australians Trailblazer of the Year and speaks and works with entrepreneurs globally. Originally from San Francisco, she now works from our global headquarters in Melbourne.

Aaron Tait - Chief Impact Officer

Aaron is the co-founder of Spark* International. Aaron draws upon lessons from a diverse career that has seen him serve for seven years as a decorated Australian military officer, run a secondary school for street-children in a Tanzanian slum, run an orphanage in Kenya, and graduate from three Masters degrees in strategy, international relations and development, with the third, from Cambridge University. Aaron is the former CEO of Spark* International, and now the CIO of YGAP. He is also the cofounder of Education Changemakers, one of the world's premiere education innovation consultancies and the author of Edupreneur - Unleashing Teacher Led Innovation. Aaron is a VilCap fellow, the FYA Trailblazer of the Year, and has spoken and worked with audiences including TED, Do Lectures, Microsoft, Apple and PWC.

Spark not in your country?

We are eager to support accelerators and programs that are working to support entrepreneurs in emerging markets. If you have launched an accelerator, incubator or support program for entrepreneurs in your country, and would like funding, training and in-country support to help you improve what you are doing, send an email to kaitlin@sparkinternational.org with a short introduction and we can start the conversation.

Want to get in touch?

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