

Open Source Initiatives in Zimbabwe

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About me

- ICT Consultant/ Python-Django Developer
- Career nomad – have done a bit of everything from Networking, ICT Support, Systems Analysis & Design, Project Management and ICT Advisory Services.
- Entrepreneur, currently self-employed through my start-up company Anntele Business Solutions P/L
- Django Girls Harare/Masvingo organiser
- PyCon Zimbabwe organiser

How It all started

- Muzinda Hub Scholarship Programme
- Helping each other with projects and programming
- First meeting had four members

Setting up PyZim

- Goal – set up a Python user group to share knowledge and information on Python programming.

Challenges – PyZim setup

- Conflict of interest – community vs entrepreneurship (get-rich-fast mentality)
- Bureaucracy main agenda of meetups - who holds what position

Challenges – PyZim Setup

- Only a few committed members - resolutions of meetings never actioned
- Inconsistent attendance hence same issues on agenda

Challenges – PyZim setup

- People not prepared to share knowledge – only 2 meetups actually took place.
- Economic hardships faced by members made registration impossible

The underlying factors for this were...

- Most companies/ individuals using OSS are using PHP, Linux and other platforms but not Python.
- Python use just started recently in Zimbabwe.

Underlying factors

- Python programming language is new in Zimbabwe and only taught at University of Zimbabwe, others mostly teach C as introductory language.
- Python community –a new initiative in Zimbabwe

Underlying factors

- Information is power – no information sharing culture
- Trap doors for customers

Underlying factors

- Subscribing to professional bodies not required for ICT professionals

Underlying factors

- High unemployment rate, especially amongst the youths – over 90%.
- Almost everyone is an entrepreneur – buying and selling (mostly women) or software piracy (mostly men)

Ultimately...

Setting PyZim seemed a failure as no meetups were taking place, no resolutions were actioned, no registration and no events were taking place!

Entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe



However, it was needful to...

- Empower women by introducing them to programming hence create other opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship than the usual buying and selling.

However, it was needful to ...

- Introduce young people to programming other than making a livelihood through software and music piracy.

How?

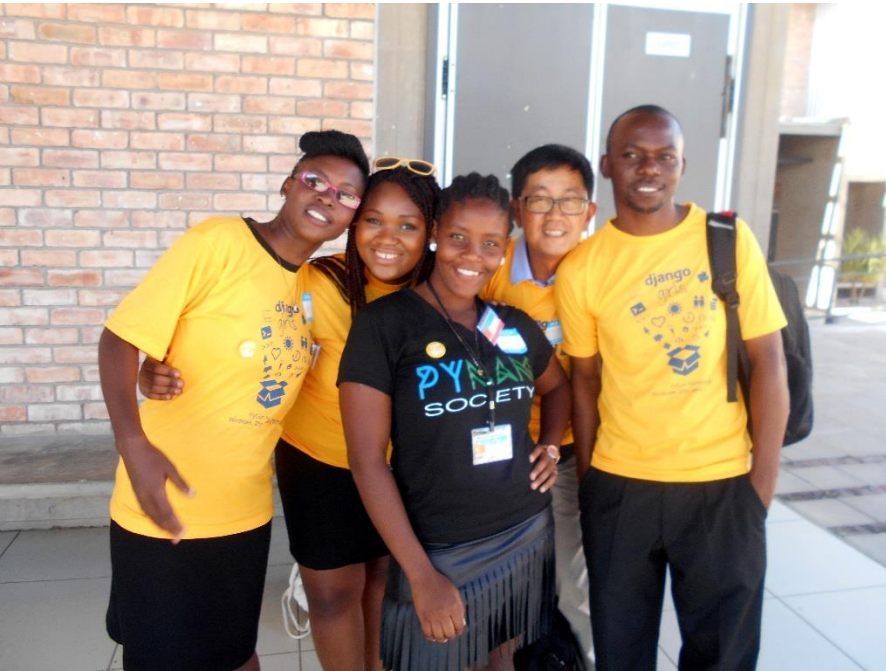
- Organising Open Source Events in Zimbabwe
- First Python Conference in Zimbabwe, PyCon Zimbabwe 2016 & Django Girls Harare event.

Major Challenge

- No experience with/organising PyCon & Django Girls events.

Opportunities...

- Opportunity to experience OSS events – PyCon Namibia 2016 and Django Girls Windhoek.
- Meeting new friends and making connections.



Opportunities...



Django Girls Harare

- Held on the 9th April 2016
- 26 girls and women attended aged between 8 – 60 years



Challenges

- Marketing the event and getting applications
- Bad weather deterred applicants
- Cultural myths hence parents sceptical of the event.



Opportunities...

- Co-author a blog about Django Girls Harare event with Humphrey and publish it on Django Girls website.

Opportunities...

- Write and publish my story on the Django Girls website – personal profile building.

Opportunities...

- Mentor and impact the lives of many girls and women.

Django Girls Masvingo

- Held on the 24th September 2016.
- 18 ladies attended, mostly students from Masvingo Poly Technical College and Great Zimbabwe University.



Challenges

- Funding issues – sanctions against Zimbabwe taking a toll
- Internet issues – improvise using hard copy applications, communication via phone and SMS
- Bureaucracy in getting a venue
- Lack of knowledge on Python and Django – what is Python?

Opportunities

- Crowdfunding project through the help of the Python community and friends from PyCon Namibia
- <https://onepercentclub.com/en/projects/pyzim>

PyCon Zimbabwe

ICT Zimbabwe 8 days to go



€4,680 Raised of €3,600

130% Funded 213 Supporters 8 Days left

[Donate now](#)

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Opportunities

- Nomination and selection for Django Software Foundation Membership
- No monetary benefit, just an honour for non-code contributions.
- Improved access to most influential members of the Django Community

Important Lessons

- It's not always about the money
- Elegance is not a key factor in measuring event success – meeting objectives is a better metric
- Exposure & networks are far more important

Important lessons

- Know the people whom you work with
- It's not about the numbers, it's more about quality, commitment and results
- Think outside the box

Important lessons

- Context is important, always remember you are in Africa (especially, Zimbabwe!)
- Students actually find Python easier to learn than C, C++ and Java!
- I can make a difference

django girls

...is a noble idea!

Experience gained

- Organising events
- Marketing events
- Approaching sponsors
- Patience to nurture a business idea
- More importantly, decision making

Way forward???



ZESA Training Centre, Belvedere, Harare
24th – 25th November 2016

Make a contribution – sponsor, speak, attend!

- Email – zim.pycon@gmail.com
- Website: zw.pycon.org
- CFP Open: zw.python.org/cfp

Thank you!