



ZuAfrique 2025 Report



ZUAFRIQUE

THE HUMAN LAYER POPUP EXPERIENCE



Introduction

Africa's technological direction has often been decided outside of Africa — in gatherings, conferences and events of similar nature that inherently lack African representation or participation. Consequently, Africa has had to chart courses characterised by inadequate understanding of its environmental intricacies, or adopt paths tailor-made for different geographies. Despite this stark reality, events on the continent dedicated to facilitating knowledge sharing, co-creation and productive discussions to collectively shape the path of African innovation have been a rarity. ZuAfrique was born to change this narrative.



“We can no longer afford to be spectators in conversations that define our future. ZuAfrique exists to place African builders, thinkers, and creators at the centre of the table where ideas are shaped, decisions are made, and innovation reflects our lived realities”.

Eric Annan | Founder/CEO, AyaHQ

ZuAfrique was a 21-day pop-up city event held in Kilifi, Kenya from April 15 – May 6, 2025, bringing together builders, creatives, technologists, and community leaders. ZuAfrique is inspired by Zuzalu and is a purpose-driven initiative for human connection and innovation.

Objectives



Foster meaningful human connection through shared, intentional experiences that illuminate and strengthen the human layer.



Explore localized applications of blockchain and decentralized technologies.



Support African builders in shifting mindsets and unlocking abundance.



Facilitate meaningful partnerships between global and African stakeholders, guided by local knowledge and leadership.



Build a lasting framework for community-led gatherings, experimentation, and policy innovation across the continent.

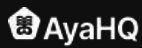
Event Overview

Registration: February 5 – March 30, 2025

April 15 – May 6, 2025

Kilifi, Kenya

Sponsors:



Partners



While it doesn't do justice to the entirety of ZuAfrique, the video below highlights some of the memories and atmosphere of the experience.

[View Video Recap Here](#)

ZuAfrique in Numbers

ZuAfrique generated significant interest globally during the registration phase. The analytics below highlight the level of engagement and demographic breakdown:

2,499 Total views on the registration page

302 Unique viewers with an average session time of 27 minutes

   Interest spanned across India, Kenya, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Canada, with top cities including Nairobi, Lagos, and Toronto

This strong pre-event interest, particularly from emerging tech hubs across Africa and Asia, reflects the resonance of ZuAfrique's mission with a global audience.

Key metrics during the course of the events were similarly impressive as given in the breakdown:

60 Participants

110+ curated events by ZuAfrique as well as participants.

290+ social media posts under #ZuAfrique, generating 60,000+ impressions

Finances

Total Funding Received

Source	Amount
Lisk	\$25,000
AyaHQ	\$50,000
Zuzalu Quadratic Funding (3.65 ETH)	Untouched (held due to price dip)
Total (excluding ETH)	\$75,000

Cost Allocation

Cost center	Percentage
Venue (Kili Sunrise Resort)	20%
Feeding (Buffet Breakfast & Dinner)	25%
Nature Experiences & Community Excursions	15%
Event Operations & Logistics	20%
Builder Scholarships	10%
Media Coverage	5%
Miscellaneous	5%
Total	100%

Event Highlights

ZuAfrrique created a platform for insightful events and conversations ranging from wellness and laughter therapy sessions to dance, swimming, karaoke, community and culture exchanges, as well as builder and policy discussions. Every day provided an opportunity to connect on a human level while systematically having conversations that inspire action and growth for the Africa ecosystem. Highlight of conversations curated by the ZuAfrrique Team include:



Participants were not left out, with community curated events proving to be just as impactful. Some highlights include:

Tokenizing Africa

How to Build a People

Building for the End Users

The Subtle Art of Communication

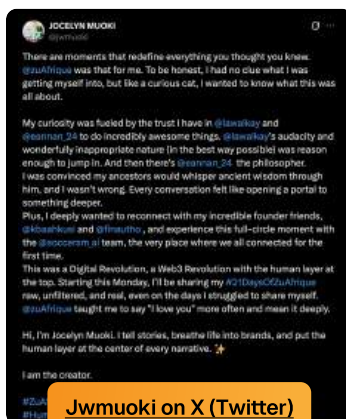
The Grant Economy

Team and Culture

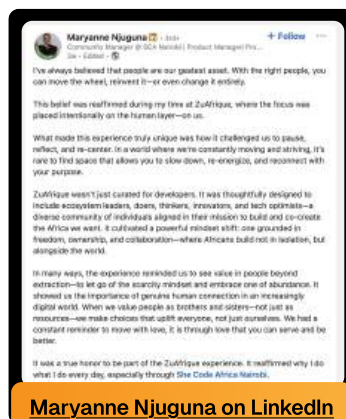
One of the standout moments of the community-powered events was the spontaneous collaboration between Soccersm, Project Mocha (both incubated by AyaHQ), and Payd. In just a short window, the three teams came together to conceptualize and build an end-to-end product to support a ZuAfrrique game night experience. This collaboration didn't just deliver a fun night, it showcased what's possible when builders operate in a trust-rich and human-centric environment. It also underlined a core purpose of ZuAfrrique — human flourishing. When diverse teams with aligned energy converge in an ecosystem like ZuAfrrique, innovation happens naturally, fast, meaningful, and user-focused.



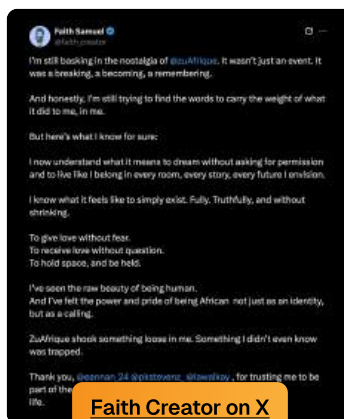
Resident Reflections



Jwmuoki on X (Twitter)



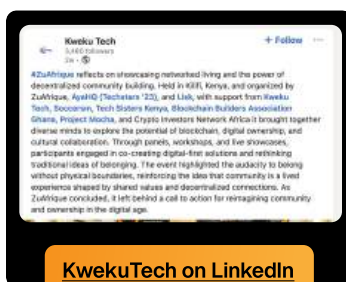
Maryanne Njuguna on LinkedIn



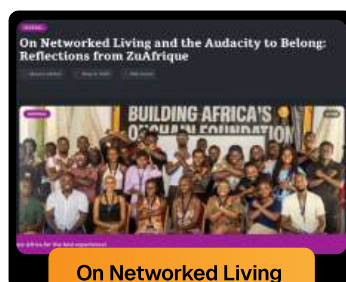
Faith Creator on X



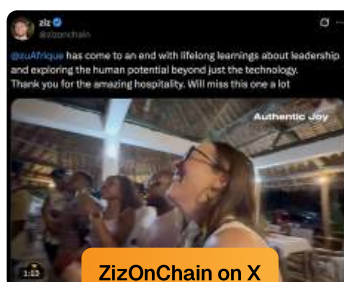
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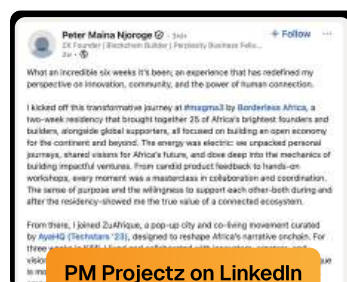
KwekuTech on LinkedIn



On Networked Living & Belonging – BBAfrica



ZizOnChain on X



PM Projectz on LinkedIn

AyaHQ x Lisk Builder Collaboration

The AyaHQ x Lisk Builder Hub, Kilifi, Kenya was a central pillar of the ZuAfricque experience, providing more than just a place to stay for over 30 residents during the 21-day pop-up city. Launched half a year ago, the hub offered something rare on the continent—an environment where builders could focus without distraction, supported by stable resources and surrounded by a community with shared purpose.

The success of the hub highlights the importance of intentional, builder-first spaces and underscores the impact of strong community support. The results went beyond the technical, sparking shifts in mindset and renewing a sense of purpose among participants through its enablement of the ZuAfricque experience. This would not have been possible without Lisk, whose exclusive sponsorship of the Builder Hub reflects a bold commitment to advancing innovation in Africa. Their belief in local builders, matched by tangible support, produced outcomes that speak for themselves.



As impactful as the builder hub is Lisk's collaboration with AyaHQ for the AyaHQ x Lisk Incubation Program through provision of grants. The AyaHQ x Lisk Incubation Program is an accelerator program designed to help early stage African builders move their projects from the early stages to being impactful onchain products. This is achieved through about 16 weeks of immersive mentorship, culminating in a Founders Summit and project showcase.

Learn more about the AyaHQ x Lisk Incubation Program [here](#).

These outcomes speak volumes and underline a clear message to protocols and funders – support matters. The AyaHQ x Lisk Builder collaboration is proof that when builders are empowered with the right tools and environment, they don't just meet expectations, they often go far beyond them.

Impact Assessment

This report draws on data from **26 residents who completed the endline impact survey**. These respondents represent a self-selecting subgroup—primarily individuals who remained engaged through the final week of ZuAfrique and had the most comprehensive experience of the residency. While the findings do not represent all participants equally, they offer a high-resolution picture of how the ZuAfrique model shaped participants' sense of identity, community, and future contribution.

Impact Research Methodology Notes

Survey timing: Conducted in the final days of the residency, the survey captured reflections from residents who were still present at the end of the program.

Respondent cohort: While over 60 individuals participated in ZuAfrique over the three weeks, 26 completed the full survey. These responses skew toward full-time or longer-stay residents who were present in the final days, and likely reflect those with the most immersive experience.

Implication: The results offer strong qualitative insight into ZuAfrique’s depth of impact but may under-represent perspectives from early-week or shorter-stay participants.

Limitations and Interpretation Notes: While the endline survey produced high-quality qualitative data and strong thematic alignment, it carried a few limitations:

- **No baseline survey** was conducted, which limits our ability to measure individual or group-level change over time.
- **Non-anonymous format** may have introduced gratitude or social desirability bias, particularly given the trust-based culture and visible organizing team.
- **Internal design and evaluation** were strengths for contextual relevance, but may reduce external credibility with institutional funders or research audiences.

These limitations do not diminish the clarity of the impact themes, but they do inform how confidently we can generalize or quantify the scale of change. Future iterations of this research process could benefit from:

- An optional baseline survey at onboarding
- A fully anonymous post-program feedback channel
- Co-design or validation with an external research partner

Key Findings

1. Immersive Design Enabled Deep Reflection and Realignment

ZuAfrique’s IRL residency format—spanning three weeks of co-living and decentralized programming—provided a rhythm and depth uncommon in most Web3 gatherings. For many, it was their first time in a long-form, in-person builder space. Participants described recalibrating their pace, mindset, and sense of creative purpose.

61.5% had never attended an IRL event longer than a week

30.8% extended their stay beyond what they planned

Over 70% said the experience exceeded expectations

Residents credited the structure of shared meals, open afternoons, and intention-setting with creating space for clarity and rest—preconditions for sustainable contribution. This design ethos prioritized flow over friction, and it worked.

2. Belonging and Trust Fueled Builder Readiness

Residents overwhelmingly reported a sense of safety, connection, and representation. The “human layer”—AyaHQ’s emphasis on emotional safety and community grounding—was cited as one of the most transformative aspects of the residency.

100% felt safe, included, and seen

96.2% made meaningful new connections

76.9% stepped outside their comfort zone in a positive way

Relational trust-building was actively structured into the experience. Participants described moments of vulnerability, deep conversation, and authentic exchange that renewed their sense of purpose in Web3.

3. Primary Outcome = Mindset Shifts

The most consistent impact signal was identity change. Participants left ZuAfrique not just inspired but aligned—with a clearer understanding of their voice, value, and contribution to decentralized ecosystems.

76.9% said their thinking shifted in a meaningful way

84.6% reported feeling more professionally capable

76.9% identified as better ecosystem builders or leaders

Residents described a renewed connection to purpose and a sense of personal agency to initiate. The most common trajectory was from self-reflection → confidence → readiness to build and lead.

4. Self-Organized Formats and Informal Flow Were Core to Impact

Structured programming wasn't the only source of value. Self-organized sessions, impromptu talks, shared meals, and peer-led circles emerged as the residency's most dynamic components.

92.3% rated self-organized sessions as valuable or highly valuable

Informal spaces (dinners, poolside, evening talks) were frequently cited as transformative

Rather than a centralized curriculum, ZuAfrique operated as a decentralized ecosystem of trust, permission, and peer learning. Residents brought their own knowledge, and the format enabled them to share it with others.

5. Program Elements That Created Tangible Value

Residents consistently rated weekend excursions, intention-setting, and media documentation as valuable elements of the experience. These offerings blended reflection, joy, and visibility.

96.2% rated weekend excursions and morning sessions as valuable or most valuable

92.3% rated photo and podcast documentation as meaningful

Residents described feeling recognized through the documentation process—and asked for more. For many, being interviewed or photographed helped them articulate their growth and imagine their future role in the space.

6. Residents Are Ready to Replicate and Expand the Model

Across testimonials, a clear signal emerged: residents want to build on ZuAfrique. They asked for clearer facilitation infrastructure, deeper technical scaffolding, and toolkits to bring the model into new geographies or thematic focus areas.

Participants called for:

Modular versions of ZuAfrique in new cities

More structured technical workshops alongside reflective space

Coordination tools for clearer self-organized scheduling

Ongoing storytelling and documentation as a community resource

The momentum exists. The next question is in what ways will the infrastructure meet it.

ZuAfrique demonstrated that community is not a secondary benefit of ecosystem design—it is a primary mechanism for unlocking decentralized participation. What emerged from this residency was not just a reflection on Web3's human layer, but a live experiment in building the social trust, identity clarity, and creative confidence that decentralized systems depend on.

The insights presented in this executive summary are just the surface. What follows in the full report is a detailed analysis of the resident experience, the identity shifts that shaped new builder trajectories, and the program elements that activated future-facing momentum. These findings offer a grounded perspective on what it takes to sustain meaningful participation in Web3—and point to what should come next for those who want to build more connected, credible, and culturally relevant ecosystems.

[Read full Impact Assessment Report here](#)

Resident Testimonials

"ZuAfrique has taught me a powerful lesson: to let go, take action, and trust in the value of my contributions."

"Through this experience, I've gained the confidence to pursue my ideas boldly—to create with purpose while caring less about external validation. What matters most is my belief in the impact my work can have, not just today, but for future generations. ZuAfrique has reminded me that sometimes, the most important thing is simply to do it."

"ZuAfrique was not just an event; it was a seed planted in fertile ground, watered with love, abundance, and a shared belief in Africa's potential. The experience redefined what community means to me. I saw young Africans not just building for themselves, but for each other, with a spirit of generosity and openness that is rare and powerful."

"ZuAfrique has been more than just a pop-up city. It has been a simulation of the ecosystem we should be building. Right from the community to the mindset, the intention and the outlook—everything was well curated to prove that an ecosystem focused on the human layer can and should exist."

"ZuAfrique is a paradigm shift. It taught me that real leadership isn't displayed. Leadership is lived through service, presence, and intention. It added more flavour to leadership. The experience rewired how I think about structure, trust, and what it truly means to build with others."

"ZuAfrique reminded me of the deeper purpose behind why I build and nurture my community. It offered me a much-needed pause—a chance to rest and reflect on the kind of life I want to create. This experience gave me the space to slow down, reconnect with myself, and regain clarity."

"Being at ZuAfrique has helped me tie up all the dots to a product I am working on and I've seen the bigger picture thanks to the nudge to have personal hard conversations and the okayness to feel. I've also found new perspective and confidence in a short time and I'll push myself hard if I need to, to maintain this new found way of living."

"I am leaving ZuAfrique not just with purpose but with a mission to amplify these stories, support builders, and ensure that the ripple effect of this community is felt far beyond its borders. The journey is just beginning, and I am honored to be part of it."

"ZuAfrique changed my perspective on many things. As Africans, community and ubuntu have always been part of our way of life, but somewhere along the way, we became more bitter and extractive. This experience reminded me of the importance of sharing, working together, embracing the circularity framework, and most importantly, believing in yourself, living in public, and making it your mission to be great. I finally feel a sense of clarity, or at least that I'm on my way to it with my work. This is exactly what I needed!"

"ZuAfrique has been my most intense co-living experience; having to connect with people in a way that I can JUST BE! I don't have enough words to fully describe the experience but I would say this has been a huge leap out of my comfort zone; nothing close to what I'm used to but I'm elated that I am walking away after 21 days with an installation of a new programming for genuine human connections, appreciating nature & living a wholesome life."

Next Steps

ZuAfrique 2.0 is coming!



ZuAfrique 2.0 is coming in 2026. The success of this first edition calls for continuity. Sustaining the transformative impact of ZuAfrique, and initiatives that harness the power of the human layer to engender mindset shifts and innovation, would be crucial to the continuous advancement of the African onchain ecosystem.

Additionally, existing initiatives and offerings – **AyaLabs, AyaHQ x Lisk Incubation Program, Builder Hubs, Roadshows, support for local communities and other initiatives** – will be amplified to further deepen impact and sustain the momentum created by ZuAfrique.

Conclusion

ZuAfrique has been a profound community experience, leaving us inspired for the future, and motivated to continuously co-create such experiences. With an overwhelming amount of genuine and positive feedback on its impact, the human layer framework which ZuAfrique sought to bring to the fore, demonstrates the ability to transform and inspire. The words of Michael Lawal – Adviser and VP of Partnerships at AyaHQ – capture it succinctly:



“ZuAfrique is a new consciousness. It’s a new culture, a new vibe, a call for the African child to dream a new dream. It’s a reminder to be human first, before anything else.”

Michael Lawal | Adviser and VP of Partnerships at AyaHQ