

# CoLab is northern Nigeria's first tech hub

By [Tom Jackson](#)

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CoLab has opened in Kaduna, the state capital of Kaduna State in north-western Nigeria, offering working space, mentorship and training to local startups.



CoLab. Source: Disrupt Africa

[CoLab](#) claims to be the first tech innovation space in the region, opening its doors in Kaduna, better known as a trade centre and transportation hub for the agriculture sector in the region.

Beyond providing a co-working space, the goal is to build a collaborative community of developers, entrepreneurs, startups and freelancers in the city. The CoLab team believes Kaduna is an ideal base for a tech hub, given its above average power provision, low cost of living and access to talent from tertiary institutions.

Founder Sanusi Ismaila told Disrupt Africa the city currently lacks a tech scene, but the goal is to develop Kaduna as an IT hub for the whole of Nigeria.

"There are a lot of brilliant people with skills, hobbyists and people that want to learn, but there really isn't any forum for them to come together in any capacity," he said. "What we are trying to do is to create a community that presents the opportunity for these bright people to interact, collaborate and start building stuff."

CoLab will provide access to mentors, training sessions and other events in order to help local entrepreneurs to develop their non-tech skills, while Ismaila said it plans to run accelerators in the future.

"We see this project not as ours, but as a region-wide project. The long-term goal is to turn the region as a whole into a technology hub. We're just here to start the spark," he said.

"We believe that by creating a space where people can come together and interact, providing access to constant power and internet, the right kind of mentorship, training, and linking people here with jobs where they can gain some experience, we can create an ecosystem that is bigger than, and outlives, us. The economic impact of such an ecosystem in the medium and long-term will be huge."

At full capacity, CoLab can accommodate 10 startups, each with a team of five individuals in a dedicated open office, while also accommodating another 50 individuals across its other indoor and outdoor open work areas.

Ismaila said he currently sees CoLab as more of a social service than an actual business. The hub is currently self-funded, but will charge a subscription fee for access to its facilities and network.

"We also intend to build an in-house team of designers, programmers and content creators which will build technology solutions for a fee," he said. "We believe that we can pass on the gains of low cost of living in these parts to both national and international customers, so we create a situation where you can build stuff for better and cheaper at CoLab, and in Kaduna generally."

## ABOUT TOM JACKSON

Co-founder @DisruptAfrica. Tech and business journalist in Africa. Passionate about the vibrant tech startups scene in Africa, Tom can usually be found sniffing out the continent's most exciting new companies and entrepreneurs, funding rounds and any other developments within the growing ecosystem

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