

KuzaAfrica

PLAY TO WIN

**Esports and Gaming on
the Rise in Africa**

Oct 1 2025

 **SIGHT**
for GROWTH



A large green arrow pointing downwards and to the right, composed of two parallel lines.

Introduction

Gaming in Africa is no **longer a fringe activity**. From Lagos to Luanda, and Nairobi to Cairo, mobile gaming, esports, and fantasy sports are **creating entirely new ecosystems**, for entertainment, digital community, income generation, and brand engagement. Africa's youthful population (70% under 30), improving connectivity, and rising smartphone penetration are creating fertile ground for **an industry poised to leapfrog traditional entertainment**.

Mobile is the dominant platform, since it is cheaper to access and easier to distribute content. What's new is the pace of **community formation**: streamers building audiences on TikTok and Twitch; WhatsApp fantasy leagues; eFootball tournaments in township malls; and fintechs using gamification to build loyalty. Gaming is no longer just play, **it's culture, community, and commerce**.

While markets like South Africa and Egypt lead with more mature infrastructure, strong gaming and esports signals are now emerging in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Morocco, and Algeria. From casual to competitive, gaming is unlocking new monetisation models and **giving brands fresh ways to connect with digital-first consumers**.



How Esports and Gaming is Shaping Consumer and Brand Behavior

Current State:

Mobile at the Core: Over 95% of gaming in Africa happens on smartphones — the continent's true console — powered by affordable devices, cheap data, and platforms like TikTok and YouTube that turn casual play into community.

Esports Goes Mainstream: Structured leagues such as GameXP (Nigeria), Ekasi Esports (South Africa), and Inwi Gaming (Morocco) are professionalising competition and drawing sponsors from telcos, fintechs, and FMCGs like Safaricom, MTN, and Monster Energy.

African Stories Come to Play: Local developers are infusing African culture, language, and folklore into their games — building pride, representation, and cultural ownership in digital spaces.

Women Redefining the Game: Female streamers and collectives are expanding visibility, driving inclusion, and reshaping what gaming culture looks like across Africa.



What It Means to Consumers:

Gaming is no longer fringe — it's cultural currency.

Gaming is now a central part of how youth and young adults spend time, express identity, and build social connections, especially in urban hubs like Cairo, Cape Town, Nairobi, Accra, and Lagos.

Consumers expect brands to show up in gaming spaces.

Telcos like MTN have launched gaming bundles, and banks like Ecobank have sponsored mobile tournaments to reach youth audiences in a native environment. Brand value is being built where the gamers are.

Streaming is the new stage.

Platforms like TikTok Live, YouTube Gaming, and Twitch offer new ways to engage. Consumers follow gamers the same way they follow musicians.

National pride moments through local esports leagues.

Events like the Africa Esports Championship or Nigeria Esports League are pulling in corporate sponsorships and youth audiences. Brands like Red Bull, Showmax, and Infinix are using these spaces to build buzz.

Fantasy sports are blurring with finance.

Fantasy football is huge, especially during Premier League season, but new formats (like Sorare and crypto-backed fantasy leagues) are linking gaming to digital wallets, NFTs, and token-based economies.

Offline gaming still thrives in peri-urban and rural spaces.

Gaming cafes and betting parlours often double as community hangouts. This creates a hybrid social-gaming space that brands can tap into with activations, partnerships, and sampling.



The Key Trends Shaping Play to Win

1

Mobile Gaming as Africa's Main Arena -

Smartphones have leapfrogged consoles, making mobile the dominant platform for casual and competitive play, especially in urban and peri-urban youth segments.



2

Esports Going Pro with Local Leagues - African esports is formalising, with country-level leagues and pan-African tournaments attracting brands, broadcasters, and youth talent across Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa.



3

Cross-Platform Fantasy & Interactive Sports -

Fantasy football, cricket, and digital card sports are evolving from hobby to obsession, with regional platforms merging sports fandom with real-time engagement and digital payments.



4

Gaming Cafes as Social Hubs

- In underserved regions, gaming cafes and community arcades serve as both access points and social venues — especially for teens and young adults without home internet.



6

Brands Gamifying Engagement - CPG, telcos, and fintechs are tapping gaming mechanics (e.g. mobile tournaments, gaming-inspired loyalty, virtual leaderboards) to drive awareness and participation.



5

Female Gamers Carving Space -

Women are increasingly active as gamers, streamers, and organisers and are building their own communities to challenge exclusion and reframe representation in African gaming.



Homegrown Game Development and Afro-themed Content

- Local studios and indie creators are building games rooted in African mythology, languages, and urban life — offering fresh narratives beyond imported titles.



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Trend 1

Mobile Gaming as Africa's Main Arena

Mobile is where Africa plays. With over 95% of gaming happening on phones, **the device has become both console and community hub**. Affordable smartphones, low-cost data, and short-form video have made gaming accessible to millions. From Nairobi's matatus to Lagos dorm rooms, mobile titles like Free Fire, EA Sports FC Mobile, and Call of Duty Mobile dominate youth attention. Gaming is more than just leisure, **it's part of digital life**, alongside music and social media.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Embed inside the mobile ecosystem: sponsor tournaments or create branded challenges within popular games.

Bundle and reward play: telcos and fintechs can offer gaming bundles or cashback rewards for data and in-game purchases.

Collaborate with creators: partner with streamers or micro-influencers on TikTok and YouTube Gaming for authentic youth engagement.



Orange Tunisia launched "Orange Gaming Tunisia," bundling data offers with access to popular mobile titles.



Infinix introduced the HOT 40 SERIES Free Fire Limited Edition (Nigeria, Egypt) developed in collaboration with Free Fire, the world's most downloaded mobile battle royale game

MTN's Ayoba Games



Trend 2

Esports Going Pro with Local Leagues

African eSports is **shifting from hobby to industry**. Countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya now host national leagues, with corporate sponsors and televised finals. Events like Africa Esports Championship and GamrX have **created local stars, livestream audiences, and brand exposure opportunities**. The scene mirrors football fandom, complete with rivalries, influencers, and merch.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Sponsor leagues or teams:

own visibility through uniforms, event naming rights, or livestream integration.

Invest in grassroots tournaments:

build loyalty by nurturing semi-pro or school-level leagues.

Build content partnerships:

co-create esports highlight shows or documentaries to reach non-gamers.



Safaricom's **BLAZE Esports** events in Kenya



Egypt Esports Federation (EEF) regularly organizes national qualifiers for PUBG Mobile, Valorant, and League of Legends.

Red Bull's **Hit the Streets** tournaments



Trend 3

Cross-Platform Fantasy & Interactive Sports

Fantasy sports are becoming **part of everyday entertainment, blurring sports fandom with gaming**. African fans manage fantasy teams, compete with friends, and place micro-bets via mobile wallets. Platforms like SportPesa, Betway, and SuperSport Fantasy combine **prediction, reward, and social bragging rights**.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Gamify sports fandom:

link fantasy leagues to product promotions, cashback, or data rewards.

Collaborate with payment providers:

integrate easy wallet deposits and redemptions for in-game earnings.

Tap national pride moments:

run fantasy challenges during AFCON or Premier League seasons.



ONTime Sports in Egypt runs interactive prediction games around live football matches.

Betika's Fantasy League in Kenya



SuperSport's Predictor
Game during
tournaments



Trend 4

Gaming Cafes as Social Hubs

In many African towns, **gaming cafes are the entry point into digital life** and **double as community spaces**, where youth play, stream, and socialize. These **cafes fill the access gap** for players without home Wi-Fi, creating offline gaming culture around titles like FIFA and Tekken.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Activate at the grassroots:
sponsor gaming cafes with branded gear, tournaments, or giveaways.

Turn them into sampling points:
launch energy drinks, snacks, or gadgets in these venues.

Support access:
co-fund digital inclusion programs through gaming hubs.



iHub Nairobi's gaming nights

Ekasi Esports lounges in South Africa



RUSH
SPORTS LOUNGE

RUSH Esports Lounge in Cairo hosts competitive tournaments and live streams.



Trend 5

Female Gamers Carving Space

Women are stepping into Africa's gaming scene as **players, streamers, and organizers**. Groups like GirlCode Nigeria and Black Valkyries (South Africa) are **challenging stereotypes and building inclusive communities**. Visibility is growing and streamers like QueenArrow (Kenya) are now brand ambassadors and esports hosts.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Champion inclusion: sponsor women-only tournaments and highlight female gaming talent in campaigns.

Co-create mentorship or training spaces: partner with women-led tech hubs.

Tell their stories: use authentic narratives that celebrate diversity in gaming.

Examples: Puma South Africa's esports collab with QueenArrow, Uncut Gaming SA's female-led events, and GirlCode's mentorship programs.



GirlGamers Morocco is an emerging online collective promoting women in esports.



Queen Arrow joining the Mzansi Esports Champions finals!

iGaming Afrika top 50 most influential women in gaming, Africa.



Trend 6

Brands Gamifying Engagement

Gamification is now a **mainstream engagement tool**. From loyalty programs with virtual leaderboards to in-app missions and rewards, brands are turning everyday actions into playful competition. It **drives repeat engagement and social sharing**, especially among digital-first youth.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

Add game mechanics to loyalty schemes: points, streaks, or levels tied to real rewards.

Integrate gaming into social campaigns: turn hashtag challenges into scoreboards.

Use mini-games in fintech or telco apps: reward learning or saving behavior through play.

Examples: Absa Bank's GenU gamified learning app, Pepsi's Play2Win campaign in Nigeria, and Safaricom's Blaze loyalty leaderboard.



Inwi Gaming (Morocco) gamified its youth loyalty program through missions and rewards tied to esports events.



Pepsi's Play2Win
campaign in Nigeria



Etisalat Egypt uses in-app mini-games for data reward promotions



Trend 7

Cross-Platform Fantasy & Interactive Sports

African developers are rewriting narratives. Studios like Leti Arts (Ghana), Usiku Games (Kenya), and Kiro'o Games (Cameroon) are blending local folklore, language, and heroes into mobile titles. These games resonate deeply because they reflect lived experiences and pride in identity.

How brands in Africa can leverage this trend:

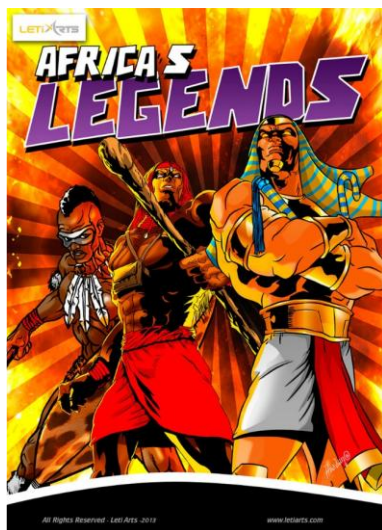
Partner with local developers:
co-create branded games rooted in African stories.

License or fund Afro-themed titles:
use them for education, awareness, or entertainment.

Support developer ecosystems:
sponsor coding jams and local app store showcases.



Aurion: Legacy of the Kori-Odan is an action role-playing video game developed by the Cameroonian developer Kiro'o Games.



In **African Legends (Leti Arts)**, the character designs in "Africa's Legends" are deeply rooted in the richness of African cultures

Digital Mania Studio (Tunisia) have produced globally recognized titles.



Mind-the-Gap

Play to Win - Esports and Gaming on the Rise in Africa touches every generation—but how they engage, what influences them, and how they respond to brands varies significantly. A tailored approach is essential. Here's how each generation connects to digital platforms, brand themes, and engagement styles:



GEN ALPHA (2013 onwards)

Behaviors : Native and play-driven; learn and socialise through interactive games and YouTube Kids content.

Themes that Connect : Digital creativity, learning through play, African heroes in gaming narratives.

Channels : Gamified learning apps, animation platforms, kids' edtech games.

Brand Aspects : Fun, safety, and creativity; parents appreciate educational value.

Engagement Style : Short, colourful, story-based and interactive; prefer play over passive viewing.



GEN Z (1997 - 2012)

Behaviors : Competitive and community-oriented; blend gaming, streaming, and social identity.

Themes that Connect : Inclusion, self-expression, hustle culture, and tech pride.

Channels : TikTok, Twitch, Discord, mobile esports, WhatsApp gaming groups.

Brand Aspects : Bold, authentic, and locally relevant; champion individuality and empowerment.

Engagement Style : Co-creation and challenge-driven; prefer interactive, creator-led experiences.



MILLENNIALS (1981 - 1996)

Behaviors : Mix casual mobile gaming and fantasy sports; use play for relaxation and connection.

Themes : Work-life balance, nostalgia, competition, and digital convenience.

Channels : Fantasy football apps, mobile games, YouTube Gaming, and sports betting platforms.

Brand Aspects : Smart and aspirational; appreciate rewards and digital ease.

Engagement Style : Responsive to gamified loyalty and value-driven play; prefer experiences with tangible payoffs.



GEN X (1965 - 1980)

Behaviors : Light players and sports fans; engage in fantasy leagues and casual mobile games.

Themes : Social bonding, national pride, and shared family fun.

Channels : WhatsApp, Facebook Gaming, fantasy football, sports prediction apps.

Brand Aspects : Trust, community, and practicality.

Engagement Style : Group-based and social; respond well to competitions linked to real-life rewards or family participation.



BABY BOOMERS (1946 - 1964)

Behaviors : Limited play; mostly observers or casual puzzle players.

Themes : Connection with younger generations, pride in youth achievement, and local heroism.

Channels : TV, radio, community events, and family-led gaming experiences.

Brand Aspects : Reliability, family orientation, and visible community impact.

Engagement Style : Indirect and relational-respond through storytelling, pride moments, or family involvement rather than direct gameplay.



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OUR

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OUR Calendar 2025

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**KUZA AFRICA:
UNVEILING
OPPORTUNITIES,
EMPOWERING
CHANGE**

FEBRUARY

**KUZA AFRICA:
CULTURAL
RENAISSANCE**

MARCH

**ROOTS REVIVAL:
EMBRACING, LOCAL
AND TRADITIONAL,
FAVORITES**

APRIL

**DIGITAL BOOM:
AFRICA'S LEAP INTO
THE FUTURE
ECONOMY**

MAY

**THE SOCIAL PULSE:
INFLUENCING
TRENDS, SHAPING
NARRATIVES.**

JUNE

**GREEN CHALLENGES:
TACKLING CLIMATE
CHANGE AND ECO-
PRESSURES**

JULY

**CONSCIOUS
CHOICES:
SUSTAINABILITY
MEETS ETHICAL
LIVING.**

AUGUST

**UNITED MARKETS:
AFCFTA POWERING
REGIONAL GROWTH**

SEPTEMBER

**RIISING STARS:
YOUTH AND
WOMEN LEADING
CHANGE**

OCTOBER

**PLAY TO WIN: E-
SPORTS AND
GAMING ON THE
RISE**

NOVEMBER

**UNWINDING
AFRICA:
ENTERTAINMENT
AND LEISURE
REDEFINED**

DECEMBER

**WELLNESS
REVOLUTION:
PRIORITIZING
HEALTH AND
BALANCE**

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