



NIIH POST AUGUST 2025 EDITION



EDITORIAL LETTER

Dear Stakeholders, Innovators, and Partners,

It is with great pride that we share with you this edition of the National ICT Innovation Hub Newsletter, capturing the milestones and transformative strides made in August 2025. This past month has been a powerful reminder of Uganda's growing innovation spirit rooted not just in technology, but in creativity, resilience, and collaboration.

From empowering young women in universities to step boldly into the innovation space, to inspiring secondary school girls through the Data Ladies Program, we are witnessing the rise of a new generation of innovators who are determined to shape Uganda's future. Strategic partnerships, such as our collaboration with PwC Uganda, continue to strengthen the support systems around startups, while initiatives like the UJ-Connect Acceleration Program and the Uganda-Japan delegation are expanding our global footprint and building bridges for investment and knowledge exchange.

Equally inspiring is the national commitment to inclusivity, as seen in the ICDL partnership that has equipped refugees and public officers with digital skills, ensuring no one is left behind in the digital transformation journey. Across borders, Uganda proudly showcased its innovation story at TICON Africa 2025, standing shoulder to shoulder with the continent's brightest minds.

This issue also reminds us to reflect on what innovation truly means in our context. Beyond apps and patents, innovation in Uganda is about grassroots solutions; farmers conserving water, health workers extending care, and young creatives reimagining culture. It is this inclusive, resourceful, and homegrown ingenuity that must continue to drive our agenda.

As you read through these stories, we invite you to celebrate with us the resilience and brilliance of Ugandan innovators. Together, we are laying strong foundations for a digital, inclusive, and globally competitive future.

*Winfred Nankanja,
Communications and PR Associate
National ICT Innovation Hub Team.*

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ICT INNOVATION HUB

The Hub is located inside the Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT) Nakawa Campus and creates an environment for ICT innovators facing challenges with workspace, limited internet connectivity and searching for creative spaces that spur thinking.

The Hub seeks to become the "Home of ICT Innovation" with the ability to house and support the local innovation ecosystem in Uganda, harnessing the true concept of Nationalism (home-grown potential).

VISION

A competitive, solutions-based innovation ecosystem.

MISSION

Home of innovation that catalyzes social economic development.

CORE VALUES

Collaboration

Mentorship

Excellence

Sustainability

Home Grown Solutions

BEYOND BLUEPRINTS AFRICA MENTORSHIP FOR YOUNG CONSTRUCTION TECHNICIANS

August 4th - 30th, 2025

Beyond Blueprints Africa is a flagship project of Daria Kayitesi Safe Space, dedicated to empowering young people through sexual reproductive health education, career guidance, mentorship, and public speaking skills.

Founded by Ruth Namutebi Elizabeth, a 33-year-old architecture student and HIV/mental health advocate, the organization has actively engaged schools, communities, and online platforms with career sessions, mentorship programs, health campaigns, and speaker series.

Beyond Blueprints Africa focuses on school-to-work mentorship for construction technicians, addressing the gap between diploma graduates and professional opportunities. The program equips technicians with career growth strategies, networking opportunities, scholarship guidance, professional exposure, and practical skills such as CV building, portfolio design, interview techniques, and workplace etiquette.

Participants also connect with professional bodies like the Uganda Society of Architects and Uganda Institute of Professional Engineers to build networks and receive guidance from registered professionals.

The four-week program targeted students across Uganda Technical Colleges under the UVTAB curriculum, including architecture, engineering, interior design, surveying, physical planning, and plumbing.

The initiative will run annually, and interested participants can always reach Ruth at +256703966594 for more information.



STRENGTHENING INNOVATION THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

August 7th, 2025

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) Uganda to support the National ICT Innovation Hub. Through this partnership, PwC will co-develop capacity-building programs, mentor startups, and provide technical support. The collaboration marks a major boost in accelerating Uganda's digital transformation by empowering innovators and entrepreneurs with the skills needed to succeed.



GOU AND ICDL EMPOWER REFUGEES WITH DIGITAL SKILLS

August 14th, 2025

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance and the National ICT Innovation Hub, marked a major milestone in its partnership with ICDL Africa by training more than 1,230 refugees and strengthening their digital capacity.

Launched under the January 2023 Memorandum of Understanding with ICDL Africa, the Digital Skills for Refugees Program has successfully delivered practical training and internationally recognised ICDL certification to refugees and host communities in Arua, Koboko, Kiryandongo, and Kampala.

From May to July 2025 alone, over 900 refugees benefited, with 619 graduates earning certifications in areas such as computer essentials, cybersecurity, data analytics, and digital marketing.

The initiative also supported refugee entrepreneurs, ICT teachers, and women, with training offered in multiple languages to ensure inclusivity.

The MoU with ICDL Africa continues to drive Uganda's digital transformation agenda, advancing the National Digital Transformation Roadmap and the Digital Uganda Vision. By equipping vulnerable communities with modern skills, the partnership demonstrates Uganda's commitment to inclusive, nationwide digital empowerment.





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LAUNCH OF BATCH 3 OF THE UJ-CONNECT ACCELERATION PROGRAM

August 15th, 2025

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, in partnership with JICA, officially launched Batch 3 of the UJ-Connect Acceleration Program, bringing 15 entrepreneurs on board.

Over the next six months, participants will gain mentorship, entrepreneurial skills, and hands-on training from experts in Uganda and Japan to grow their technology-driven businesses

guided by the UJ-Connect tailored mentoring curriculum.

During the orientation, entrepreneurs showcased their innovations, highlighting how ICT can tackle real-world challenges. The UJ-Connect Program is part of a four-year Uganda-Japan initiative to strengthen ICT talent, foster entrepreneurship, and build lasting partnerships between the two nations.



DATA LADIES PROGRAM EMPOWERS GIRLS IN STEM

August 19th - 21st, 2025

The Data Ladies Program is an inspiring initiative aimed at empowering girls aged 15–18 years to pursue careers in STEM.

Despite progress in national education, young women still face barriers that limit their participation in science and technology. The Data Ladies Program was built to provide hands-on training, mentorship, and digital skills development to bridge such gaps.

The inaugural cohort brought together 20 girls from secondary schools in Nakawa Division for a three-day training during the holiday. Led by Policy facilitators and hosted at the National ICT Innovation Hub, the programme combined interactive sessions on digital safety, programming (Python), machine learning,

research, and data management with mentorship from women role models.

Through this experience, participants not only gained technical skills but also built confidence, teamwork, and a sense of belonging in STEM.

The peak of the programme will be a DataFest event scheduled for October 2025, where the girls will showcase their learning and link classroom knowledge to real-world opportunities, creating a pipeline of future innovators and contributing to Uganda's vision of an inclusive, tech-driven future.



UGANDA STRENGTHENS ICT TIES WITH JAPAN THROUGH UJ-CONNECT DELEGATION

August 19th - 29th, 2025

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, in partnership with JICA, led a UJ-Connect delegation to Japan to strengthen collaboration in ICT and innovation.

The mission featured four Ugandan startups; Milima Security, Rent Beta, Maarifasasa, and SMS One who showcased Uganda's ICT sector at the TICAD Exhibition and pitched to potential Japanese partners and investors.

The delegation also engaged with leading firms like Hitachi, Sakurug, and Future Company, and undertook benchmarking visits to top innovation hubs including JAM BASE, Station AI, and Quintbridge.

These engagements enhanced Uganda's visibility in Japan's tech ecosystem, opened doors for business growth, and reinforced international partnerships aimed at driving technology transfer, investment, and innovation.



UGANDA SHOWCASED AT TICON AFRICA 2025

August 20th - 22nd, 2025

Representatives from the National ICT Innovation Hub (NIIH) and Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT) attended the 2025 Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa) Conference in Accra, Ghana.

Hosted in partnership with the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana, the conference brought together Africa's leading minds in technology, innovation, and

education under the theme "Thriving in Africa's Evolving Markets: Trust, Trends, and Technology."

Uganda's team had the opportunity to showcase the country's strengths in digital education, connect with policymakers and innovators, build strategic partnerships, and exchange best practices driving digital transformation across the continent.



EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN IN INNOVATION

August 29th, 2025

Through hands-on training, mentorship, and innovation challenges, participants turned bold ideas into viable solutions and showcased their creativity at the Graduation.

The Entrepreneurship, Digital Skills, and Employability of Young Women Program, led by the National ICT Innovation Hub in partnership with Makerere University Business School, has empowered 140 young women across five universities with hands-on digital and entrepreneurial training.

The program sparked 120+ innovative ideas, with 60 incubated and 10 funded, showcasing the bold talent and creativity of Uganda's next wave of female innovators. Culminating in the Graduation & Innovation Showcase on 29th August 2025, this milestone marks not an end, but a powerful beginning.



WHAT DOES INNOVATION REALLY MEAN IN UGANDA?

By Carol Kagezi

Partnership and Alliance Coordinator - NIIH



How we define innovation matters. If we focus only on patents and apps, grassroots problem-solvers remain invisible. But when we value social, frugal, and indigenous solutions, Uganda's true ingenuity is recognized, supported, and empowered.

Innovation here is not a borrowed term but a lived reality.

When we talk about innovation in Uganda, what exactly do we mean? Is it the latest app rolling out, or the ingenious ways smallholder farmers are adapting to climate change with homemade solar irrigation systems? Is it fintech solutions driving financial inclusion, or the quiet brilliance of local innovators rethinking community health and the logistics of restocking medical supplies in local health centres?

Innovation has become one of the most overused and least interrogated words in our national discourse. Yet, we rarely pause to ask: what does innovation truly mean for us, here in Uganda?

Globally, innovation is often framed in terms of disruption, technology, and novelty. In Silicon Valley, it is measured by unicorns and venture capital. In OECD definitions, it is about patents, research, and competitiveness.

Uganda's context, however, is different. Ours is a country

of youthful energy, limited resources, and a vibrant informal economy. Here, innovation is not always about cutting-edge technology. More often, it is about resourcefulness—solving problems creatively with what is available.

This makes our innovation not less valuable, but more urgent, inclusive, and reflective of who we are.

Uganda's innovation comes alive when:

- Farmers find new ways to conserve water during dry seasons;
- Village Health Teams invent social systems to extend healthcare where infrastructure falls short;
- Mobile money, once an adaptation, becomes a backbone of daily life;
- Creatives reimagine culture through music, design, and language, turning local identity into global influence.

This is innovation in motion. It may not always look like the global playbook prescribes, but it drives real change in Uganda.

How we define innovation determines who gets seen, who gets funded, and who gets left out. If innovation is limited to apps and patents, grassroots problem-solvers remain invisible. But if it encompasses social, frugal, and indigenous solutions, Uganda's real ingenuity is recognized and supported.

Definitions shape policy, education, and investment. They decide whether we design for the few or for the many. This conversation is not just about semantics—it is strategic. Uganda needs to define innovation on her own terms. Not as a borrowed word, but as a lived reality.



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