



NIIH POST SEPTEMBER 2025 EDITION



EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Stakeholders, Innovators, and Partners,

As we dive into the September 2025 edition of the NIIH Newsletter, we're excited to share the latest developments and successes from Uganda's vibrant digital landscape. This month, we're spotlighting initiatives that showcase the creativity, innovation, and determination of our nation's young talent.

Our feature story highlights the 3D Computer Animation Bootcamp, which brought together hundreds of aspiring creatives eager to explore the world of 3D animation. We're proud to see our young innovators pushing the boundaries of what's possible, and we're committed to providing them with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed.

We're also thrilled to share the achievements of our robotics team, which secured second place in the World Junior Robotics category. Their innovative projects, such as the doctor-assistant robot, demonstrate the potential of technology to drive positive change in our communities.

In addition to these exciting initiatives, we're featuring insights from industry experts on topics like Extended Reality (XR) and digital marketing. Our goal is to provide our readers with the knowledge and inspiration they need to stay ahead of the curve in the rapidly evolving digital world.

As we celebrate the progress we've made, we're also mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. We recognize the importance of digital literacy, access to technology, and inclusivity in ensuring that everyone can benefit from the opportunities of the digital economy. We're grateful for the support of our partners and stakeholders, and we look forward to continuing to share the stories and innovations that are shaping Uganda's digital future.

*Sincerely,
Winfred Nankanja
Editor, NIIH Newsletter*

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

3D COMPUTER ANIMATION BOOT-CAMP EMPOWERS UGANDA'S YOUNG CREATIVES

September 1st - 4th, 2025

The edition brought together hundreds of aspiring creatives, students, and young professionals eager to explore the world of 3D animation. The four-day program immersed participants in the complete animation pipeline, from storyboarding and character design to modelling, animation, rendering, and postproduction.

The boot camp attracted several participants, with an average of 170 attending in person and 70 joining online each day.

Learners came from institutions across the country, including Makerere University, Kyambogo University, UICT, MUBS, Kampala International University, Victoria University, Uganda Christian University, and even several secondary schools such as Bombo Army, Mengo, and Kitante. Notably, some participants travelled from as far as Arua and Lira, reflecting the growing nationwide interest in digital creativity.

The exercise aimed to equip participants with hands-on experience in 3D animation using tools such as Autodesk Maya and Blender, while raising awareness about career opportunities in areas including gaming, virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), and digital media. Learners gained exposure to industry workflows, collaborated on a short animated film, and connected with ongoing opportunities through Crossroads 3D Animation Academy and Kelele Collective, hence reinforcing the country's potential as a hub for 3D animation and multimedia innovation.



BUILDING DIGITALLY EMPOWERED CHANGE AGENTS

By investing in digital empowerment at all levels, the government is building a foundation for a more inclusive, connected, and future-ready Uganda.

The 10,000 Digital Skills Programme by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance is a national effort to equip Ugandans with essential digital competencies needed in today's technology-driven world. The initiative aims to close the digital skills gap and empower citizens, especially the youth, to participate meaningfully in the growing digital economy.

Using a "train-the-trainer" approach, 100 change agents were equipped to transfer digital knowledge to communities across the country. This model ensures that digital literacy extends beyond urban centers, reaching rural areas and grassroots innovators who often have limited access to such opportunities.

Participants are trained in practical skills such as digital communication, online entrepreneurship, and data literacy – tools that enable them to improve productivity, promote innovation, and create new economic opportunities.

UGANDA'S YOUNG INNOVATORS HEAD TO SINGAPORE FOR ROBOTICS OLYMPIAD

Following the national event, Uganda's young innovators represented the country in South Africa, where 14 pupils, guided by teachers and parents, secured second place in the World Junior Robotics category. With Singapore on the horizon, this achievement highlights Uganda's potential in leading Africa's technology and innovation future.

Uganda's next generation of innovators is set to shine at the World Robotics Olympiad Global Finals in Singapore this November.

The journey began at the 2025 Uganda National Robotics Olympiad, hosted at the National ICT Innovation Hub, where students showcased impressive creations such as Doc247, a doctor-assistant robot aimed at improving rural healthcare, and an automatic juice dispenser, praised for its creativity.

The competition, which was organized in collaboration with Mindset Coders, Edutech Club, and BurnRadio, and supported by Google, Camden Education Trust, and MTN Foundation, has demonstrated the power of teamwork in nurturing STEM talent.

PROFESSIONAL TALK

with
John Ssenkeezi,
President of Uganda Digital Society

Topic: **Building a Growth Engine, Not Just a Campaign**

Discover how data-driven strategies, customer insights, and smart tools like Amplitude, Metabase, One Signal, and the North Star Metric framework can turn ideas into loyal fans and sustainable growth.

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ESTONIA DEVELOPMENT CENTRE VISITS UGANDA

September 8th - 9th, 2025

The National ICT Innovation Hub hosted representatives from the Estonia Development Centre as part of ongoing efforts to advance Uganda's green digital transition.

This visit follows the partnership formed during last year's Green Growth Hackathon, where participants developed solutions addressing challenges in agriculture, sustainability, and climate resilience.

The winning teams from the hackathon presented updates on their projects, sharing how their ideas have progressed from initial pitches to practical, real-world solutions.

The exchange highlighted the growing impact of these innovations on Uganda's technology and sustainability landscape.



KRAFTOR 101 XR WORKSHOP EXPLORES CREATIVITY

September 11th, 2025

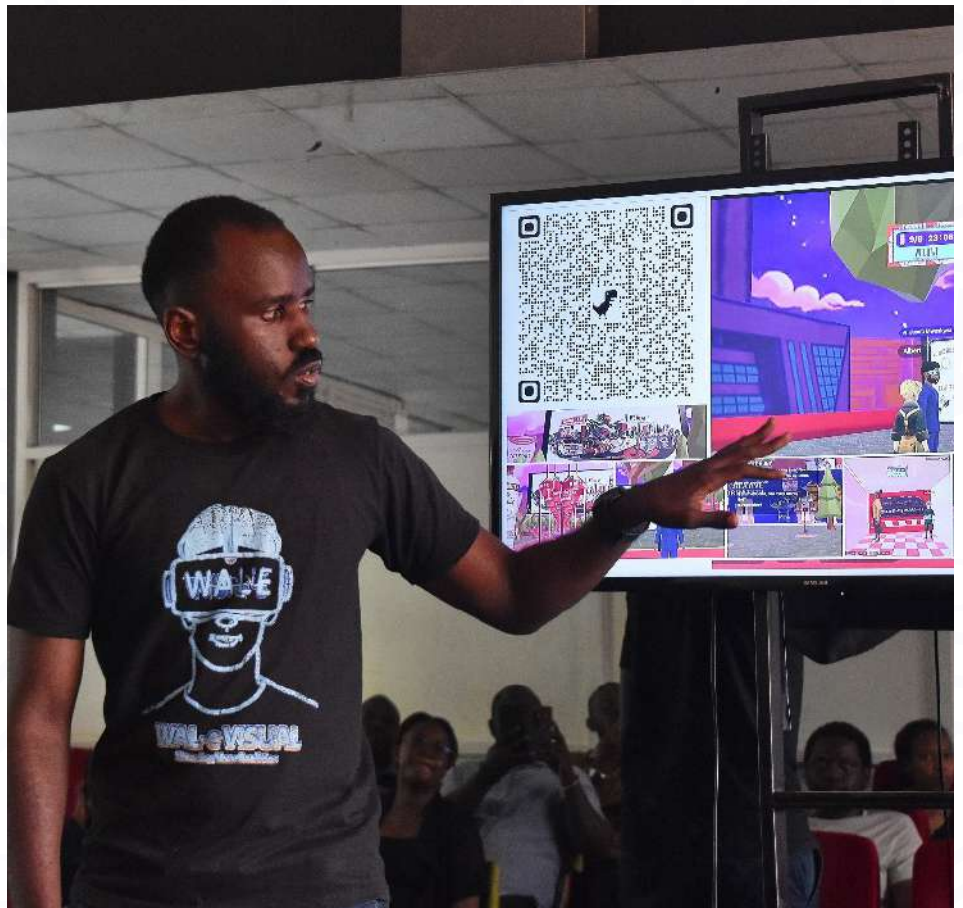
Participants explored how XR can guide audiences through physical spaces, enable remote engagement, and showcase designs in interactive 3D formats, helping to make complex concepts more accessible.

The Kraftor 101 Series, in collaboration with Wal-e Visual, hosted an inspiring Extended Reality (XR) Workshop for students, graduates, and professionals.

The series aims at exposing participants to diverse career opportunities in architecture, art, and design while fostering learning,

networking, and growth through seminars and hands-on sessions.

The inaugural workshop introduced attendees to the possibilities of XR, a fusion of virtual and augmented reality, highlighting its applications in immersive storytelling, spatial design, client presentations, and collaborative workflows.



THE LAUNCHPAD PROGRAMME

In September, the National ICT Innovation Hub launched its first accelerator program designed to equip Ugandan innovators with the skills and strategies needed to grow and scale their ventures, guided by the slogan "Ideate, Incubate, and Accelerate."

The program is a three-week activity, and during these weeks, participants received comprehensive training across critical business areas, including compliance and regulations, legal responsibilities, taxation and financial planning, intellectual property, and patents.

They also focused on growth strategies such as sales and go-to-market planning, technology and product design, building minimum viable products (MVPs),

lean operations, and cultivating the founder mindset required to navigate challenges.

At the end of the program, innovators were given a platform to pitch their ideas and were challenged to integrate the lessons learned into compelling business cases, where key ecosystem partners, Imuka Access and PwC, provided feedback and highlighted opportunities for investment readiness and professional services.



YOUNG WOMEN GRADUATE FROM 10X PROGRAMME

September 26th, 2025

Over the past year, the 10X Program by the Women in Technology Uganda (WITU) has trained 300 young women across two cohorts in key digital skills, including digital marketing, data analytics, web development, graphics design, and entrepreneurship.

The program also complements national efforts to build a digitally skilled workforce, with Uganda's ICT sector contributing over 9% to GDP and employing millions.

Initiatives like 10X are essential for ensuring that young women are not left behind in the country's digital transformation agenda.

The 10X program graduation brought together representatives from Mastercard Foundation, Outbox, and Purple Skills Foundation, among other distinguished guests, to recognize a milestone where more young women are now joining a growing community of change-makers.

The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, together with partners like WITU and UICT, reaffirmed their commitment to continue fostering digital skills and opportunities for Uganda's youth.





Advancing Innovation for Uganda's Digital Future

Catch up with the latest conversations on real stories behind innovation, startups & bold ideas that are shaping the future.

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UNLOCKING AFRICA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

With Africa's population set to double by 2050, the continent is brimming with young, energetic talent. Yet, millions remain unemployed or underemployed, and over 100 million youth are still offline. We sat down with a Ugandan innovator, Robert Bob Okello to talk about his mission, recent experiences in Japan, and the future of Africa's digital workforce.



Q&A

Qn:
To start, tell us a little about yourself and your company

Robert Bob Okello is my name. I'm the founder of Maarifasasa Ltd, a company on a bold mission to tackle one of Africa's most pressing challenges, which is youth unemployment.

We are doing this by unlocking remote work opportunities for young people across the continent, with a strong focus on digital jobs.

Qn:
What's the current state of Africa's youth talent pool, and where do you see the gaps?

Okello:
Africa has an incredibly exciting talent pool of young people. But the reality is that nearly 100 million young Africans are still offline. At Maarifasasa, we're working to bridge this gap by equipping youth with in-demand digital and technology skills.

On one side, we focus on learning, skilling and preparing them. On the other side, we create employment opportunities by placing them in companies around the world.

Qn:
How exactly does Maarifasasa connect this talent to global opportunities?

Okello:
Our model is rooted in business process outsourcing (BPO). Companies across the globe outsource work to us, and our trained talent based in Uganda and other African countries executes those projects. It's a win-win situation because businesses get skilled talent, and our young people access dignified digital jobs.

Qn:
Earlier this year, you joined the UJ Connect innovator trip to Japan. What was that experience like?

Okello:

Honestly, it was a game-changer both for me as a CEO and for Maarifasasa as a company.

The trip, which was organized in partnership with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and Uganda's Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, gave us firsthand exposure to the opportunities that exist between Uganda and Japan, especially around ICT talent collaboration.

Qn:

What specific opportunities stood out during that visit?

Okello:

We were matched with several Japanese businesses, which was incredibly valuable. It gave us a clear picture of what ICT companies in Japan really need; especially when it comes to talent. That alignment is central to our mission at Maarifasasa.

Qn:

You visited several cities in Japan. What impressions did you take away from that experience?

Okello:

We travelled to Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya, where we engaged with businesses and key players in the ICT sector.

Beyond the partnerships, we were able to really appreciate the depth of technology in Japan and learn from their start-up ecosystem. It was eye-opening and inspiring.

Qn:

How has this experience shaped Maarifasasa's priorities moving forward?

Okello:

The trip allowed us to clearly define our next steps.

One big takeaway was the overwhelming demand for highly skilled technical talent especially software engineers. That is why we are now doubling down on training and deploying highly qualified engineers who can meet the demands of global companies.

Qn:

And in terms of partnerships, what's next?

Okello:

Strengthening relationships is key. We are focusing on building long-term collaborations with Japanese companies that are seeking talent from Uganda.

Our goal is to polish, prepare, and connect our young people so they can thrive in those opportunities.

Qn: What drives you personally to keep pushing this mission forward?

Okello:

For me, it's about impact. Every young person who gains a skill, gets a job, or builds a career through Maarifasasa is a step closer to solving the unemployment crisis on this continent. That's what keeps us going.

Robert Bob Okello's story is a reminder that solving Africa's unemployment crisis requires more than just ideas. It requires bold action, innovation, and global partnerships.

With digital skilling and remote work placement, Africa's young people are being positioned not just as job seekers, but as a world-class workforce ready to power the future of work.



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