



Ministry of Trade,  
Industry and Cooperatives

**STARTUP  
UGANDA**

# THE STATE OF STARTUPS IN UGANDA AS OF 2025



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# Executive Overview: Uganda's Startup Ecosystem - 2025

#94

 Global Startup Ecosystem Ranking

#2

 Ranking in Eastern Africa

132

 Active Startups

\$21M

 Total Funding

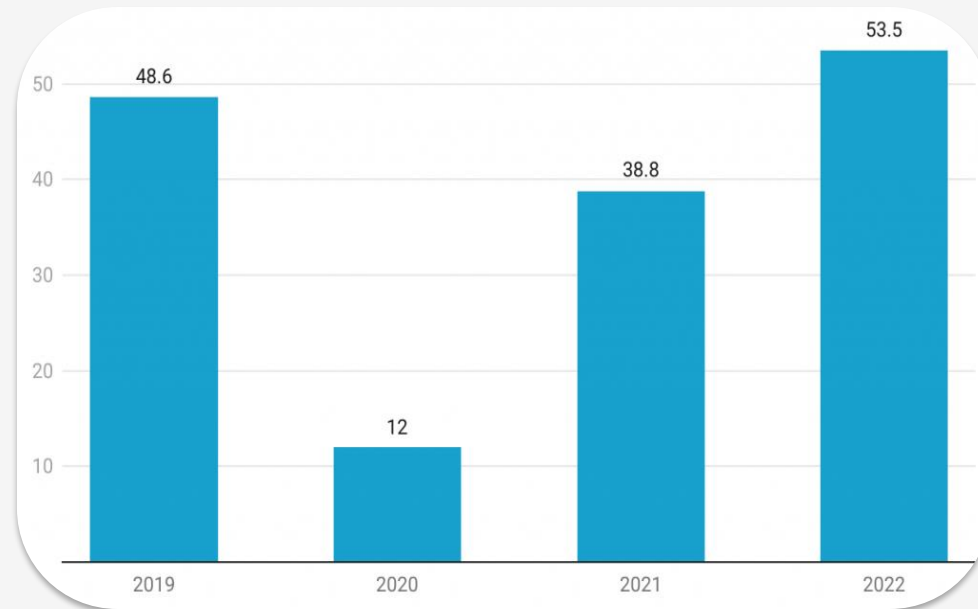
80.23%

 Funding Drop in 2024

304.17%

 YoY Growth (from low base)

Annual Funding Raised by Ugandan Startups in Millions of USD



Digest Africa Source: Digest Africa Intelligence. Created with Datawrapper

# Why Startups? – Benchmarks and Potential

## TUNISIA

8 years of existence

### AGE

100 employees and \$5.3m

### SIZE

2/3 of capital by people

### INDEPENDENCE

Unique solution to a problem

### INNOVATION & SCALE

## ITALY

5 years, not a merger, HQ in Italy or EU

### AGE/LOCATION

<€5m; firm does not distribute profits, Ltd co.

### SIZE

Exclusively; high tech goods and/or services

### PURPOSE

>15% of expenses for R&D, depositary/ licensee of patent

### INNOVATION

## Startups

A Proven Solution to

- Unemployment
- Technology transfer
- Socio-economic transformation

*This is not for every startup in the sense of the grammar but rather,*

**Achieve; HIGH VALUE, HIGH IMPACT, HIGH SCALABILITY, HIGH GROWTH and DRIVEN BY COMMERCIALISABLE INNOVATION**

## Countries with High Startup Impact on GDP



### Estonia

Startups contribute approximately 3% to its entire GDP and make up 1% of the country's total employment



### Israel

Highly developed ecosystem relative to its size, particularly in cybersecurity and deep tech sectors



### Singapore

Value of its startup ecosystem has grown rapidly, driven by strong government support and focus on



### Lithuania

Noted for a booming entrepreneurial environment, with a competitive GDP per capita and high ranking



### United States

Silicon Valley is its epicenter. Startups account for a significant portion of economic activity and job creation

# Current Landscape: **Leading Startups - 2025**



## Numida

Working capital loans for African micro businesses

**25,000+** SMEs Supported    **\$16M** Funding Provided



## SafeBoda

Transportation platform connecting riders to trained drivers

**2M+** Monthly Rides    **25,000** Trained Drivers



## XENO Investment Management

Digital investment platform for wealth creation

**\$5.1M** Total Funding

## ✓ Funding Trends

Total Funding Raised

**\$21M**

2024 Funding Decline

**80.23%**

Year-over-Year Growth

**304.17%**

### Most Funded Companies in Uganda (2019-2022)

	Company Name	Amount Raised
1	Tugende	46,900,000
2	Asaak	34,000,000
3	Numida	15,100,000
4	Grainpulse	11,000,000
5	SolarNow	9,145,000
6	Zembo	6,410,000
7	Rocket Health	5,000,000
8	Solar Sister	5,000,000
9	Safeboda	3,001,300
10	Pura Organic	2,500,000

Digest Africa Source: Digest Africa Intelligence. Created with Datawrapper



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# The SafeBoda Case Study

Started community of riders

## Started

Google, GoVentures (GO-JEK's venture arm),  
Allianz X, Transsion Holdings, Beenext, Unbound, and Justin Kan

## Investors

Ride hailing, Package Delivery, Financial services,  
SafeBoda for Business

## Services

## Funding Trends

Number of employees (jobs)

270

Imagine 200 startups

$270 \times 200 = 54,000$

Number of riders (Jobs)

40,000

Imagine 50 startups

$40,000 \times 50 = 2,000,000$

Number of Trips completed

70,000,000



Imagine if Mobile Money...?

“ It just takes one startup to change an industry.  
This is what supporting startups is all about. ”

# The Uganda Startup Ecosystem Overview

## Active Startup Incubators, Hubs and Accelerators under Startup Uganda

“Hubs have a role to play in organizing the startups across the country and government could leverage their existence and strengthen them to impact”

## Some of Government, Development partners, CSO's and Academia Partners engaged

Here are some of the support organizations including some government MDAs

### Startup Uganda Members



# Programmes and support for Startups

“ The common programs offered by the Uganda startup ecosystem actors; such as incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs and other ESOs ”



## Finance and Investment Readiness

Training on financial management and fundraising



## Coworking Spaces / Workspaces

Shared Workspaces with Office amenities



## Talent and Team Building Tools

Recruitment platforms and team-building workshops



## Business Clinics

Advisory services on business challenges



## Mentorship and Coaching

Structured mentorship and business coaching



## Market Linkages and Sales Support

Digital marketing and sales strategies



## Access to investors

Networking events and investor introductions



## Capacity Building and Training



















Workshops on entrepreneurship and management

## Count of businesses Self-Identified as Startups

“ The startup industry is about 15 years old in Uganda, based on the first innovation hub established in 2010. With a conducive environment and support, **20 – 50 strong startups** can emerge or be identified each year! ”

# 1000+

If this number identifies itself as startups,  
it's an opportunity to identify potential startups from them

 EzyAgric	 Ensibuuko	 Emata Uganda Limited
 Numida	 Asaak Head Office	 SafeBoda
 Rocket Health	 Spouts international	 clinicPesa (CP)
 Tugende Limited Headquarters	 UpEnergy	 Zofi Cash
 ChapChap Africa	 Furaha	 Ridelink Limited Uganda
 My Doctor	 Xeno	 Brainshare

Source: Regulatory Impact Assessment, Google

# Private Equity Investment in Uganda

“ Here are some of the types of investments, and the role of PE in startup growth. It has associated challenges but as well as opportunities. ”

## Types of startup Investments

Seed Funding / Acceleration + Equity-Light Rounds

### Seed capital

Series / Growth Equity / Venture Capital Rounds

### Venture capital

Debt Financing / Hybrid Instruments, loans, revenue-share, convertible debt

### Debt capital

Crowdfunding / Angel Networks / Local Investor Platforms

### Angel investing

## Role of Private Equity

Providing growth-capital for scaling operations

### Scale of startups

Strengthening governance, operational capacity & business processes

### Strengthening structures

Catalysing local ecosystems and attracting further investment

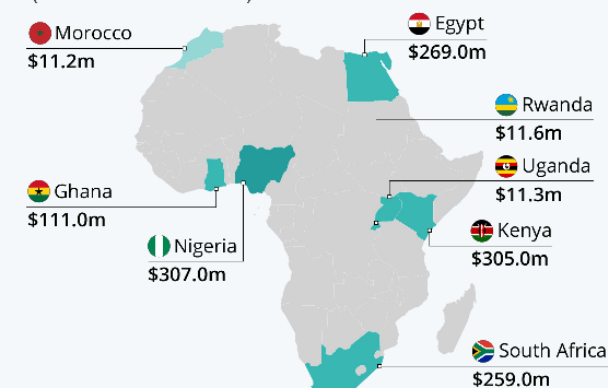
### For investor confidence

Providing exit pathways and return-mechanism for investors

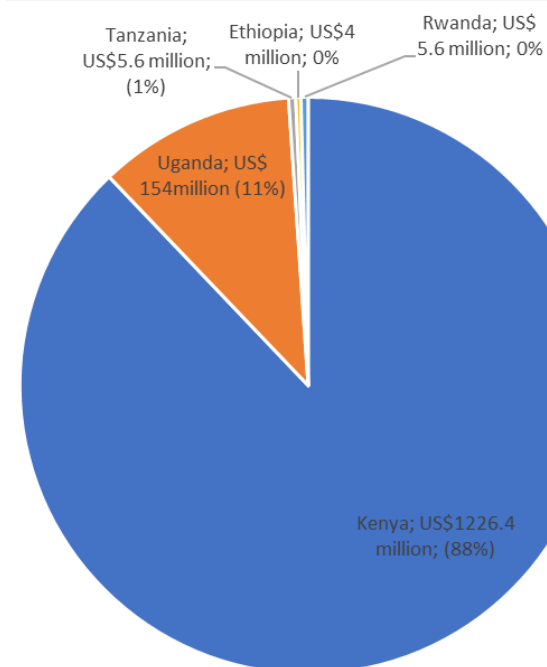
### Invest-grow-exit-reinvest

## Where Africa's Startup Activity Is Concentrated

Top countries for VC investment in Africa in 2020 (in million U.S. dollars)



Source: Partech Analysis via AfricArena



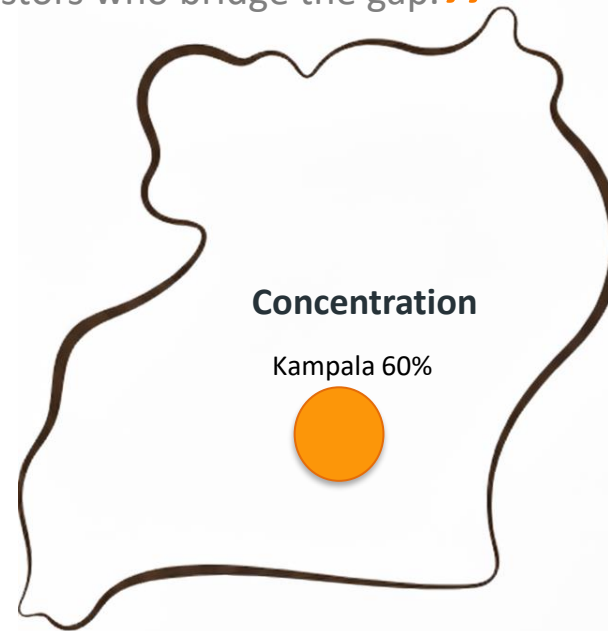
Source: Partech, World Bank report

# Angel Investing in Uganda Research – 2025 Snapshot

“ Ecosystem is vibrant but early-stage ventures often struggle to find funding beyond friends, family or grants. Its Angel investors who bridge the gap. ”

## Participant Profile

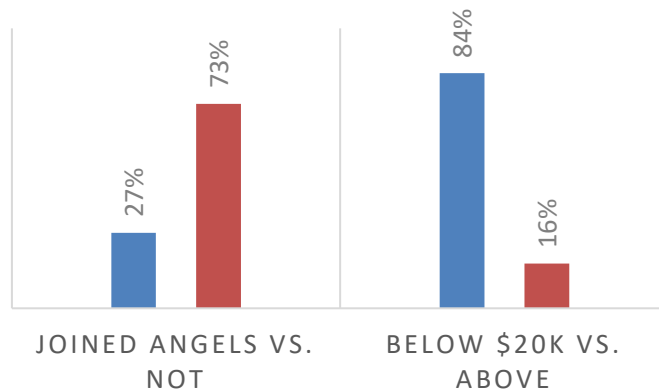
- 60% entrepreneurs/startup
- Only 2–3% active angels - ecosystem still nascent
- 75% male; 60% Kampala-based



## Awareness levels

- 62% familiar with angel investing (mostly partial)
- 47% say it's "poorly understood" nationally
- Misconceptions: grants - angel funds, fear of "investor control," and "only for the rich"

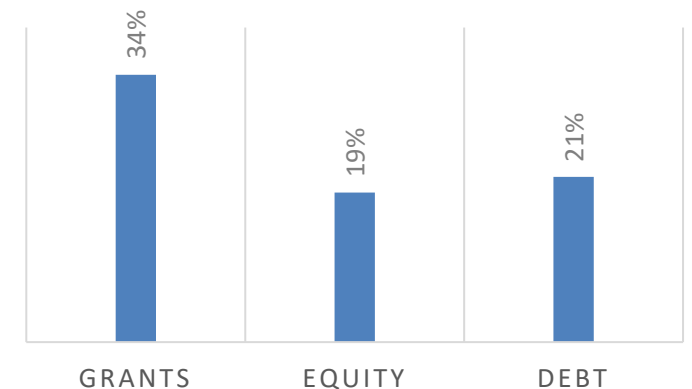
## Investor Network vs. Ticket Size



## Activity and Ticket

- 27% have ever joined an angel deal
- 84% of deals below USD 20K
- grants (34%), then equity (19%) and debt (21%)

## Funding Type



# Human Capital for startups – Entrepreneurs and Industry

“ The Uganda Startup Ecosystem is still young. The average entrepreneur is between 18 to 30 years old. This means their experience, skills and knowledge are equally moderate but promising. Also, the workforce skills often are mis-aligned with the market needs ”

## Entrepreneur Profile

- 18 – 30 years is the average entrepreneur (National Entrepreneurship Index)
- 67% need technical support and sponsored tools (Young Entrepreneurs Survey-2022)
- Majority startups range from 1-10 years, often sole-proprietorships (FSDU Uganda)

## OBSERVATIONS

- Startups struggle to hire practical and skilled talent locally like digital Skills; data, digital marketing, software (WorldBank)
- *Learning by doing >> Limited structured pathways to acquire applied business skills that investors /employers value (UEEI)*
- Build a mentor development track and incentives
- *Digital/tech skills, product management basics and practical finance/bookkeeping highly demanded*
- Lack of formal mentor training & standardization reducing impact
- *BDS activity has scaled in recent years, Quality and standardization remain issues. Need more BDS staff trained in lean startup methods. Rural and sector-specific BDS*

## Talent / Intrapreneur Profile

- Startups require a hybrid of technical and entrepreneurial soft skills
- Data analysis, digital marketing, software /web dev, customer support and project mgt
- Candidates lack applied problem-solving, productivity habits and graduates need workplace readiness training (World Bank)

## BDS Providers Profiles

- 10% Annual growth in number of BDS providers on national database
- 26.8% of enterprises used a BDS out of all those who are aware of it
- Incubators, accelerators, consulting firms, NGO trainers, and government programs



## Universities / Institutions

- 700,000 Graduates every year with only 12.5% assimilated into employment
- Curricula often misaligned with market demands
- Started experimenting entrepreneurship centers, hubs and industry partnerships



## Mentors and Mentees Profiles

- Lack of formal mentor training & standardization reducing impact.
- Need more mentors trained in scalable coaching methods (remote)
- Effective mentors combine technical know-how (Spring impact)

## Current Landscape: Ugandan Ecosystem Research – Key findings

“ An in-depth overview of how the ESOs in Uganda are set up, what they offer, to whom, and how and the state and opportunity of collaboration among stakeholders! ”

1 Need for more specialization

2 Openness for collaboration

3 There is a track record of collaboration

4 Access to finance remains a limiting factor

5 Entrepreneurs lack of trust in ESOs

6 ESOs should build stronger technical capacities in-house

7 More entrepreneur-centricity needed

8 ESOs are becoming more business-oriented

9 Narrow region support by Ugandan ESOs





## Current Landscape: Ecosystem Research – Recommendations

“ An in-depth overview of how the ESOs in Uganda are set up, what they offer, to whom, and how and the state and opportunity of collaboration among stakeholders! ”

- 1 Build more connections with Gov't MDAs and engage them in program design & execution
- 2 Use Startup Uganda as a forum to enhance collaboration and advance the ecosystem
- 3 Come up with ecosystem-wide definitions
- 4 Support ESOs to become investors
- 5 Increase monetization of activities
- 6 Provide relevant and high-quality capacity building to ESOs
- 7 Enable entrepreneurs to get to know your ESO more easily
- 8 ESOs should hire experienced and successful business leaders/ entrepreneurs as they grow
- 9 ESOs should involve successful founders more
- 10 ESOs and government actors should invite each other to activities and events frequently

# Sector Opportunities: Key Investment Areas



## FinTech

Top 3 raised **\$18M+**

Global Rank: **#65**

**Key Players:** Numida, Xente, Ensibuuko, ClinicPesa



## AgriTech

Top 3 raised **\$6.7M+**

Global Rank: **#60**

**Key Players:** EzyAgric, Everlend Agritech, AVAL Agroecology



## Climate Tech

SolarNow: **5MW+** installed

Offset **350,000** tons CO<sub>2</sub>

**Focus:** Renewable energy for off-grid communities



## DeepTech

**New** Centre of Excellence

Expected to **lead** in 2025

**Focus:** AI, Climate Tech innovations, advanced FinTech



## HealthTech

Doctor-patient ratio: **1:25,000**

ClinicPesa: **1.6M+** users

**Key Players:** CHIL AI Lab, ClinicPesa, telemedicine platforms

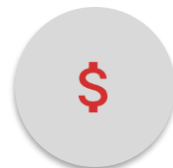
# Major Challenges Facing Uganda's Startup Ecosystem



## Infrastructure & Connectivity

- Internet penetration: **28%**
- Within 10km of fiber: **29%**
- Smartphone penetration: **<30%**

**Impact: Limited digital access for entrepreneurs and customers**



## Funding Constraints

- 2024 funding decline: **80.23%**
- Limited VC presence vs Kenya & Nigeria
- Academia-industry linkages: **Weak**

**Impact: Limited capital for scaling and innovation**



## Talent & Skills Gap

- Limited ICT uptake in education
- Teaching skills gaps: **Significant**
- Electricity challenges: **Persistent**

**Impact: Shortage of skilled tech talent for startups**



## Market Access

- Innovation hubs: **Concentrated in Kampala**
- Rural entrepreneurs: **Limited support**
- Cross-border expansion: **Barriers remain**

**Impact: Exclusion of rural innovators and limited market reach**

# The Solution: Enabling Environment (Startup policy / act)

## What are Startup Policies and Acts?

“Startup Policies and Acts are an emerging legislative instrument used to bundle strategic incentives and interventions to accelerate the formation and sustained scale of innovative and high-growth firms.”

Direct Startup Intervention



Data-Driven Strategies



Ecosystem Activation & Promotion



### Governance

Obtaining permits, Enforcements of contracts, Bankruptcy, Paying taxes, Intellectual property, etc.

### Finance

Pre-seed finance, Venture finance, Bank finance, Capital markets, etc.

### Markets

Internationalization, Equipment & inputs, Public Procurement, B2B, etc.

### Culture

Personal development, community support, Networking, Women entrepreneurship, etc.

### Infrastructure

Digital infrastructure, Utilities, Logistics, etc.

### Support

Growth support, Operational support, R&D, etc.

### Human Capital

Basic skills, Advanced skills, Business skills, Labor market, etc.

# Expected Impact of the **Uganda Startup Policy**



## Digital Economy Expansion

 **4M** more citizens connected to internet

 **1.79M** new jobs created

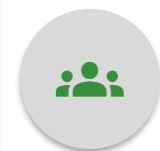
 **UGX14.6T** in economic value by 2030



## Economic Growth

 Economy expansion: **\$50B → \$500B**

 Target year: **2040**



## Job Creation

 **132,000+** work opportunities

 Through Startup Uganda Association




## Innovation Acceleration

 **70%** of population under 30

 Youth-led initiatives supported



## Regional Leadership

 Positioning as **East Africa's hub**

 Projected **60%** market growth

# Call to Action: Next Steps for Policy Makers



## Strengthen the enabling Environment (Startup policy / act)

Immediate implementation in 2025 to provide regulatory clarity



## Build Startup capacity, Market Readiness and Access

Investment-readiness programs, Digital market linkages, Mentorship at scale



## Catalyze and Boost Access to Early-Stage Capital and Angel Funding

Activate local capital Formalize syndicates and introduce incentives



## Strengthen University-Industry Partnerships

Create pathways for research commercialization by leveraging triple helix model



## Develop Local Talent, Strengthen Innovation Hubs and Regional Ecosystems

Invest in digital skills, incubation and acceleration programs and ecosystem data



# Uganda Innovation Week – Startup Uganda – Yearly Signature Event

3000

Online Attendance

One of the best networking, experiences for me this year.

Noella, UIW Attendee

1500

Physical Attendees

After two years of virtual events, I believe UIW 2022 brought the start-up community closer, in this post COVID era.

Joseph, UIW Attendee

47.8%

Female Participants

I love that UIW 2022 brought me closer to potential customers and, future partner prospects. The opportunities are many.

Boris, Entrepreneur

30+

Sessions

Seeing all these women speakers was beautiful. I can only imagine what the future has in store for women entrepreneurs.

NSSF Rep

# Startup Uganda needs Government Catalyzation



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## Trending ventures

+ Add Your startup



### Pro Interns

Uganda's No.1 Internship Platform

📍 Kampala



### Zembo

Electric bikes

📍 Kampala



### Yamzit

Just like your diary or your appointments book...

📍 Professional & Commercial Services

📍 Kampala

Source: startup Uganda website



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CH BREAK

Bunyonyi

Young Africa Works

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**INNOVATION WEEK**

**QUESTIONS**

Source: Uganda Innovation Week 2023 By: Keneth Twesigye – Policy lead, Startup Uganda (CEO & Grace Nuwamanya-Proposal writing Expert – TechBuzz Hub)



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