



Women In
Technology
Uganda

Annual Report 2023.

Unveiling WITU's
Spectacular
Achievements in 2023



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A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I'm thrilled to share Women in Technology Uganda's 2023 Annual Report, marking a remarkable year of progress. We've advanced our mission of empowering women and girls from underserved communities as successful technologists and entrepreneurs.

In 2023, we reached 93% of our target, engaging 10,000 young women and girls through our Tech Hub and Business Hub programs. Our Code Academy, the Women's Institute of Technology and Innovation, continued offering fully funded diplomas in Computer Science. Initiatives like Code Girls, Elevate On Campus, and the Business Recovery Program expanded our reach.

Partnerships with Team4Tech, Cadence Design Systems, Uganda Communications Commission, Aga Khan Foundation, Segal Family Foundation, Social Initiative, Hive Colab, Stanbic Bank, and others facilitated cutting-edge training. Contributions from our board and friends enhanced our technological capabilities.

Looking ahead, we're committed to improving African females' lives through technological and economic equality. Strategies like DEJA, SME Digital Transformation, Bespoke Business Development Services, Investment Readiness Accelerators, and the Women Investment Fund will support women-owned and led businesses.

Thanks to our partners, supporters, and the incredible women and girls in our programs, we're making a lasting impact across Uganda.

**BARBARA BIRUNGI
MUTABAZI**
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Women In
Technology
Uganda**

About Us

Women in Technology Uganda (WITU) is a non-profit organisation, founded in 2014 and started by women for women. The organization's goal is to transform the lives of women and girls from underserved communities into successful technologists and entrepreneurs.

WITU stands out in equipping young women and girls with 21st Century digital skills reaching over 35 districts across the country, supporting more than 6000 young girls and women annually into gainful and dignified employment through connection to job opportunities or support to start a business.

Our Mission

To impact the economic growth and gender equality in Africa through skills development and Innovation, encouraging entrepreneurship and unlocking opportunities for women.

Our Vision

To improve the lives and futures of African females through technological & economic equality.



WORD FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Nick. Heaton
Board Chairman

2023 was the year when the world came out from the shadow of COVID-19, the effect of the pandemic is still lingering but we saw things returning to a more pre-covid normality. I am extremely happy to see the large numbers of women helped by WITU and the continuous quest for better quality programs with longer lasting impact has seen a number of the programs refined, revised and improved. Going forward these improvements should secure a more significant and longer lasting change for so many disadvantaged women. It is also noticeable that 2023 saw a marked improvement in outbound communications and continued efforts to get WITU more globally recognized should have a corresponding impact on funding opportunities. My congratulations go out to Barbara and the management team at WITU who continue to drive these programs.

Our Board



**Barbara Birungi
Mutabazi**



Richard Segal



Timothy K. Mutabazi



Judith K. Jasi



Suzanne Salomon



Colin Besigye



2023 Inspiring Impact

93%

Achieved on overall target

106

New businesses started

10,000

Young women trained across all programs

36

Districts Reached

848

Businesses Improved

40,000

people stand to benefit from the ladies supported

33

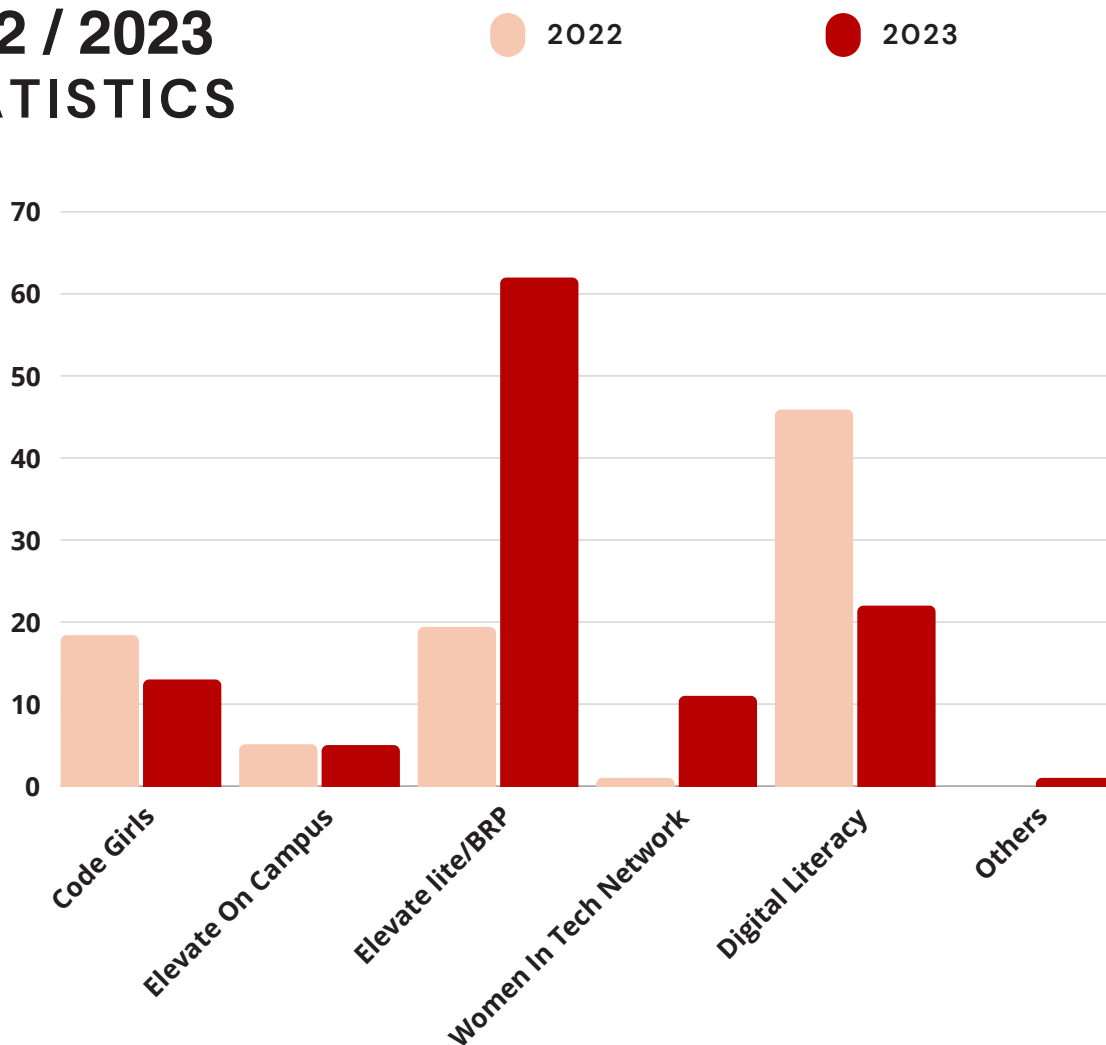
Businesses Funded

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

In 2023, WITU made significant progress with respect to its strategic plan (2022-2026), narrowing the technological gap and empowering women in entrepreneurship.

Successfully reaching 93% of the goal, 9,695 young women and girls were engaged through programs in our TECH HUB AND BUSINESS HUB, underscoring WITU's commitment to technological inclusivity and supporting women entrepreneurs.

2022 / 2023 STATISTICS



In 2023, WITU engaged 9,695 participants in diverse programs. Elevate Lite/BRP led with 62.32%, followed by Code Girls (12.67%) and WiTech (10.55%). Hi-Innovator and Elevate on Campus programs contributed 8.96% and 4.08% respectively. These percentages highlight our commitment to inclusive technology and innovation.

With collaborative efforts, WITU continues its holistic approach to empower individuals and businesses in the digital era.

TECH HUB

The WITU Tech hub aims to significantly contribute to reducing the technological gender gap in Uganda. The Objectives are; to address the gender technology gap through investing in STEM skills development, and to support women to find work opportunities across the globe.



In 2023, WITU received a transformative boost to our computer lab with the generous contribution of 17 computers from the Social Initiative, significantly enhancing our technological capabilities and operational efficiency.

We deeply appreciate the Social Initiative for their invaluable support and commitment to advancing our mission.

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In 2023, WITU received a \$25,000 grant from Cadence Design Systems. This financial support was allocated towards bolstering the pipeline of young women from marginalized communities. The grant facilitated the acquisition of new staff laptops and software for the computer lab, while also expanding the reach of the Code Academy to accommodate a larger number of participants in the upcoming year.



CODE ACADEMY

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (WITI)



WITU's Code Academy, The Women's Institute of Technology and Innovation, was founded in 2021 with a specific aim: to address the untapped potential of numerous talented girls who lacked opportunities for higher education in Uganda, and to position them at the forefront of emerging computing technology advancements, and the Tech start-up ecosystem.

The institution currently offers a fully funded diploma in Computer Science to enable eligible young female students to be prepared to take on the most demanding and interesting career tasks. As a result, we have a group of female junior software developers with better career and livelihood prospects.

In 2023, the Code Academy opened applications for Cohort 3, and a total of 46 students completed the admission process and embarked on a journey to pursue a fully funded diploma in Computer Science. This increases the total of young women who are enrolled to 64 students.

We express gratitude to our partners TEAM4TECH and Cadence for their generous support, enabling educational opportunities in STEM for young women. The support from these partners contributes to a more inclusive and empowered future.

Acknowledging the significance of bridging the technology gap and promoting mental health awareness and well-being, we partnered with the Mind Watch Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on Mental Health Advocacy and awareness, offering free mental health services. Our collaboration aimed to delve into efficient coping strategies and stress management for students at the Code Academy.



Mentorship Sessions



In 2023, WITU's Code Academy hosted three impactful mentorship sessions, featuring notable figures in the tech industry. Founder and Executive Director Barbara Birungi Mutabazi shared her inspiring journey in tech, emphasizing the diverse opportunities available in the sector. She encouraged young women to leverage platforms like LinkedIn and Github for job connections.

In July, Mr. Richard Segal, a Board Director at the Segal Family Foundation and a Ph.D. holder in computer science, participated in a session. During the session, he emphasized the swift advancements made by AI developers, stressed the usefulness of tools such as React and Python, and encouraged students to adopt a mindset of continuous learning.

cā dence[®] Mentorship



In October, tech professionals from Cadence shared their unique career paths, resonating deeply with WITU's Code Academy students who gained invaluable insights from this mentorship series.

Among them was Nourin Haque, an Application Engineer at Cadence Design Systems. With a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from Binghamton University, Nourin shed light AI and ML and how they are used.



CODE GIRLS

The Code Girls program aims to spark enthusiasm among young girls for STEM fields, motivating them to pursue technology-related courses while still in school.

The girls, along with their club patron (a volunteer), work together to organize meetups and sessions, usually scheduled after classes and on weekends throughout the school year.

WITU provides training to club patrons enabling them to deliver a 6-8 week curriculum for their club. This curriculum is thoughtfully designed to impart diverse skill sets through multi-level content in platforms like Scratch, App Inventor, and Micro Bits.

In 2023, the Code Girls program reached over 1,000 girls working with 10 secondary schools including Isingiro Secondary School, Kyambogo College School, Mariam High School, St Agatha Girls Secondary School, Biyaya Secondary School, Ofua Seed Secondary School, to empower the young girls with advanced Scratch programming.



With support from Team4Tech and 10 volunteers from Cadence Design Systems, we organized a "Spark a Passion for STEM" hackathon at Kyambogo College School for girls aged 13 to 16. The 80 participants utilized Scratch programming, collaborated in teams, and tackled school community challenges. After 10 weeks of refining projects, a panel of five judges evaluated the final solutions.

Team Bullying presented an animation on the dangers of bullying and its link to mental health, emphasizing the importance of reporting to school authorities. Team Menstrual Health used an interactive game to challenge menstruation stigma. Team Water Pollution showcased the impact of waste disposal on aquatic life, promoting eco-friendly choices. Team Water Pollution was declared the winner, praised for their community impact, innovative thinking, and effective teamwork.

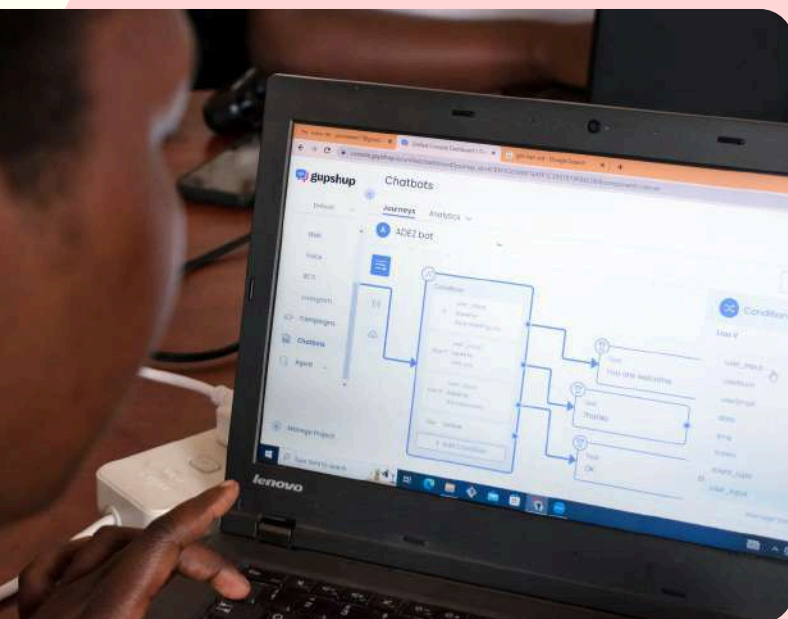
CHATBOT DEVELOPMENT

This initiative seeks to establish a pathway to the digital economy and remote work, connecting young girls with a basic background in ICT to employment opportunities.

The program focuses on empowering young women in underserved communities with the skills to develop chatbots, particularly in the context of business communication using Artificial Intelligence. Completing 4 cohorts in 2023, 150 ladies were trained, with 7 graduates being retained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) by WITU.

A partnership was initiated with the National Information Technology Authority (NITA) in the bid to develop chatbots that make the access of information for the different E-Government services easy.

The Chatbot developed provides a friendly Q&A interface to assist with availing information on Tin registration (URA), how to register a business (URSB), how to acquire a passport (Immigration) and how to replace a national Id (NIRA).



WITU MAKERSPACE

A Makerspaces is a collaborative workspace which provide access to a variety of tools, equipment, and technology, such as 3D printers, laser cutters, electronics, and more.

We revamped our MakerSpace in October 2023 emerging as a collaborative workspace equipped with four 3D printers, Eight VR glasses, and 20 Micro Bits.



3D Printers

The 3D printing sessions empowered these women to bring their ideas to life, laying the foundation for potential careers in prototyping and innovation.

VR Glasses

VR glasses were introduced to offer immersive learning experiences and showcase the technology's applications in education, healthcare, gaming, and more.



Micro Bits

Micro Bits ignited a passion for STEM and coding, fostering critical thinking and creativity.

Team4Tech, in collaboration with 10 volunteers from Cadence Design Systems, provided training to 30 young women on the utilization of makerspace tools, including 3D printing, VR glasses, and Microbits. Driven by passion and a thirst for knowledge, five of the participants volunteered to become trainers for upcoming cohorts.



In collaboration with Team4Tech, the 2023 initiative focused on the expansion of the WITU Makerspace, the development and launch of a digital employment platform, and the integration of the Hackathon learning model into the Code Girls program.

Over a 10-week collaboration, 10 volunteers from Cadence Design Systems contributed to co-creation, skill enhancement, and mentorship.

The project explored 3D printing, VR glasses, and Micro Bits for education and innovation. We received significant equipment contributions from both Team4Tech and volunteers, comprising three 3D printers with 30 filaments, 20 Micro Bits, and seven Google Cardboards.

We received three 3D printers with 30 filaments, 20 Micro Bits, and seven Google Cardboards.

WOMEN IN TECH NETWORK (WITECH)

A network connecting female tech professionals with aspiring women, Women In Tech Network hosts bi-monthly events, uniting academic institutions, private sector firms, and government reps to meet Uganda's future tech leaders.

In 2023, WITECH continued breaking barriers in Uganda's tech industry. Through our WITU movement, we hosted two events in May and November, bringing together professionals from academia, the private sector, and government to support future tech leaders.

Our May event, themed "The Future of Remote Work," showcased the evolving landscape of professional opportunities. 50 ladies attended the event with keynote speaker Pooja Agrawal inspiring attendees to embrace remote work for a balanced lifestyle, a panel of industry experts including Phillis Kiragu, Maureen Wagubi, and Patricia Kalungi shared invaluable insights on navigating this digital frontier. This grew the WITU women in Tech network.

In November, WITU collaborated with Uganda Innovation Week and Mkazipreneur for a transformative event at the National ICT Innovation HUB, Nakawa. Themed "The Digital Economy for Female Entrepreneurs," it featured a keynote by Managing Director Barbara Mutabazi.

A panel discussion, moderated by Patricia Kahill, included leaders like Martha Tukei, Renita Nabisubi, Julian Rweju, Vaolah Amumpaire, and Tr Basemera Stella Maris, emphasizing legal support, global outreach, and peer learning for success in the digital age. Grateful to all participants, we look forward to our next Women In Tech Networking Event, championing diversity in Uganda's tech landscape.





UGANDA
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION



DIGITAL LITERACY (UCC PROJECT)

Uganda Communications Commission (The Commission), through the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF) established in accordance with section S(l)(s) of the Uganda Communications Act of 2013, is mandated to, among other functions, promote universal access to communication services and improve access to ICT services in Uganda.

The aim of this project is to narrow the gender gap in ICT and contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 across 20 districts: Paliisa, Rubanda, Pader, Nakaseke, Kibuku, Kakumiro, Gomba, Bulambuli, Kaberamaido, Amudat, Butaleja, Buliisa, Katakwi, Amolatar, Budaka, Abim, Namisindwa, Amuria, Bundibugyo, and Kaliro. The program focuses on empowering businesswomen by improving their skills in using mobile phones to foster business growth.

Our goal is for at least 50% of the trained women to actively engage in the digital economy through digital financial services, mobile phones, marketing, and selling of their products. The assessment of this achievement is contingent on available funds during the project evaluation phase.

The Commission partnered with Women in Technology Uganda (WITU) on a project to enhance ICT adoption through digital literacy for women across the country.

We effectively trained and certified 3,271 women, ensuring a minimum of 160 participants from each district and two villages within those districts. In April 2023, we shared an insightful report on ICT, Digital Literacy, and Digital Service Access and Use among women in the Informal Sector. Additionally, we equipped 20 trainers with a specialized Digital Literacy toolkit and provided training to 20 field assistants on the digital literacy assessment tool and training manual to ensure continuity in learning.

**"3271 WOMEN
TRAINED IN THE
INFORMAL
SECTOR"**

WITU BUSINESS HUB

The primary objective of the business hub is to facilitate access to essential resources and opportunities for women-owned and led micro, small and medium enterprises in Uganda. The focus is on rejuvenating, sustaining, and fostering the growth of these businesses to contribute to social and economic development.

To accomplish this aim, WITU will employ the following strategies in the upcoming year: SME Digital Transformation, Bespoke Business Development Services, Investment Readiness Accelerators, and the Women Investment Fund—an early-stage seed fund supporting women entrepreneurs and innovators in Uganda and East Africa.

ELEVATE ON CAMPUS

Elevate is a 12-week training program focusing on young women from poor socio-economic backgrounds within Kampala and Mbarara trained in 4 cohorts annually.

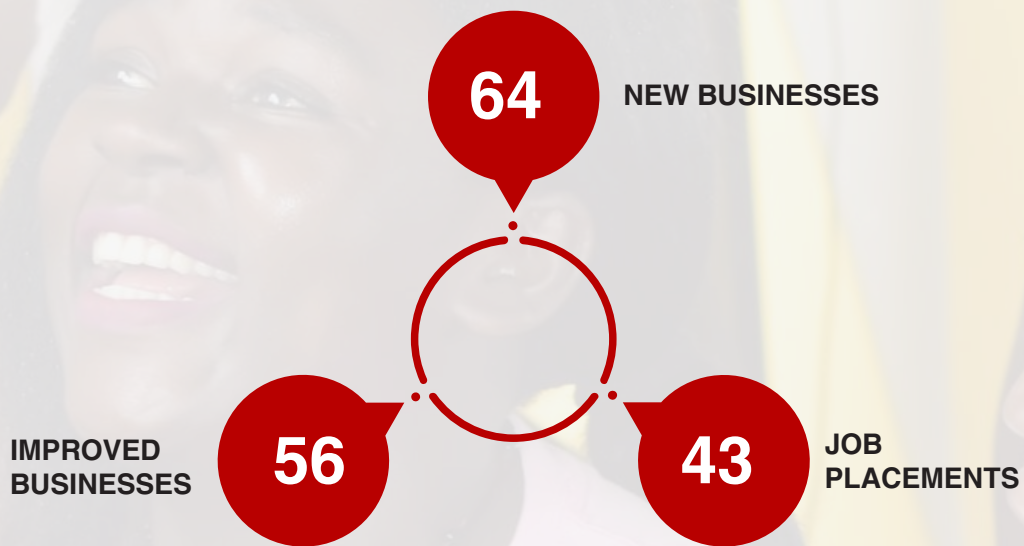
The young women are empowered with ICT skills; Microsoft applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher), digital marketing skills, life skills; employability skills (CV writing, application writing, and interview skills), building self-esteem and confidence, goal setting and entrepreneurship skills covering opportunity identification, how to start and manage a business, marketing, and customer care.

The program goes beyond conventional training, the program instigates behavioral and attitudinal changes while encouraging a savings culture among participants. In addition to core curriculum activities, elements like hands-on sessions in soap, jelly production, basket weaving, bookmaking, doctor's visits, discussions on sexual reproductive health, and inspirational talks contribute significantly to the well-rounded development of the participants.



ELEVATE 2023 IMPACT

In 2023, a total of 396 young women graduated from our program, resulting in the establishment of 64 new businesses, improvements in 56 existing ones, and job placements for 43 young women.



In mid-2023, we refined the Elevate program to include two specialized classes: the Business Accelerator, aimed at empowering young women entrepreneurs to launch and enhance businesses using digital tools, and the ICT-only class, focusing on career guidance, workplace skill enhancement, leadership, and fundamental computing skills tailored to workplace applications. This targeted approach caters to the specific needs of each participant group.





ELEVATE COMMUNITY CHAMPION MODEL

Elevate Community Champions is a lighter model of the Elevate on-campus program. The Elevate Community Champions model started to bridge the gap and address some of the challenges noted from the previous cohorts such as participants lacking transport to come to campus, and lack of time to commute daily, among others.



In 2023, the Elevate Community Champions program successfully trained 715 women from Jjolera, Kaggo and Buddo, Kabalagala, Kibuye, Kyengera, Mukono, Gaba This resulted in the launch of 70 new businesses and the formation of six savings groups in the Kampala and Wakiso districts. The program aims to make participation more accessible and has shown positive outcomes in these specific areas.

ELEVATE BUSINESS RECOVERY PROGRAM (BRP)

Business Recovery program is a 6-week business training conducted to support women entrepreneurs in the Mbarara district whose businesses were/are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This aims at equipping them with skills to enable them to reopen, improve, and revamp from Covid 19 and its related damages caused to businesses. In 2023 we provided essential business development support to 297 young women from Rwebikoona(50), Kenkombe(100), Kashenyi(80), and Rwemigina(67) in Mbarara district conducted within their respective communities.

These were engaged in different hands-on skills that included making Petroleum Jelly, Body lotion, Hand wash gel, and Petroleum Jelly to enable them to engage in diverse income-generating activities. Women were also trained in essential business aspects that included Opportunity Identification, Market research/Marketing, and Branding. This saw several women start making products like Petroleum Jelly, Liquid soap, and Body lotion either as a group and/or as individuals as alternative or supplementary sources of income for their families.



THE ELEVATE RECOVERY

In 2023 the Aga Khan Foundation partnered with WITU to launch the Elevate Business Recovery Program in 3 districts, Kampala, Wakiso and Arua and reached 1000 women. The program focussed on 5 areas, namely Customer development, product development, Finance & Investment, Leadership, and adoption of IT for business. The total number of participants trained was 1517, with 38% of the participants from Wakiso, 33% from Arua, and 29% from Kampala. 85% of the project participants were women with businesses, collapsed businesses, and those with business ideas. 15% of the participants were men.



HI-INNOVATOR INITIATIVE

The Hi-Innovator initiative, led by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation, aims to support small and growing businesses in Uganda. It provides seed funding, technical assistance, mentorship, market linkages, and follow-on financing to businesses demonstrating potential for sustainability, scale, and profitability. Outbox Uganda is the lead implementing partner for the program, working with other ecosystem players to offer technical assistance, mentorship, and affordable financing at scale. The vision of NSSF and the Mastercard Foundation is to create new economic opportunities for youth and young women in Uganda, showcasing the positive impact of the Hi-Innovator initiative in supporting and empowering small businesses.

In 2023, WITU supported 18 businesses to secure USD 20,000 seed funding through the Hi-Innovator program, including Creative Learning Africa, Lasckmeals Solutions Limited, PJ5 Confectionery Limited, Mirror Digital Limited, Cathitex Legit Designers Ltd, Frot textured Limited, Lagara Investments Limited, Freeman Ardor Movers Limited, Duocode Solutions Limited, Nolick Investments Limited, Kayyana and Kyobijja Farm, Lakehouse Limited, Link Agencies Limited, Western Silk Road, Ento Organic Farm Ltd, Twimukye Farmers Limited, SN Breeders Ltd, and Damba Kezaala Enterprises Limited.



OUR PARTNERS



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION



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