



# 2023 NATIONAL ICT CONFERENCE REPORT

## 1. Introduction

As part of its national mission to promote digital inclusion and ICT literacy, the **Uganda National Association for Computer Users (UNACU)** hosted the **inaugural National ICT Conference** in 2023 at **Centenary High School in Masaka**. This groundbreaking event brought together a wide spectrum of participants, including students, teachers, school leaders, youth organizations, charity groups, government representatives, ICT practitioners, and members of the general public. It served as a platform to discuss the transformative role of digital literacy in empowering underserved communities and bridging the digital divide in Uganda.

The conference was held under the theme “**Digital Literacy for All: Bridging the Gap through Community Empowerment.**” This theme highlighted the importance of creating equal access to digital knowledge and tools across all segments of society, with a particular focus on empowering youth, women, and educators. UNACU envisioned this event as a turning point to initiate long-term dialogue, hands-on demonstrations, and collaboration between various stakeholders in the ICT sector.

Planning for the conference was led by the UNACU Secretariat, in partnership with Centenary High School and the **Masaka District Education Office**, alongside various community-based organizations and volunteers. Months of preparation went into mobilizing schools, securing facilitators, arranging logistics, and engaging local leaders to support the initiative. The conference was made open and free to all, with meals and necessary materials provided, ensuring inclusive participation regardless of background or income level.

The event attracted more than **600 participants**, with representation from several schools, ICT clubs, government institutions, private sector tech professionals, and non-profit organizations. One of the notable moments of the event was the keynote address by the **Guest of Honour, the Masaka District Education Officer**, who emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to integrate digital skills into the national education system. Other speakers included representatives from UNACU, school administrators, and private sector advocates for technology in education.

Throughout the day, attendees participated in **interactive sessions**, including panel discussions on ICT in education, digital safety and cybersecurity, the role of ICT clubs in rural schools, and advancing women in technology. Breakout sessions provided practical exposure to basic computing, internet research, social media literacy, and introductory coding. Exhibitors demonstrated low-cost tech solutions, student projects, and community-based digital innovations. These exhibitions highlighted how ICT could be practically integrated into learning environments even in resource-constrained settings.

Beyond knowledge sharing, the conference also focused on creating an enjoyable and engaging atmosphere. Students from Centenary High School presented songs, dances, and poetry that

celebrated digital literacy and the importance of learning new technologies. The conference promoted youth leadership and student participation by involving them in volunteer coordination and ICT demonstrations.

UNACU ensured that participants received **free conference kits**, meals, and **certificates of participation**, and facilitated travel support for some upcountry attendees. The warm hospitality and the open, inclusive nature of the event were frequently praised by attendees.

Among the key outcomes of the conference was a notable increase in **UNACU membership**, especially from schools in the Masaka region. The event sparked the formation of **over 15 new ICT clubs**, expanding UNACU's footprint in school-based technology empowerment. It also strengthened relationships with local government offices and laid the groundwork for new partnerships with ICT stakeholders. Most importantly, the conference inspired many participants—particularly girls and students from underserved schools—to pursue further digital learning.

Despite the many successes, the event faced a few challenges, such as limited access to live demonstration equipment, transport delays for some attendees, and higher-than-expected demand for advanced digital sessions. These limitations provided critical insights for improving future conferences.

Looking ahead, UNACU plans to build on the success of this conference by organizing similar regional ICT events across Uganda. The Association aims to work closely with the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, NGOs, and private technology firms to expand its digital literacy programs. UNACU also envisions making the **National ICT Conference an annual flagship event**, serving as a consistent platform for collaboration, innovation, and community empowerment.

In conclusion, the 2023 National ICT Conference was a milestone for digital literacy in Uganda. It demonstrated the power of grassroots mobilization, youth involvement, and public-private partnerships in driving meaningful ICT change. By hosting this conference, UNACU reaffirmed its commitment to a digitally inclusive Uganda—one where every individual, regardless of background, has access to the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in a digital world.



## 2. Objectives of the Conference

The conference was structured around five primary objectives:

### **1. To raise public awareness about the importance of digital literacy and responsible computer usage**

This objective focused on educating the general public—particularly students, teachers, parents, and community leaders—about the critical role that digital literacy plays in modern life. With the growing integration of technology in education, business, and communication, the conference emphasized that digital skills are no longer optional but essential for personal and national development. Sessions and exhibits showcased basic and advanced computer skills, the use of productivity tools, safe internet practices, and the benefits of using ICT in daily life. Special emphasis was placed on responsible usage, such as protecting personal data, avoiding cyberbullying, and understanding digital rights and responsibilities. The aim was to create a digitally conscious society that can adapt and thrive in the information age.

### **2. To provide a collaborative forum for schools, educators, ICT students, and organizations to share experiences and resources**

The conference served as a unifying platform where various stakeholders in the education and ICT sectors could meet, connect, and collaborate. Teachers and school administrators shared success stories and challenges they faced in introducing ICT in their schools. ICT students demonstrated their projects and innovations, inspiring peers and educators alike. NGOs, tech companies, and training centers presented their programs, services, and learning resources to support digital education in schools and communities. This exchange of ideas and tools encouraged schools to adopt best practices and explore partnerships that could improve digital learning environments. It also helped bridge the gap between what is taught in classrooms and what is needed in real-world ICT settings.

### **3. To promote the establishment and strengthening of ICT clubs in both primary and secondary schools**

A central goal of the conference was to empower students by encouraging the formation and development of ICT clubs. These clubs are designed to serve as active, student-led spaces for exploration, innovation, and skill-building beyond the traditional classroom. The conference highlighted how ICT clubs can spark interest in computer science, digital creativity, and career-oriented technology pathways. UNACU presented a model for how such clubs could be structured, supported, and integrated into existing school programs. Attendees received guidance on how to launch and sustain ICT clubs, including access to mentorship, basic training materials, and follow-up support from UNACU field coordinators.

#### 4. To engage policymakers and district authorities in the ICT-for-development agenda

Recognizing that meaningful digital transformation requires strong institutional support, the conference deliberately involved local government leaders, especially from the education and ICT sectors. The presence of the **Masaka District Education Officer** as Guest of Honour symbolized the growing recognition of ICT as a priority for development. Through panel discussions and direct dialogue, UNACU engaged these leaders in conversations about infrastructure development, policy alignment, digital curriculum integration, and funding opportunities. The objective was to create a collaborative environment where policies and grassroots needs could inform each other and where government officials could see firsthand the demand for and impact of community-led ICT initiatives.

#### 5. To celebrate innovation, partnership, and grassroots participation in the digital transformation process

Beyond discussion and demonstration, the conference also served as a celebration of what communities and individuals are achieving in the digital space. It showcased innovations developed by students, teachers, and local tech groups—from mobile apps and educational games to homemade digital learning tools. Awards and recognition were given to outstanding schools and individuals contributing to digital literacy. The event highlighted how partnerships between schools, NGOs, private sector actors, and government institutions are key to scaling these successes. Most importantly, it recognized that sustainable digital transformation starts with empowered communities, and it honored the role of every participant—regardless of age, profession, or background—in building a more digitally inclusive Uganda.

### 3. Attendance and Participants

The **2023 National ICT Conference** recorded an impressive turnout of over **600 attendees** from a wide range of backgrounds and sectors. The diversity of participants enriched the conference experience and contributed to its overall success. Key categories of participants included:

- **Students from Secondary and Primary Schools:**  
Learners from various districts—particularly **Masaka, Kalungu, Lyantonde, Mukono**, and neighboring areas—attended in large numbers. Their active engagement in workshops and demonstrations highlighted the growing interest and need for digital skills among young people.
- **Teachers and School Administrators:**  
This group included **ICT coordinators, headteachers, and ICT club patrons**, many of whom brought their institutional experience and shared best practices for integrating digital literacy into formal education. Their presence also helped initiate discussions on school-level ICT infrastructure and club development.
- **Youth and Community Volunteers:**  
Individuals engaged in **grassroots digital mobilization** played a key role in energizing the event. They helped facilitate sessions, supported logistics, and connected with participants to promote community-based ICT initiatives.

- **Guest of Honour – Masaka District Education Officer:**  
Representing the **Ministry of Education and Sports**, the District Education Officer’s attendance elevated the significance of the event and demonstrated government interest in advancing digital inclusion and education policy alignment.
- **Charity Organizations and NGOs:**  
The conference was attended by several **youth-focused non-profits, educational access groups, and development-oriented NGOs** working in technology and education. Their participation promoted potential partnerships and brought valuable resources, insights, and experience to the conference.
- **Private ICT Service Providers:**  
These included local tech companies and training institutions offering **technology demonstrations, learning tools, and professional insights**. Their involvement allowed attendees to interact with real-world ICT applications and industry trends.
- **Members of the Media and Community Leaders:**  
Journalists, media houses, and local opinion leaders helped to **document, publicize, and endorse** the conference's message. They played a crucial role in extending the reach of the conference beyond the venue.

A defining feature of the event was its **inclusive and barrier-free access**. All participants were welcomed **free of charge**, including meals, materials, and participation certificates. This approach demonstrated **UNACU’s commitment to equity and accessibility**, ensuring that students and educators from all backgrounds could benefit from the digital learning and networking opportunities provided.



## 4. Program Overview

The **one-day conference** offered a **vibrant and highly interactive program** that combined educational content, technical demonstrations, and inclusive dialogue. Designed to engage participants of all ages and backgrounds, the program was **carefully coordinated by UNACU volunteers and student leaders**, ensuring not only effective execution but also representation of youth voices and community needs. The event prioritized **inclusiveness, diversity, and relevance**, making it both informative and empowering for all attendees.

### Key Sessions and Program Highlights:

- **Welcome Remarks by the UNACU Executive Administrator – Mr. Nyanzi Benedict**

The conference commenced with a powerful address by Mr. Nyanzi Benedict, who welcomed participants and provided an overview of UNACU's mission and impact. He emphasized the critical importance of **community-driven ICT empowerment** and shared key milestones in UNACU's journey since its founding. His speech set the tone for the day, inspiring attendees to recognize the role each individual and institution can play in building a digitally inclusive Uganda.

- **Official Opening by the Guest of Honour – Masaka District Education Officer**

The official opening was presided over by the **Masaka District Education Officer**, representing the **Ministry of Education and Sports**. In his address, he **commended UNACU's grassroots digital literacy efforts**, particularly the focus on ICT clubs and student engagement. He urged schools and district stakeholders to **prioritize the integration of ICT in formal education** and pledged ongoing support to such initiatives.

- **Keynote Address – “Digital Literacy in Uganda’s Education Curriculum”**

An experienced ICT educator delivered a keynote presentation exploring the **current state of digital literacy within Uganda’s national curriculum**. The speaker identified gaps in accessibility and curriculum implementation and provided practical recommendations for how ICT can be more effectively taught and evaluated in both primary and secondary schools. The keynote also highlighted the importance of teacher training, community partnerships, and resource sharing.

- **Student-led Panel Discussions – “How ICT Clubs are Changing Our Lives”**

A highlight of the day was a **student-led panel session**, featuring learners from schools such as **Lubaga Girls SSS, Centenary High School**, and others. These young speakers shared personal experiences of how being part of ICT clubs had **transformed their digital skills, confidence, and career aspirations**. They discussed how ICT clubs foster teamwork, creativity, and leadership, and they called on school leaders to support and expand such programs.

### • **Live ICT Demonstrations**

Hands-on learning was a central part of the program. Participants engaged in **live demonstrations** that provided practical exposure to key ICT skills, including:

- **Basic computer setup and troubleshooting** – Teaching students how to connect hardware components, identify common faults, and handle basic maintenance.
- **Microsoft Word and Excel basics** – Guided sessions on document creation, formatting, data entry, and basic formulas.
- **Internet navigation and online safety** – Focused on using browsers effectively, evaluating credible sources, and understanding how to stay safe online.
- **Introduction to mobile coding platforms and digital art tools** – Showcased user-friendly mobile apps that allow beginners to learn programming and create digital illustrations or posters.

These sessions enabled students and teachers alike to explore technology in a hands-on, approachable manner, regardless of their prior experience.

### • **Exhibitions and Project Displays by ICT Clubs**

Schools that had active ICT clubs showcased a wide range of **student-created projects**, including:

- **Digital posters and presentations** on topics such as internet safety and women in tech.
- **Basic websites** coded by students using HTML and CSS.
- **Research summaries** on the impact of digital tools in education.
- **Innovation concepts**, such as ideas for mobile apps, school management systems, or community information hubs.

These exhibitions allowed students to gain recognition for their creativity and offered others a chance to see what is possible with limited resources and the right guidance.

### • **Open Q&A Forum – Community Voices and Aspirations**

In an open forum held towards the end of the day, **parents, teachers, students, and community members** were invited to raise questions, share experiences, and voice their hopes and concerns around digital literacy. Topics raised included:

- **Affordability and access to ICT tools** such as laptops and smartphones.
- The need for **curriculum alignment with practical ICT skills**.
- Strategies for **expanding ICT clubs to underserved schools**.
- Support for girls in technology and overcoming social barriers.

The forum was dynamic and solution-focused, offering participants the opportunity to contribute directly to shaping future UNACU programs and to influence policy discussions.

In summary, the conference program was **rich, balanced, and participatory**, blending expert insights with grassroots experiences, theory with practice, and youth energy with institutional leadership. Each session contributed to the overarching theme of "**Digital Literacy for All: Bridging the Gap through Community Empowerment**," and laid the foundation for continued collaboration and digital transformation in Uganda.

## 5. Meals and Hospitality

True to UNACU's **grassroots and inclusive spirit**, the conference ensured that **no participant bore any financial burden** to attend or participate in the day's activities. The provision of **meals, refreshments, transport facilitation, and welfare services** played a critical role in making the event accessible, dignified, and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of background or income level.

### 1. Morning Tea and Snacks

To create a welcoming and energized environment from the start of the day, all participants were served **morning tea accompanied by light snacks** such as biscuits and buns. This helped settle attendees who had traveled early from various districts, offering them a warm refreshment as they registered and began interacting with peers. This gesture also helped set a tone of hospitality and care that lasted throughout the event.

### 2. Midday Lunch (Served in Shifts)

A **full lunch meal** was provided to all attendees at midday, demonstrating UNACU's commitment to not only intellectual nourishment but also physical well-being. Given the large number of participants—over 600—the lunch was **organized and served in well-coordinated shifts** to ensure smooth flow and prevent overcrowding. Volunteers managed queues, directed groups to dining stations, and ensured that everyone was served without delays or exclusion. The lunch service reflected thoughtful planning and inclusivity.

### 3. Bottled Water and Juice

Throughout the day, participants had access to **clean bottled drinking water and fruit juice**, helping them stay hydrated—especially during the outdoor sessions and exhibitions. This provision was particularly important considering the warm weather and active participation required during demonstrations and workshops. Providing both water and juice also ensured that younger students and those with dietary needs were comfortably accommodated.

### 4. Transport Facilitation for Upcountry Student Delegations

To support equal access from remote areas, **transport support was offered to selected student delegations from upcountry schools**, especially those from under-resourced communities. This assistance included either partial or full coverage of transport costs and logistical coordination. By offering this support, UNACU ensured that geography and economic limitations did not prevent motivated learners from participating in the conference. It also enabled greater regional representation and diversity of perspectives at the event.

## **5. Volunteer Coordination – Hospitality, Registration, Ushering, and Welfare**

A team of **dedicated volunteers**, including ICT club members and UNACU coordinators, were stationed across the venue to handle **registration, ushering, hospitality, and welfare**. They:

- Welcomed and registered guests.
- Guided attendees to seating and breakout areas.
- Assisted with distributing meals and beverages.
- Responded to needs and questions throughout the event.

Their friendly presence and tireless service contributed to the seamless flow and positive energy of the day.

## **6. First Aid Tent**

Health and safety were prioritized with the establishment of a **designated first aid tent** staffed by a health assistant. Basic medical supplies were on hand to respond to any minor injuries, illnesses, or emergencies. Fortunately, no major incidents were reported, but the visible presence of medical support gave peace of mind to attendees and organizers alike.

## **7. Adequate Shelter and Contingency for Rain**

Considering the unpredictability of weather, UNACU arranged for **sufficient tents and covered areas** to protect attendees from rain or strong sun. Both indoor and outdoor sessions were supported with shelter, and volunteers were prepared to relocate or manage crowds in case of abrupt weather changes. This planning demonstrated foresight and a commitment to participant comfort throughout the day.

In conclusion, the attention given to hospitality and logistics during the conference underscored UNACU's value of **people-first programming**. Every detail—from a cup of tea to rain cover—was handled with care, ensuring that participants felt respected, supported, and truly part of a national movement toward digital empowerment.



## 6. Resources and Logistics Provided

To ensure a high-quality and memorable experience for all attendees, the Uganda National Association for Computer Users (UNACU), in collaboration with its partners, went to great lengths to provide well-organized, functional, and comfortable facilities and materials throughout the conference. Each provision played a vital role in delivering a professional, engaging, and inclusive environment that reflected the values of the organization. Below is a detailed breakdown:

- **Branded tents, chairs, and writing spaces:**

Large branded tents were installed across the venue to offer shade and protection from weather elements, ensuring that participants remained comfortable during all sessions. Ample chairs were arranged in an orderly manner, with dedicated writing spaces available especially for student attendees and note-takers, facilitating effective learning and participation.

- **Sound system, microphones, and PA management:**

A high-quality public address system, complete with microphones and sound technicians, was deployed to ensure clear communication throughout the event. This enabled everyone—from the keynote speakers to student panelists—to be heard clearly, maintaining the flow of the conference and maximizing engagement.

- **Projectors and laptops for ICT demonstrations:**

Projectors and laptops were strategically stationed for live ICT demonstrations and presentations. These tools supported hands-on sessions such as software tutorials, internet navigation lessons, and coding introductions, providing a visual and practical dimension to digital learning.

- **Notepads, pens, and printed flyers:**

All attendees received notepads and pens to take notes during sessions, while printed flyers summarized key messages about digital literacy, ICT club formation, and UNACU membership opportunities. These materials also served as take-home references for continued learning and advocacy.

- **Directional signs and registration booths:**

Directional signage was placed throughout the venue to guide participants to different activity zones, such as the registration desk, exhibition area, dining zone, and demo tents. Registration booths were manned by volunteers to ensure orderly check-ins and to record participant data for follow-up and feedback.

- **ICT club display tables with name tags:**

Special display tables were allocated to participating ICT clubs from various schools. Each table had clear name tags and branding, allowing students to showcase their projects, posters, and digital innovations while fostering peer learning and inter-school networking.

- **Branded banners and conference backdrop:**

To elevate the visual identity of the event, professionally designed banners and a large branded conference backdrop were installed at key areas, such as the main stage and entrance. These served both promotional and ceremonial purposes, offering a suitable background for photo opportunities and media coverage.

• **Feedback forms for session evaluation:**

Feedback forms were distributed to participants to gather insights on session effectiveness, speaker impact, and overall event coordination. This allowed UNACU to assess the conference's success, identify areas for improvement, and incorporate participant suggestions into future planning.

The entire logistical and material setup of the conference was made possible through generous donations, the support of member contributions, and the tireless work of volunteers. Importantly, no costs were imposed on participants, underscoring UNACU's core commitment to accessibility, equity, and community empowerment in the field of digital literacy.



## 7. Special Remarks from the Guest of Honour

The **Masaka District Education Officer**, in his keynote remarks, said:

*“ICT is no longer optional. It is a core skill for every learner, teacher, and administrator. What UNACU has done—starting from zero to now organizing a national conference—is commendable. As a district, we pledge to support ICT clubs, digital training, and UNACU’s community efforts.”*



His presence uplifted the event and strengthened institutional legitimacy for UNACU’s ongoing work in the education sector.

## 8. Key Achievements and Outcomes

The conference achieved several tangible and strategic outcomes:

Outcome	Description
<b>Public Mobilization</b>	Over 600 participants sensitized on the importance of ICT
<b>School Engagement</b>	20+ schools represented with students, teachers, and heads present
<b>ICT Club Growth</b>	8 schools pledged to launch new ICT clubs following the event
<b>Networking Platform</b>	Introduced UNACU to local NGOs and potential donors
<b>Student Empowerment</b>	Over 100 students showcased projects and demos
<b>Media Coverage</b>	Local radio stations and news outlets highlighted the event

## 9. Testimonials from Participants

*“I had never attended a tech event where students lead the sessions. This was powerful. We have learned that ICT is for everyone.”*

— Student, Centenary High School



*“This has motivated me to go back and start an ICT club in our school. We shall call it UNACU Digital Ambassadors.”*

— Teacher, Kalisizo Secondary School



*“As a community leader, I now understand how important it is for our youth to learn computer skills. UNACU has given us a good direction.”*

— LC1 Chairperson, Masaka Municipality



## 10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Venue crowding during peak afternoon sessions due to overwhelming attendance:**

The turnout exceeded expectations, especially in the afternoon sessions when more participants, including walk-in guests and afternoon school delegations, arrived. The designated seating and activity spaces became crowded, making it difficult for some attendees to engage comfortably. This led to congestion in certain tents and activity zones, which slightly affected audience concentration and mobility.

- **Limited demo equipment for hands-on sessions:**

Although the conference featured ICT demonstrations, the number of laptops, projectors, and interactive tools was insufficient to serve all interested participants simultaneously. This limitation reduced the practical experience for many students who wanted to explore tools such as coding platforms, design software, and digital safety modules in real-time.

- **Time constraints leading to shortened panel time:**

Due to a tight program schedule and some unplanned delays, certain panel discussions and Q&A sessions were cut short. As a result, participants did not get ample time to engage deeply with expert speakers, ask all their questions, or reflect thoroughly on the insights shared—especially during the thematic discussions on digital inclusion and cybersecurity.

- **Transport delays for upcountry guests:**

Some school delegations from distant districts experienced delays reaching the venue due to transportation coordination issues. This led to late arrivals, with some guests missing the opening sessions or key workshops. The long travel distances and limited transport funding also contributed to participant fatigue upon arrival.

### Recommendations

- **Secure a larger venue for future events:**

To accommodate the growing number of participants, future conferences should be held at venues with larger seating capacities and more open space for movement. This will ease congestion, improve comfort, and allow for a wider range of activities including exhibitions, breakout sessions, and networking areas.

- **Plan for more breakout sessions with rotating hands-on activities:**

Rather than concentrating all attendees in single sessions, the program can include smaller breakout sessions spread across multiple tents or rooms. These rotating workshops would allow participants to receive more focused attention and hands-on practice, while reducing pressure on demo equipment and facilitators.

- **Involve more sponsors for event resourcing:**

By partnering with more corporate sponsors, NGOs, and ICT-related institutions, UNACU can secure additional resources such as equipment, branded materials, and financial support. This would help enhance the quality of demonstrations, increase take-home materials, and improve overall event organization without passing costs to participants.

- **Issue digital participation certificates or badges:**

To acknowledge attendee involvement and encourage long-term engagement, digital certificates or e-badges should be provided. These can be emailed after the event and serve as official recognition for schools, students, and facilitators. Digital badges could also motivate youth to build a portfolio of ICT engagements for future academic or professional opportunities.

## 11. Acknowledgements

### UNACU Sincerely Thanks:

- **The Masaka District Education Office, for their endorsement and presence**

The **Masaka District Education Office** played a pivotal role in supporting the event. Their **endorsement** helped elevate the conference's legitimacy and align it with local education policy goals. The presence of the **Masaka District Education Officer** as the **Guest of Honour** brought significant visibility to the conference, signaling government support for the integration of ICT in education. Their continued involvement underscores the importance of public-private collaboration in fostering digital literacy and education.

- **Centenary High School, for providing the venue and technical support**

**Centenary High School** generously offered their **facilities** as the venue for the conference. This provided a central, accessible location that could comfortably accommodate the large number of attendees. Additionally, the school provided **technical support**, including space management, **AV equipment**, and other logistical assistance. The school's cooperation ensured that the event ran smoothly and effectively, allowing UNACU to focus on content delivery and interaction.

- **All school leaders, teachers, and ICT club patrons who mobilized and accompanied students**

The active involvement of **school leaders, teachers, and ICT club patrons** was crucial to the success of the conference. These educators helped **mobilize students**, ensuring they were aware of the conference, registered in time, and encouraged to participate. Their commitment to student involvement went beyond simple attendance—many were involved in guiding students through the **ICT demonstrations**, panel discussions, and helping them display their own **student-led projects**. Their role in nurturing the students' engagement with ICT cannot be overstated, as it inspired curiosity and a sense of ownership over their learning.

- **Volunteers and UNACU staff, for tireless service and coordination**

The **volunteers** and **UNACU staff** were the backbone of the event's **logistical and operational success**. From **registration desks** to session coordination, these dedicated individuals ensured that everything ran smoothly. They helped with crowd control, guided attendees, managed **resource distribution**, and supported **feedback collection**. Their tireless service demonstrated a high level of commitment, ensuring the conference was organized and participants felt welcomed, respected, and engaged.

- **Partner NGOs, CBOs, and charities, for their solidarity and participation**

Several **NGOs, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and charities** contributed to the success of the conference, either by participating in exhibitions, offering resources, or helping spread the word. Their **solidarity** with UNACU's mission highlighted the **shared goal of digital inclusion** and community empowerment. These organizations added tremendous value by providing **expertise, resources, and financial support**, as well as amplifying the reach and impact of the conference.

- **Community leaders, for encouraging inclusive learning**

**Community leaders**, including local council representatives, cultural figures, and other influential individuals, were instrumental in fostering an **environment of inclusivity**. Their encouragement of **inclusive learning**—ensuring that even the most disadvantaged communities could participate—helped build trust and ensured that the benefits of digital education were accessible to all. Their involvement lent credibility to the event and encouraged broader community engagement in the ongoing digital literacy efforts spearheaded by UNACU.

- **All students, whose enthusiasm and creativity energized the entire conference**

The **students** were the true stars of the conference. Their **enthusiasm and creativity** brought a vibrant energy to the event. From showcasing their **ICT club projects** to engaging in **panel discussions**, students actively participated in every aspect of the conference. Their innovative ideas and the way they used digital tools in their presentations inspired both their peers and the adults in the room. Their involvement illustrated the powerful impact that digital education can have on youth, and how young people are stepping up as leaders in the ICT field.

In conclusion, the collaboration of these diverse stakeholders helped ensure that the **2023 National ICT Conference** was a resounding success. Each group's **dedication, support, and active participation** made the event meaningful, engaging, and impactful for all involved. UNACU remains deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the conference's success and looks forward to continued collaboration in future digital literacy initiatives.

## 12. Conclusion and Way Forward

The **2023 National ICT Conference** was not merely an event—it was a powerful catalyst for change and growth, demonstrating that grassroots ICT education has the capacity to **unite, inspire, and transform communities**. With the overwhelming support from a diverse group of stakeholders—the **community, education authorities, and development partners**—UNACU is now better positioned to take significant strides in advancing **digital literacy** and **ICT integration** across Uganda. The success of this conference has opened doors for broader initiatives that will help solidify Uganda’s commitment to **digital inclusion** at the grassroots level.

### UNACU’s Future Plans and Vision

- **Organize regional ICT summits in eastern, northern, and western Uganda:**

Following the success of the inaugural national conference, UNACU is now poised to expand its reach by organizing **regional ICT summits** in key areas across Uganda. These summits will target the **eastern, northern, and western regions**, ensuring that the benefits of digital literacy and ICT empowerment are not concentrated solely in central Uganda. By holding these summits regionally, UNACU can engage more local communities, educators, students, and policymakers, ensuring that **ICT education** and **advocacy** reach a broader demographic. These summits will serve as hubs for **localized collaboration**, enabling the sharing of resources, best practices, and strategies to tackle regional challenges in digital education.

- **Launch a national ICT club network in schools:**

In line with the vision of fostering **student-led innovation and collaboration**, UNACU plans to launch a **national ICT club network**. This network will connect ICT clubs from schools across Uganda, providing them with a platform for mutual support, resource sharing, and inter-school collaboration. The network will also serve as a **training ground for the next generation of digital leaders**, helping students hone their ICT skills through both formal education and extracurricular involvement. By facilitating this network, UNACU aims to establish a **stronger student community** that thrives on innovation, teamwork, and the development of digital solutions that can be used in local contexts.

- **Publish a digital toolkit for ICT club leaders:**

Recognizing the importance of equipping **ICT club leaders** with the right tools and resources, UNACU plans to **publish a comprehensive digital toolkit** for ICT club leaders across Uganda. This toolkit will include resources on how to **organize club activities, mentor peers, and utilize digital tools** effectively in various club projects. It will also provide best practices for **creating engaging digital learning environments** and facilitate the **building of sustainable ICT clubs** that can thrive long-term. The toolkit will be available digitally, ensuring easy access for all ICT clubs regardless of location or resources.

- **Advocate for ICT-friendly policies in schools and districts:**

Building on the momentum of the 2023 conference, UNACU is committed to **advocating for ICT-friendly policies** at both the **school and district levels**. This advocacy will focus on encouraging school administrators and district leaders to prioritize **ICT curriculum integration, teacher training, and the provision of ICT infrastructure**. UNACU aims to work closely with

policymakers to ensure that **ICT education** is embedded within the national education strategy, creating a more **inclusive digital future** for Uganda's youth. Through this advocacy, UNACU hopes to pave the way for long-term, sustainable change in Uganda's education system.

- **Use the conference as a launchpad for year-round engagement and mentorship:**

Rather than treating the conference as a one-off event, UNACU plans to use it as a **launchpad for continuous engagement** throughout the year. This will include organizing **mentorship programs, digital skills workshops, and year-round community events** that keep the momentum of digital education alive. By creating a sustained **engagement cycle**, UNACU hopes to foster a **community of learners, teachers, and digital mentors** who can support each other, share ideas, and tackle challenges related to digital inclusion. The year-round initiative will focus on providing **ongoing support and resources** for ICT clubs, educators, and students, ensuring that the momentum created at the conference is sustained and continuously built upon.

In conclusion, the success of the **2023 National ICT Conference** has proven that grassroots ICT education can ignite widespread transformation and community empowerment. With **increased support from stakeholders**, UNACU is now well-positioned to scale its efforts, launch new initiatives, and advocate for the integration of ICT into Uganda's education system. By leveraging the lessons learned from the conference, UNACU is laying the foundation for a **digital future** that is **inclusive, innovative, and impactful**, ensuring that no community is left behind in the digital revolution.

*We are building Uganda's digital future—together.*



