



# FULL REPORT: 2024 NATIONAL ICT CONFERENCE

**Theme:** “*Digital Literacy for All: Bridging Uganda’s Digital Divide through Institutional and Community Engagement*”

📍 **Venue:** Makerere University – School of Computing and Informatics Technology

📅 **Date:** August 10, 2024

✉️ info@unacu.org | 🌐 www.unacu.org

## 1. Introduction

The **Uganda National Association for Computer Users (UNACU)** held its most impactful and widely attended event to date—the **2024 National ICT Conference**—at the prestigious **Makerere University**. This event marked a milestone in UNACU’s journey from a grassroots initiative to a nationally recognized voice in Uganda’s digital transformation agenda.

Set against the backdrop of **growing ICT demand**, limited rural access, and youth unemployment, the conference brought together **educators, students, policymakers, innovators, and development partners** under one unified call: “*Digital Literacy for All.*”

UNACU chose Makerere University not just for its facilities, but for its symbolism: a center of higher learning aligned with our vision of transforming lives through inclusive technology.

## 2. Background and Context

Digital skills have become essential for education, employment, health, agriculture, and civic participation. Yet many Ugandans—especially in rural areas and underserved communities—remain digitally excluded.

To address this, UNACU designed this conference as both a **policy platform and grassroots celebration**—a place where:

- **Young innovators** could showcase their projects
- **Educators** could share best practices
- **Policymakers** could engage with real community voices
- **NGOs** could connect with schools for support and outreach

The conference also aligned with the **Digital Uganda Vision 2040** and UNACU’s national goal to empower **ICT Clubs in all districts** of Uganda.

### 3. Objectives of the Conference

1. **Promote digital literacy** as a core component of education in Uganda
2. **Showcase innovations** from ICT clubs across the country
3. **Build capacity** among teachers and ICT club patrons
4. **Facilitate dialogue** between government and civil society on ICT access
5. **Strengthen partnerships** with the Ministry of ICT and other stakeholders
6. **Grow UNACU's membership base** through visibility and public engagement

### 4. Attendance and Participation

Over **1,200 participants** attended, representing a diverse cross-section of the country.

#### Categories of Participants:

- **Students:** Over 500 from both rural and urban schools
- **Teachers & ICT Coordinators:** 200+ from over 40 schools
- **Ministry Officials:** Representatives from Ministry of ICT & National Guidance
- **University Faculty:** Makerere School of Computing and ICT lecturers and student leaders
- **NGOs & Civil Society:** Including GirlsCanCode, EduNet, Internet Society Uganda Chapter, and more
- **Community Leaders:** LC officials, religious leaders, and district education officials
- **Private Sector:** Tech companies, trainers, and media outlets

Free transportation was provided for some upcountry school delegations, with meals and conference kits fully sponsored by UNACU and its partners.

### 5. Program Overview

The conference featured **plenary sessions, parallel workshops, panel discussions, student exhibitions, and practical digital literacy demonstrations.**

#### Morning Session:

- **Opening Ceremony**
  - National Anthem and interfaith prayer
  - Opening Remarks by UNACU Executive Administrator, *Mr. Nyanzi Benedict*
  - Welcome Speech by Host Dean, Makerere University

- Keynote Address by *Ministry of ICT Official*:  
“We must build ICT into every classroom, every youth center, every home—  
UNACU is our bridge to the community.”

### **Mid-Morning:**

- **Panel 1: Building Digital Skills for a Competitive Workforce**
  - Topics: Local innovation, digital job markets, online freelancing
- **Panel 2: Strengthening ICT Clubs in Uganda’s Schools**
  - Presentation of the National ICT Clubs Framework (co-developed by UNACU and the Ministry)
  - Voices from school club leaders

### **Afternoon:**

- **Breakout Workshops**
  - *Microsoft Office Skills for Teachers*
  - *Digital Storytelling for Students*
  - *Coding without Computers (for low-resource schools)*
  - *Online Safety and Cyber Hygiene for Schools*
- **Student Innovation Exhibitions**
  - Apps and games built in Scratch
  - Web pages and digital art
  - Posters and infographics on cybersecurity
  - Presentations on school digital projects

### **Closing Session:**

- Panel of Donors and Development Partners
- Presentation of Certificates and Awards
- National Call to Action: *"One District, One ICT Club Network"*

## **6. Services Provided**

UNACU ensured the event was **inclusive and accessible**:

- **Free Entry** for all participants
- **Free Meals** (breakfast, lunch, and refreshments)
- Branded **conference kits** (folders, pens, ID tags, T-shirts)
- Special booth for **on-site UNACU membership registration**
- Health tent and first aid
- Media coverage and digital photo/video documentation

## 7. Key Achievements

Area	Outcome
<b>Policy Alignment</b>	Strengthened link between UNACU and Ministry of ICT
<b>Membership Growth</b>	235 members registered on-site (80% students & teachers)
<b>ICT Club Expansion</b>	17 new ICT clubs pledged by attending schools
<b>Resource Distribution</b>	Over 60 starter kits pledged by NGOs for club development
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	Over 400 students actively participated in hands-on workshops
<b>Visibility</b>	Event covered by NTV, Radio Simba, Bukedde, and Daily Monitor

## 8. Speaker Highlights

*“This event shows the power of grassroots leadership. UNACU is giving young Ugandans hope and skills.”*

— **Hon. Dr. Mukasa Charles**, Ministry of ICT Representative



*“We are not here as guests; we are here as digital pioneers. UNACU has given us the platform.”*

— **Student Leader**, Lubaga Girls ICT Club



*“The Makerere community is proud to host this event. It aligns perfectly with our role in national development.”*

— **Dean, School of Computing, Makerere University**



## 9. Media and Publicity

The event was widely covered, amplifying UNACU’s work nationally.

### Coverage Outlets:

- **TV:** NTV, Bukedde TV, UBC
- **Radio:** CBS FM, Buddu FM, Capital FM
- **Online:** Twitter trends, Facebook livestreams, school blogs
- **Print Media:** New Vision and Daily Monitor featured conference highlights

UNACU also published **live updates** via its official website and social media handles.

## 10. Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- **Scale the conference** to two days to accommodate more sessions and networking
- **Create regional forums** in advance to prepare schools and clubs
- **Launch pre-conference competitions** in graphics, essays, coding
- **Increase participation from northern and western Uganda** with travel support
- **Secure long-term sponsors** to supply ICT equipment to new clubs
- **Develop a feedback and reporting system** for follow-up from school delegations

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## 11. Next Steps and Commitments

As a result of this successful conference, UNACU will:

- Roll out a **National ICT Clubs Directory**
- Publish a **Digital Literacy Toolkit** for schools and teachers
- Co-host a **Policy Roundtable** with the Ministry of ICT on ICT education
- Offer **remote mentorship** to rural ICT clubs via the UNACU e-learning platform
- Organize **regional ICT innovation camps** in Mbale, Mbarara, and Lira

## 12. Appreciation

UNACU extends sincere gratitude to:

- **Ministry of ICT and National Guidance**, for policy support
- **Makerere University**, for hosting the event
- **All participating schools**, for inspiring hope and creativity
- **Donors and partner NGOs**, for resource support
- **UNACU volunteers**, for professionalism and selfless service
- **Media houses**, for giving our voices a national platform

## 13. Conclusion

The 2024 National ICT Conference proved that **Uganda’s digital future is already being shaped—from the ground up**. Students, teachers, ministries, and community members stood side by side at Makerere to co-create a national agenda for digital literacy.

UNACU has taken the lead in ensuring that **digital empowerment reaches every corner of Uganda**, and this conference has laid the foundation for a stronger, smarter, and more connected society.

*“Together, let’s make Uganda a nation of empowered computer users.”*  
— **Nyanzi Benedict**, Executive Administrator, UNACU







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