



# SHETECH INCUBATOR AND ACCELERATOR PROGRAM FIRST COHORT REPORT

**SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Launchpad Tanzania is a not-for-profit organization established in 2017 with the main purpose of contributing to human capital development and sustainable development programs. Our programs are underpinned by sustainable development and equitable inclusion through gender equality and inclusion, where we believe in prioritizing those groups in society who are marginalized (the youth, women, and those living with disabilities).

## VISION AND MISSION

The Launchpad Tanzania aspires to serve as a comprehensive civil society entity dedicated to advancing programs for the empowerment of women and youth. Our vision centers on fostering sustainable development through programs that prioritize gender sensitivity and cater to the needs of the younger generation.

At our core, we actively engage with Tanzanian youth, women, and individuals with disabilities, creating tailor-made development initiatives tailored to address specific demands. We advocate for the advancement of human capital, transformation in education, gender equality, and inclusive participation, championing these as sustainable pathways to ensure that no individual is left behind.

## OUR TARGETED GROUP

Our efforts concentrate on supporting young individuals, particularly adolescent girls and young women, who encounter restricted economic opportunities within both formal and informal labor markets. These groups often face exclusion from active participation in productive markets, resulting in increased economic vulnerability due to their marginalized status.

Primarily, our focus lies in aiding women engaged in micro-entrepreneurship, frequently operating within the informal sector, as well as small-scale producers and individuals employed in both formal and informal sectors.

In essence, our target demographic comprises women and youth between the ages of 18 and 35 residing in urban and semi-urban regions.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

- Provide an overview of Launchpad Tanzania's mission and scope.
- Present the outcomes of the SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program (First Cohort).
- Offer recommendations for program improvement.
- Conclude the report with key takeaways.

## WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY

This is a dedicated platform curated by The Launchpad Tanzania, serves as a vibrant forum aimed at bringing together, showcasing, and advocating for women actively engaged in building, utilizing, and advocating for technology across Tanzania. This platform is an instrumental initiative designed to amplify the voices and contributions of women in the tech sphere, highlighting their innovation, expertise, and influence within the Tanzanian tech landscape.

Through this platform, we foster a supportive ecosystem that celebrates the achievements and endeavors of women across various technology domains, ranging from STEM professionals, tech entrepreneurs, innovators, to advocates and enthusiasts. Our goal is to spotlight their successes, share their stories, provide mentorship, and create collaborative opportunities, fostering an environment conducive to the growth and empowerment of women in technology throughout Tanzania.

## SHETECH INCUBATOR AND ACCELERATOR PROGRAM – First

### Cohort

The SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program, conceptualized and executed by The Women and Technology (an arm under The Launchpad Tanzania), is a groundbreaking women-focused initiative aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women entrepreneurs in Tanzania's digital economy.

The program aspired to bridge the gender gap in the technology industry by fostering a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. It emphasized innovation, mentorship, and

resource accessibility to empower women-led startups and provide them with a robust foundation for success.

## ADMISSION PROCESS

The Launchpad Tanzania meticulously scrutinized 148 applications, evaluating innovation, viability, and potential impact. Out of a competitive pool, 10 exceptional women-led startups were chosen for the inaugural cohort.

These individuals stood out due to their innovative project proposals and a strong commitment to gender equality in the digital realm. Their projects range from gas leakage detection systems to smart chicken feeding solutions, audiobook platforms, chat-bots, e-commerce applications, and language learning platforms.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

The cohort commenced its journey with a resounding program launch event on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, featuring Mr. Musa Kamata, the C.O.O from SAHARA VENTURES. An orientation session equipped participants with insights into program modules, expectations, and milestones.

The program structure consisted of carefully designed modules that span a variety of topics, from ideation and market research to product development, user testing, and business development. These modules are geared towards equipping participants with the skills needed to succeed in the digital economy.

It curated a series of workshops encompassing critical topics such as product development, financial planning, marketing strategies, and investor readiness. Personalized mentorship sessions complemented these workshops. The program also utilized virtual Google Meet sessions whereby Participants actively engaged in online discussions, workshops, and one-on-one mentoring sessions.

SHETECH INCUBATOR & ACCELERATOR PROGRAM		
SCHEDULE: SEPT 19, 2023 - DEC 07, 2023		TOTAL DURATION: 12 WEEKS
DAYS	TIME	
TUESDAY	11:00 AM - 14:00 PM	
THURSDAY	11:00 AM - 14:00 PM	
MODULE NAME	DURATION	NO. OF SESSIONS PER MODULE
Foundation and Ideation	1 Week	2
Project Development	9 Weeks	18
Business Development	1 Week	2
Final Pitch Presentation	1 Week	2
TRAINERS		
Marwa Nyamhumbi	Francis Mwasyola	
Deogratius Moshia	Abraham Mbuli	
Borah Omary	Dr. Mboni Kibelloh	
Getrude Mligo	Paskal Shamlamba	
Musa Kamata	Kevin Kitambi	

## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program has achieved several significant milestones and accomplishments since its inception. Here's an in-depth overview of its achievements:

- Capacity Building and Skill Enhancement:** Startups underwent capacity-building exercises, acquiring new skills and refining existing ones. Workshops, training sessions (on digital identity, Startups Compliances, Branding, Startups Registration and pitch-deck preparation), and access to resources contributed to enhancing their entrepreneurial acumen and business management skills.
- Network and Collaboration:** The program facilitated networking opportunities, enabling startups to forge collaborations, partnerships, and synergies within the ecosystem. Building strong networks with industry players, investors, and fellow entrepreneurs expanded opportunities for growth and learning. For instance, some participants showcased their progress through The Women and Digital Convention facilitated in October 06 2023 by The Launchpad Tanzania.
- Strategic Partnerships:** The program forged strategic partnerships with industry players, corporations and organizations such as Tanzania Startup Association, D-Lab, Sahara Ventures, COSTECH and ENDOXA Law. These collaborations allowed

startups to leverage expertise, access new markets, acquire resources, and gain credibility in their industries.

- **Mentorship and Guidance:** The program provided startups with access to a network of experienced mentors, industry experts, and advisors. Through tailored mentorship sessions, startups received guidance in various aspects including business strategy, product development, marketing, and fundraising.
- **Funding and Investment:** The program facilitated connections and opportunities for startups to pitch their ideas to investors such as COSTECH and secure funding. One startup within the cohort successfully attracted endorsement from Vodacom (a Cellular Network Provider), marking a crucial step towards her growth and sustainability.

## CHALLENGES

- **Participants' Dropout**

The Dropout rate among enrolled startups from 10 to 7 disrupted the continuity and synergy within the cohort. It affected the collaborative learning environment and diminishes the collective growth potential of the program. It resulted in wasted resources and mentorship efforts invested by the program. It not only affected the individual startup but also impacts the allocation of resources that could have been utilized for other participants.

- **Power Cut Issues**

Power cut issues disrupted the daily operational workflows of startups, affecting their productivity and hindering progress. It led to downtime, impacting crucial tasks like product development, online meetings, and research. These interruptions disrupted scheduled mentorship sessions, workshops, or training programs organized by the incubator. It also affected the accessibility of resources and the ability to maintain a consistent learning environment.

- **Resource Constraints**

Early-stage startups frequently grapple with limited financial resources. Securing adequate funding or investment, managing operational costs, and sustaining growth with limited capital can be a significant challenge.

As this program operates without charging selected participants, it's important to note that it is self-funded and not sponsored externally. The absence of

sponsorship limited the program's capacity to accommodate a larger cohort, restricting the intake to only 10 participants for this specific cohort.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The encountered challenges provided invaluable learning experiences for the cohort. To address these challenges effectively, the SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program can consider the following strategies:

- **Engagement and Support**

Implement proactive engagement strategies to identify challenges faced by startups and offer tailored support to mitigate dropout rates. Regular check-ins, feedback mechanisms, and personalized assistance can help in retention efforts.

- **Alternative Power Solutions**

Encourage startups to explore alternative power solutions like generators, solar energy, or backup power sources to mitigate the impact of power cuts. Providing guidance or support for sustainable energy solutions could be beneficial.

- **Flexibility and Adaptability**

Flexibility in scheduling and providing resources that cater to potential power cut issues can aid startups in managing interruptions. Recorded sessions, offline resources, and flexible attendance policies can ensure continuity despite disruptions.

- **Network and Community Support**

Foster a supportive network among startups, encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration. Peer support can mitigate the challenges faced by individual startups, aiding in problem-solving and resilience.

Addressing these challenges requires a proactive approach, collaborative efforts, and adaptability from both the SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program and participating startups. By implementing mitigation strategies, the program can navigate these challenges and maintain its effectiveness in nurturing women-led startups despite these obstacles.

## CONCLUSION

The SheTech Incubator and Accelerator Program 2023 has made significant progress since its inception, offering an empowering platform for women entrepreneurs in Tanzania's digital



economy. As we move forward, we anticipate even greater strides, collaboration, and innovation from our participants.

This inaugural cohort report underscores our commitment to empowering women in the tech industry. We remain steadfast in our dedication to nurturing innovation, supporting women-led startups, and fostering an inclusive and prosperous future.

## ANNEX

Below are links to pictures and videos of the Program.

S/N	Content	Link
1	Call for Application Google form	<a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1X3N5ppenhElodE-nkhg3WhH8gWQgJvvg61cLQ10KJzo/edit">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1X3N5ppenhElodE-nkhg3WhH8gWQgJvvg61cLQ10KJzo/edit</a>
2	Program Launch Day photos	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1946yWPKaNoJ2MBID1T1Vmo_QfGx_FHaS/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1946yWPKaNoJ2MBID1T1Vmo_QfGx_FHaS/view?usp=drive_link</a> <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1925F_0ocHLEGje7bb9jQhXZSZnZD1ifH/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1925F_0ocHLEGje7bb9jQhXZSZnZD1ifH/view?usp=drive_link</a> <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/191E1n0w1UfzGvhYmhGhd-m7yj6ri6psP/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/191E1n0w1UfzGvhYmhGhd-m7yj6ri6psP/view?usp=drive_link</a>
3	Workshops photos	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/18-K4UX0AatGgLW1EOZHuxtwxYPcO_jw">https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/18-K4UX0AatGgLW1EOZHuxtwxYPcO_jw</a>
4	Online Sessions screenshots	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Cs7EjlsyGYLF0EeATKt0ZpmeqdkEuI3B">https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1Cs7EjlsyGYLF0EeATKt0ZpmeqdkEuI3B</a>
5	Highlight video	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n9z30U80SXUDnK_VqEpTNAfkTGO4tuLG/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n9z30U80SXUDnK_VqEpTNAfkTGO4tuLG/view?usp=drive_link</a>
6	SheTech Participants showcasing their solutions at the Women and Digital convention	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/18y-1v2Abqn_VH_58dy_NE1sgxnABS64a/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/18y-1v2Abqn_VH_58dy_NE1sgxnABS64a/view?usp=drive_link</a> <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/18r2s9Khnhp1Ak315TOyOUsH5rETOrCRC/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/18r2s9Khnhp1Ak315TOyOUsH5rETOrCRC/view?usp=drive_link</a> , <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/18k_uPvS-JouEAL8giyd7HqAKklp3e8FP/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/18k_uPvS-JouEAL8giyd7HqAKklp3e8FP/view?usp=drive_link</a> <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/18d1bUNefS1X7EmXF10fnf3O-Gsvy6_af/view?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/18d1bUNefS1X7EmXF10fnf3O-Gsvy6_af/view?usp=drive_link</a>