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Youth Skills and Jobs Barometer

First edition, 2026: where Uganda's young people stand on work, skills and opportunity, from the latest public data

GROUND → DATA → INSIGHT → DECISION

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First edition, 2026

Contents

About this barometer
Executive summary
1. Why a youth skills and jobs barometer
2. The barometer at a glance
3. Demography: a large and growing cohort
4. Work: employment, unemployment and underuse
5. NEET: the young people programmes often miss
6. Job quality and the demand for labour
7. Skills: education, training and the match with work
8. Access: digital, finance and public programmes
9. Mobility: labour migration and the wish to leave
10. Youth voice
11. Barometer scorecard (Tsavone judgement)
12. Outlook: 2027 and beyond
13. Implications for decision-makers
14. What Tsavone will measure in later editions
15. Methods note
16. Related publications
Sources
- Annex A: Indicator definitions
- Annex B: Checklist for youth programme designers

> **The first edition of Tsavone Consulting's annual barometer of youth skills and jobs in Uganda. It brings together the 2024 Census, the UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025, the National Human Resource Survey and other recent official data on young people's work, unemployment, NEET status, informality, skills, digital access and migration. Every figure is sourced, gaps are named, and a scorecard and measurement agenda set the baseline for later editions.**

About this publication

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About this barometer

The Youth Skills and Jobs Barometer is an annual publication of Tsavone Consulting. It answers one question: are young Ugandans getting the skills and the work they need, and is the position getting better or worse? It is written for people who design, fund, deliver or evaluate youth employment and skilling programmes, and for employers who hire young people.

This is the first edition. It is built from public, citable data available to Tsavone on 29 October 2026. Each figure in the text states its source and year, and each source appears with a web address in the Sources section at the end. Source numbers appear in square brackets, for example [S1]. Where no reliable figure exists, we describe the indicator and say what Tsavone will measure in later editions.

Tsavone's own judgements, such as the scorecard directions in chapter 11 and the outlook in chapter 12, are labelled as judgement and kept separate from data.

> **Two definitions of youth are used in Uganda. The National Youth Council Act, 2015 defines youth as people aged 18 to 30. The United Nations and the ILO use 15 to 24. UBOS reports both [S2]. This barometer always states which age band a figure uses. Do not compare figures across age bands.**

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Executive summary

Uganda is a young country with a jobs gap. The 2024 National Population and Housing Census counted 45,905,417 people, of whom 10,769,151 (23.5 per cent) were aged 18 to 30 and 9,751,311 (21.2 per cent) were aged 15 to 24 [S2]. The World Bank estimates that 600,000 to 700,000 young people enter the labour market each year [S3]. Reporting of National Planning Authority estimates says that the economy absorbs just over 200,000 of them, about one in three [S4].

Ten key findings

1. **Half of young adults are not in employment, education or training.** The 2024 Census found that 50.9 per cent of youth aged 18 to 30 were NEET, rising to 54.8 per cent in rural areas and ranging from 34.1 per cent in Kampala to 62.4 per cent in Bukedi [S2].
2. **Youth unemployment is high and higher for young women.** The UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 found unemployment of 17.9 per cent among those aged 15 to 24 (young women 21.0 per cent, young men 15.2 per cent), against 12.2 per cent for all people aged 15 and over [S5].
3. **Long-term unemployment is the norm for jobless youth.** In the 2024 Census, 48.8 per cent of unemployed youth aged 18 to 30 had been looking for work or trying to start a business for more than a year [S2].
4. **Work is overwhelmingly informal.** Outside agriculture, 95.1 per cent of employed people aged 15 to 24 and 91.5 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 are in informal employment [S5].
5. **More education does not yet mean more jobs.** Unemployment among youth aged 15 to 24 with post-primary specialised training or more is 28.2 per cent, and 36.3 per cent for young women in that group [S6].
6. **Formal employers are hiring, but slowly.** Formal establishments employed about 2.37 million people and reported 155,240 vacancies in 2025; informal establishments reported 305,364 vacancies [S5]. Formal private employment was projected to rise by 618,503 jobs between 2023 and 2025 [S7].
7. **Education output is rising fast.** UCE registrations reached 432,163 in 2025, up 20.2 per cent from 2024 [S8]. Tertiary institutions produced 241,292 graduates in 2023, up from 182,065 in 2021 [S7].
8. **TVET is being rebuilt.** The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2025 came into force on 15 March 2025, created a Skills Development Fund and set a skills development levy of 1 per cent of gross emoluments for employers with five or more employees [S9]. Government announced plans in September 2026 to make lower-level TVET free [S10].
9. **Digital access is growing but uneven.** UCC reported 17.0 million active mobile internet subscriptions in Q3 2025 against 45.7 million active mobile SIMs [S11].
10. **Many young people look abroad.** More than 348,473 Ugandan migrant workers were deployed abroad between 2016 and March 2026 [S12], and 52 per cent of youth aged 18 to 30 told Afrobarometer in 2024 that they had considered emigrating [S13].

What decision-makers should do

- **Target NEET youth, not only the unemployed.** Most young people outside work are not counted as unemployed. Programmes should reach those in Bukedi, Teso and rural areas where NEET rates are highest.
- **Design for young women.** Young women face higher unemployment at every education level reported. Programmes need childcare, safety and sector choices that work for them.
- **Fix the transition from training to work.** Link the new TVET system and the skills levy to employer demand, work placements and tracer studies.
- **Measure what programmes achieve.** Large public programmes reach few youth according to the 2024 Census. Rigorous evaluation should guide where the next shilling goes.
- **Make labour migration safer and more skilled.** Train and certify migrant workers for better-paid roles abroad and protect them from abuse.

1. Why a youth skills and jobs barometer

Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) covers FY2025/26 to FY2029/30. Its strategic direction, as presented by the Minister of State for Planning, targets an average of 885,000 jobs a year and income per head rising from USD 1,051 in FY2025/26 to USD 2,008 by FY2029/30 [S14]. The World Bank Group's new Country Partnership Framework for 2026 to 2035, endorsed on 4 June 2026, places the creation of more and better jobs at the core of its strategy [S3].

Public data on youth work have improved sharply. In 2026 alone UBOS released the Labour Market Survey 2025, which combines a household module and an establishment module [S5], and the National Human Resource Survey 2023/24 [S7]. The 2024 Census added district-level youth data [S2]. But this evidence is spread across releases and age bands. The barometer brings it together, sets a baseline and tracks change each year.

1.1 What the barometer covers

Pillar	Questions	Main sources in this edition
Demography	How many young people are there, where, and how fast is the cohort growing?	2024 Census [S2]
Work	Are young people employed, unemployed, underused or outside the labour force?	Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5]; 2024 Census [S2]; NLFS 2021 [S15]
Job quality	Is the work formal, secure and productive?	Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5]; National Human Resource Survey 2023/24 [S7]
Skills	Are young people gaining skills that employers need?	2024 Census [S2]; UNEB [S8]; NHRS [S7]; UVTAB [S10]; TVET Act [S9]
Access	Can young people reach digital tools, finance and programmes?	UCC [S11]; 2024 Census [S2]; MoFPED via media [S16]
Mobility	Are young people migrating for work, and on what terms?	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development via media [S12]; Bank of Uganda via media [S17]; Afrobarometer [S13]
Voice	How do young people see their prospects?	Afrobarometer Round 10 [S13]

2. The barometer at a glance

The table below is the core indicator set. Later editions will repeat it so that readers can see direction of travel. Where an indicator comes from a different instrument from its earlier value, the two are not directly comparable; section 15.3 explains why.

Indicator	Latest value	Year	Source
Total population	45,905,417	2024	Census [S2]
Youth aged 18 to 30 (share of population)	10,769,151 (23.5%)	2024	Census [S2]
Youth aged 15 to 24 (share of population)	9,751,311 (21.2%)	2024	Census [S2]
New labour market entrants a year	600,000 to 700,000	2026 estimate	World Bank [S3]
Unemployment rate, all 15+	12.2%	2025	Labour Market Survey [S5]
Youth unemployment rate, 15 to 24	17.9% (female 21.0%, male 15.2%)	2025	Labour Market Survey [S5]
Youth unemployment rate, 18 to 30	16.2% (female 19.0%, male 13.9%)	2025	Labour Market Survey [S5]
Youth employment-to-population ratio, 15 to 24	29.6% (male 34.5%, female 25.0%)	2025	UBOS via Nile Post [S6]
NEET rate, 18 to 30	50.9% (rural 54.8%, urban 45.2%)	2024	Census [S2]
Long-term unemployment share, unemployed 18 to 30	48.8%	2024	Census [S2]
Informal employment outside agriculture, 15 to 24	95.1%	2025	Labour Market Survey [S5]
Labour underutilisation, all; ages 15 to 19	41.6%; 58.3%	2025	UBOS via Ecofin Agency [S4]
Youth 18 to 30 with post-secondary education or more	6.5%	2024	Census [S2]
Youth 15 to 24 literacy rate	82.8%	2024	Census [S2]
UCE candidates registered	432,163	2025	UNEB via Pulse Uganda [S8]
Tertiary graduates	241,292	2023	NHRS [S7]
Active mobile internet subscriptions	17.0 million	Q3 2025	UCC via PC Tech Magazine [S11]
Migrant workers deployed abroad (cumulative)	More than 348,473	2016 to March 2026	MGLSD via Eagle Online [S12]

Indicator	Latest value	Year	Source
Youth 18 to 30 who have considered emigrating	52%	2024	Afrobarometer [S13]
Youth earnings, job satisfaction and transitions over time	No public data	Not available	Tsavone will measure from 2027

3. Demography: a large and growing cohort

The 2024 Census counted 45,905,417 people in Uganda [S2]. Of these, 10,769,151 were aged 18 to 30 (23.5 per cent), of whom 53 per cent were female, and 9,751,311 were aged 15 to 24 (21.2 per cent) [S2]. There were 11,404,639 adolescents aged 10 to 19 [S2]. These adolescents will enter the working-age population over the next decade.

Young people head a large share of households. Youth aged 18 to 30 headed 3,111,884 households, or 29.1 per cent of the 10,698,913 households counted in 2024 [S2]. Of these, 1,404,325 were urban and 1,707,559 rural [S2]. Youth-headed households are a natural target for programmes that combine livelihoods, housing, finance and social protection.

3.1 The scale of entry into the labour market

The World Bank Group states that 600,000 to 700,000 young people enter the labour market each year [S3]. Ecofin Agency, reporting National Planning Authority figures, gives about 700,000 new entrants a year, of whom the economy absorbs just over 200,000, and projects about 1 million new entrants a year in 2030 to 2040 [S4]. Tsavone treats the absorption figure as indicative: it depends on how jobs are defined and counted.

The NDP IV target of 885,000 jobs a year [S14] is above the current estimate of new entrants. If the target were met in full, it would begin to reduce the backlog of unemployed and NEET youth. Whether it is being met cannot yet be checked from public data, because there is no regular published count of jobs created. Tsavone recommends an annual jobs account (chapter 13).

> **Every year roughly two out of three new entrants do not find work, on NPA estimates [S4]. The backlog builds year on year. This is why NEET and long-term unemployment matter more than the headline unemployment rate.**

4. Work: employment, unemployment and underuse

4.1 The headline picture

The UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025, released on 16 April 2026, interviewed 9,850 households, a response rate of 96.2 per cent, and surveyed formal and informal establishments [S5]. It found labour force participation of 50.9 per cent among people aged 15 and over (men 59.5 per cent, women 43.4 per cent), an employment-to-population ratio of 44.7 per cent and an unemployment rate of 12.2 per cent (men 10.8 per cent, women 13.9 per cent; urban 12.8 per cent, rural 11.8 per cent) [S5].

Indicator (2025)	All 15+	Youth 15 to 24	Youth 18 to 30
Unemployment rate	12.2%	17.9%	16.2%

Indicator (2025)	All 15+	Youth 15 to 24	Youth 18 to 30
Unemployment rate, female	13.9%	21.0%	19.0%
Unemployment rate, male	10.8%	15.2%	13.9%
Unemployment rate, urban	12.8%	18.7%	Not reported
Unemployment rate, rural	11.8%	17.2%	Not reported
Employment-to-population ratio	44.7%	29.6% [S6]	Not reported

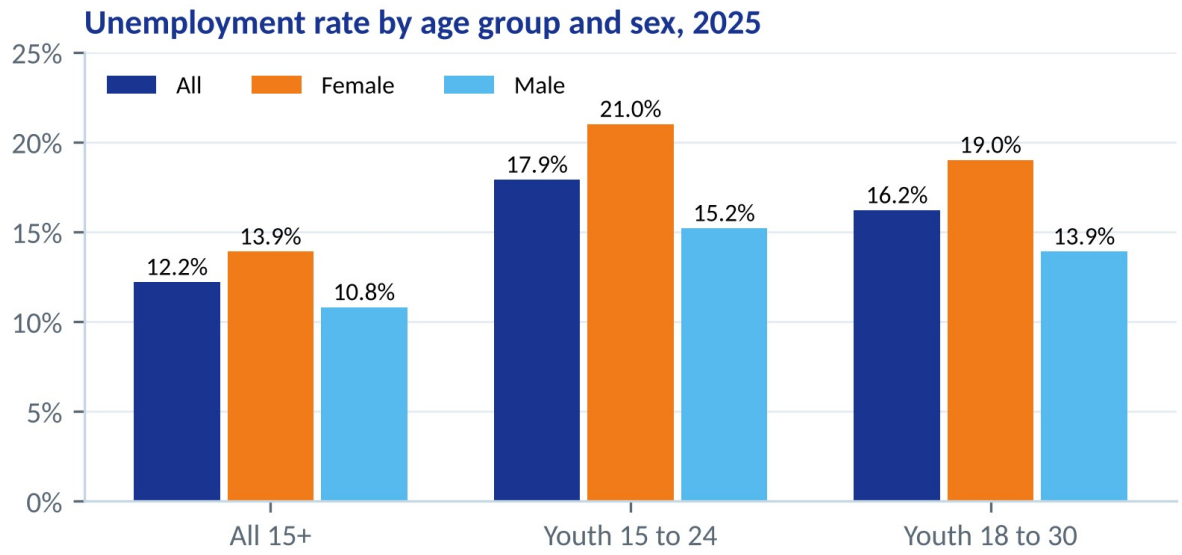


Figure 1. Young women face the highest unemployment rates
Source: UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5].

Source: UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5], except where marked [S6].

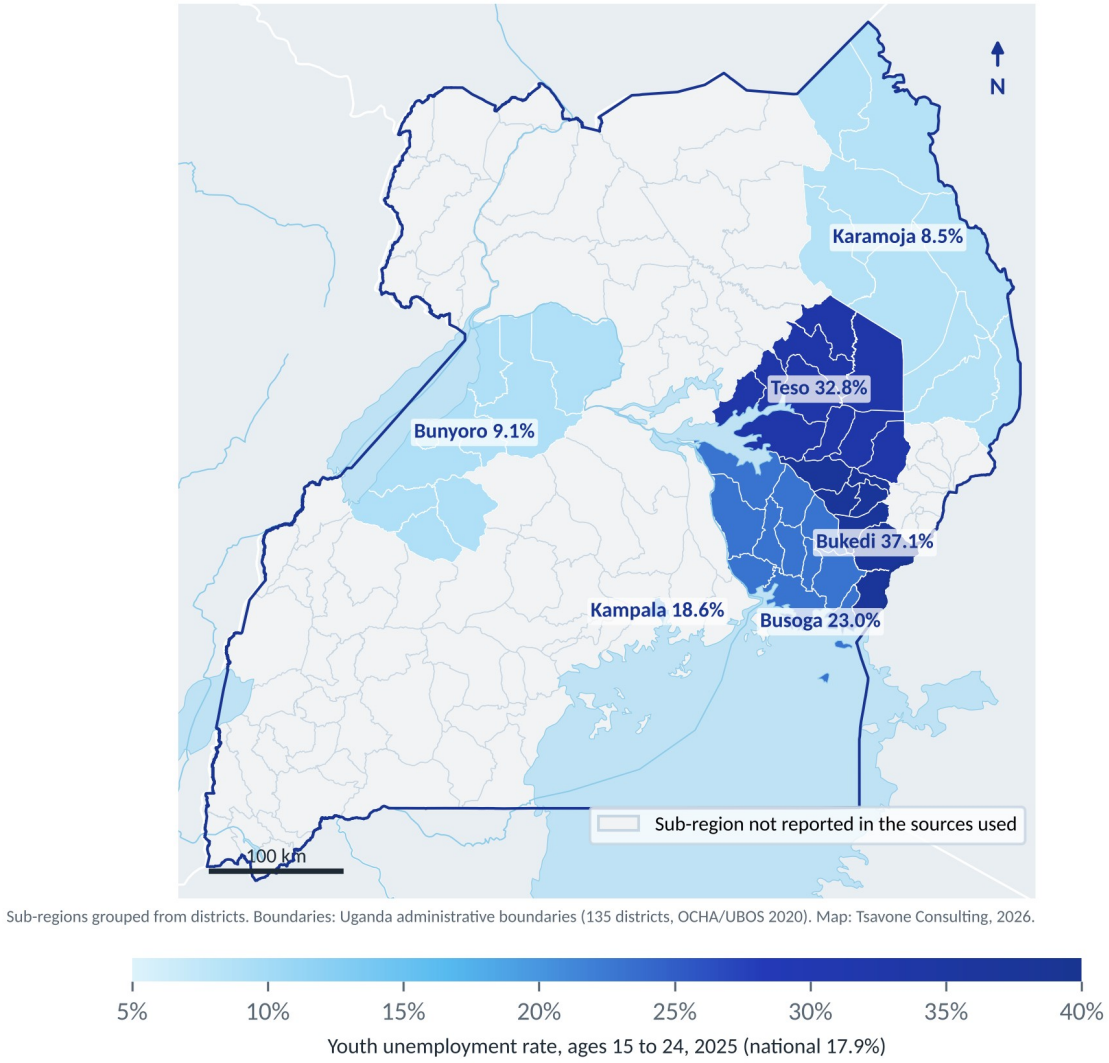
4.2 Where youth unemployment is highest

Nile Post reporting of the UBOS release gives youth unemployment for ages 15 to 24 by sub-region [S6]. The highest rates are in the east: Bukedi 37.1 per cent, Teso 32.8 per cent and Busoga 23.0 per cent. Kampala is at 18.6 per cent. The lowest rates are in Bunyoro at 9.1 per cent and Karamoja at 8.5 per cent [S6].

Low unemployment does not mean good outcomes. In places such as Karamoja, low measured unemployment usually reflects that most young people work in subsistence or family activity, or have left the labour force, rather than that they hold good jobs. This is why the barometer also tracks NEET, informality and underuse.

Sub-region	Youth unemployment rate, 15 to 24 (2025)
Bukedi	37.1%
Teso	32.8%
Busoga	23.0%
Kampala	18.6%

Sub-region	Youth unemployment rate, 15 to 24 (2025)
National	17.9%
Bunyoro	9.1%
Karamoja	8.5%



Sub-regions grouped from districts. Boundaries: Uganda administrative boundaries (135 districts, OCHA/UBOS 2020). Map: Tsavone Consulting, 2026.

Figure 2. Youth unemployment varies widely between sub-regions

Source: UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5], sub-regions reported in the source. Sub-regions grouped from the 135 districts in the Uganda administrative boundaries (OCHA/UBOS, 2020).

Source: UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025, as reported by Nile Post via AllAfrica [S6]. Other sub-regions were not given in the report Tsavone accessed.

4.3 Long-term unemployment

The 2024 Census found that 45.4 per cent of unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 and 48.8 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 had been looking for work, or trying to start a business, for more than a year [S2]. Across all working ages the Daily Monitor, reporting the Census, gave about 700,000 people in long-term unemployment out of 1.4 million unemployed [S18]. Long spells out of work erode skills and confidence and make later employment less likely.

4.4 Underuse beyond unemployment

Unemployment is a narrow measure. It counts only people without work who are looking and available. Ecofin Agency, reporting the Labour Market Survey 2025, gives a labour underutilisation rate of 41.6 per cent nationally and 58.3 per cent among those aged 15 to 19 [S4]. Underutilisation adds time-related underemployment and the potential labour force to the unemployed. The 2024 Census counted a potential labour force of 888,238 among youth aged 18 to 30: people who want work but are not counted as unemployed [S2].

4.5 Trend: has anything changed since 2021?

The National Labour Force Survey 2021 reported an unemployment rate of 12 per cent, youth unemployment of 17 per cent and a NEET rate of 41 per cent among youth aged 18 to 30 [S15]. The Labour Market Survey 2025 reports 12.2 per cent and 17.9 per cent (15 to 24) [S5]. The 2024 Census reports a NEET rate of 50.9 per cent among youth aged 18 to 30 [S2].

Tsavone's reading is that headline and youth unemployment have been broadly flat since 2021. The jump in NEET from 41 per cent to 50.9 per cent should not be read as a trend, because the 2021 figure comes from a sample survey and the 2024 figure from a census, which use different questions and methods. The 2025 survey release Tsavone accessed did not report NEET. A like-for-like NEET trend will be possible when UBOS publishes NEET from the 2025 survey or its successor.

5. NEET: the young people programmes often miss

NEET youth are those not in employment, education or training. The indicator matters because it captures young people who are discouraged, caring for family, waiting for opportunities or otherwise outside both work and learning, many of whom are not counted as unemployed.

The 2024 Census found that 50.9 per cent of youth aged 18 to 30 were NEET [S2]. Of the remainder, 35.0 per cent were in employment only, 2.3 per cent in employment and school, and 11.8 per cent in school only [S2]. NEET was 54.8 per cent in rural areas and 45.2 per cent in urban areas. By sub-region it ranged from 34.1 per cent in Kampala to 62.4 per cent in Bukedi [S2]. In Bunyoro, for example, 301,207 youth aged 18 to 30, or 48.2 per cent, were NEET [S2].

Status of youth aged 18 to 30 (2024)	Share
Not in employment, education or training (NEET)	50.9%
In employment only	35.0%
In school only	11.8%
In employment and school	2.3%

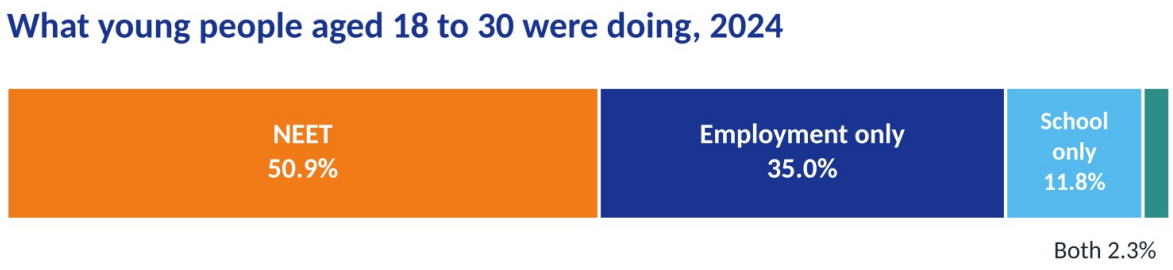


Figure 3. Half of young people aged 18 to 30 are not in employment, education or training
Source: UBOS National Population and Housing Census 2024 [S2].

Source: 2024 Census, UBOS International Youth Day brochure 2025 [S2].

5.1 Who is NEET?

The public data released so far give NEET by residence and sub-region, but not by sex, disability, education or reason. Evidence from other parts of the Census and the Labour Market Survey suggests that young women, rural youth and youth with disabilities are over-represented among those outside work. For example, unemployment among young women with disabilities aged 15 to 24 is 26.9 per cent, against 13.0 per cent for young men with disabilities [S6]. Tsavone will seek NEET breakdowns by sex, disability and reason for later editions.

5.2 Implications

- Programmes that recruit through schools, job centres or business associations will tend to miss NEET youth. Outreach through parishes, community structures, savings groups, faith groups and mobile channels is needed.
- Young women who are NEET often carry care responsibilities. Childcare support, flexible hours and safe transport raise participation.
- District targeting should use NEET rates as well as poverty and unemployment. On the 2024 Census, Bukedi and other high-NEET sub-regions stand out [S2].

6. Job quality and the demand for labour

6.1 Informality

The Labour Market Survey 2025 found that 87.6 per cent of employment outside agriculture, forestry and fishing was informal for all workers aged 15 and over, 95.1 per cent for those aged 15 to 24 and 91.5 per cent for those aged 18 to 30 [S5]. The National Labour Force Survey 2021 gave 88 per cent for all workers [S15]. Informality has barely moved.

For most young people, the realistic first job is informal: own-account work, family enterprise or casual employment in a small business. The 2024 Census recorded that among the 9.4 million employed people aged 14 to 64, 39.2 per cent were employees, 29.3 per cent own-account workers, 24.5 per cent helpers in family businesses, 5.3 per cent employers and 1.7 per cent paid interns [S18]. Programmes that aim at formal wage jobs alone will reach a small minority.

6.2 Where people work

In 2025, 37.1 per cent of employed people aged 15 and over worked in agriculture, 12.4 per cent in industry and 50.5 per cent in services [S5]. Women's employment is even more concentrated in services (56.4 per cent) and less in industry (6.9 per cent) [S5]. Rural employment is 46.9 per cent agricultural [S5].

6.3 Employer demand

The establishment module of the Labour Market Survey 2025 gives the first recent picture of vacancies from the employer side [S5].

Indicator (2025)	Formal establishments	Informal establishments
Employees	2,373,109	7,350,199
Of which female	848,569	3,398,447
Job vacancies	155,240	305,364
Vacancies in services	115,927	223,106
Vacancies in industry	22,566	80,100
Vacancies in agriculture	16,747	2,160
Jobs lost (layoffs, outsourcing, other)	46,217	Not reported

Source: UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 [S5]. Employees in industrial parks numbered 29,705, about 1.3 per cent of formal establishment employees [S5].

Total reported vacancies of about 460,000 are well below the number of unemployed and NEET youth. Even if every vacancy were filled by a young person, demand would not close the gap. The binding constraint is the number of jobs, not only the match between skills and jobs.

6.4 Formal employment and contracts

The National Human Resource Survey 2023/24 counted 2,204,918 formal sector employees in 2023, of whom 503,738 were public and 1,701,180 private [S7]. 1,192,077 were on fixed-term contracts, 939,259 permanent and 73,582 casual [S7]. The survey projected formal private employment to rise from 1,701,180 in 2023 to 2,319,683 in 2025, an increase of 618,503 [S7]. Informal non-household employment was 7,183,414 in 2024 [S7].

The same survey reports progress on some markers of decent work: the share of workplaces with an occupational safety and health policy rose from 19 per cent in 2016/17 to 71 per cent in 2024, and the share of private employees whose employer contributes to NSSF rose from 34 per cent to 61 per cent [S7]. These are measured among surveyed establishments, not all workers.

6.5 Earnings

Tsavone did not find a youth-specific earnings figure in the 2025 releases it accessed. The National Labour Force Survey 2021 reported average monthly earnings, cash and in kind, of UGX 250,000 for all workers [S15]. Later editions will report youth earnings if UBOS publishes them, and Tsavone's own survey will collect them (chapter 14).

7. Skills: education, training and the match with work

7.1 Educational attainment

Young Ugandans are better educated than earlier generations, but large gaps remain. The 2024 Census reported the highest level completed by youth as follows [S2].

Highest level (2024)	Youth 15 to 24	Youth 18 to 30
No formal education	18.6%	17.6%
Primary completed	13.3%	13.5%
Secondary completed	12.9%	19.5%
Post-secondary and above	2.2%	6.5%

Source: 2024 Census [S2]. Categories as published; they do not sum to 100 per cent because people who started but did not complete a level are not shown.

Youth literacy (ability to read and write in any language) was 82.8 per cent for ages 15 to 24 and 81.6 per cent for ages 18 to 30 [S2]. Afrobarometer's 2024 survey found that 54 per cent of youth aged 18 to 30 reported secondary (42 per cent) or post-secondary (12 per cent) education [S13]. Survey and census figures differ because of sampling and question wording.

7.2 School and tertiary output

The flow of school leavers is rising sharply. UNEB registered 432,163 candidates for the 2025 Uganda Certificate of Education, up 20.2 per cent from 359,417 in 2024, of whom 52.7 per cent were female [S8]. 2025 was the second cohort assessed under the competency-based lower secondary curriculum, in which continuous assessment counts for 20 per cent of the result [S8]. The National Human Resource Survey reports 1,459 tertiary institutions (1,010 private) in 2023, enrolment of 484,746 and 241,292 graduates, up from 182,065 graduates in 2021 [S7]. Vocational and technical colleges produced 73,824 of the 2023 graduates [S7].

7.3 The education paradox

More education does not yet protect young people from unemployment. Nile Post reporting of the Labour Market Survey 2025 gives youth unemployment (15 to 24) of 28.2 per cent among those with post-primary specialised training or above, against 17.2 per cent for those with some primary and 17.3 per cent for those with some secondary education [S6]. For young women with post-primary specialised training, the rate is 36.3 per cent, compared with 19.5 per cent for young men [S6].

Part of this pattern is expected: better-educated youth can afford to wait for a suitable job, and they live in towns where measured unemployment is higher. But the size of the gap, especially for young women, points to weak links between training and work, few formal jobs, and possibly discrimination in hiring. It is a central question for later editions.

7.4 Skills gaps reported by employers

The National Human Resource Survey 2023/24 asked formal establishments about skill gaps among their employees [S7]. The most commonly reported gaps were soft and digital skills rather than technical ones.

Occupation group (2023)	Most reported skill gaps (share of employees)
Managers	Customer care 14.6%; managerial 14.3%; communication 13.1%; IT 11.8%
Professionals	IT 14.1%; communication 7.4%; innovativeness 7.2%
Technicians and associate professionals	Communication 7.3%; innovativeness 6.8%; language 6.2%
Clerical support workers	Innovativeness 4.7%; IT 3.5%; technical 3.4%
Service and sales workers	Communication 11.4%; customer care 10.3%; innovativeness 10.2%; language 9.4%

Source: National Human Resource Survey 2023/24 [S7]. In 2024, 85 per cent of employees said their job matched their education or training, 9 per cent said no training was required, 5 per cent were over-educated and 1 per cent under-qualified [S7]. These figures cover employees in surveyed establishments, not the many young people outside them.

7.5 TVET reform

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2025 (Act No. 3 of 2025) came into force on 15 March 2025 and repealed the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training Act [S9]. Its main features, as summarised by ALN, are [S9]:

- a TVET Council and a Skills Development Fund held in a dedicated Bank of Uganda account;
- a skills development levy of 1 per cent of total gross monthly emoluments, payable by employers with five or more employees (section 111), with collection awaiting regulations;
- mandatory licensing and registration of vocational and technical practitioners, including artisans such as hairdressers, mechanics and tailors.

In September 2026 the Acting Minister of Education and Sports announced plans to make lower-level TVET programmes free, and two sets of TVET Regulations 2026 were gazetted, covering trainee admissions and provider governance [S10]. In the May to June 2026 UVTAB assessment, 17,262 candidates registered and 84.4 per cent of those assessed attained full competence, up from 81 per cent in 2025 [S10]. Women made up only 22.2 per cent of technology candidates [S10].

> **The skills levy could become the largest new source of finance for youth skills in a generation. Its value depends on how the Skills Development Fund is governed, whether employers see a return, and whether the funded training leads to work. These are questions for independent monitoring.**

8. Access: digital, finance and public programmes

8.1 Digital access

Digital skills and access shape both job search and the kinds of work young people can do. The Uganda Communications Commission reported 56.7 million registered mobile subscriptions, 45.7 million active mobile SIMs, 17.0 million active mobile internet subscriptions and about 196,000 fixed internet subscriptions in Q3 2025, as summarised by PC Tech Magazine [S11]. About 34 per cent of 56.1 million connected devices were smartphones [S11]. Subscriptions are not people: one person may hold several

SIMs. Youth-specific internet use from the 2024 Census was not in the releases Tsavone accessed; later editions will report it.

8.2 Reach of public programmes

Government runs several large programmes that reach young people directly or through households. The 2024 Census asked about participation [S2]. Among youth aged 18 to 30, 9.9 per cent (1,020,113 people) reported benefiting from NAADS, 0.4 per cent from the Youth Livelihood Programme, 0.3 per cent from Operation Wealth Creation and 0.1 per cent from Emyooga [S2].

The Parish Development Model (PDM) is now the largest channel. The Ministry of Finance reported in November 2025 that UGX 3.216 trillion had been transferred to parishes and that about 3.27 million Ugandans had benefited; each parish SACCO receives UGX 100 million a year in two instalments [S16]. The share of PDM beneficiaries who are youth is not published in the sources Tsavone accessed. Media reports of weak loan recovery in some districts point to the need for independent evaluation.

8.3 What is not yet measured

- Youth access to credit and savings, by sex and location.
- The share of PDM and other programme beneficiaries who are aged 18 to 30.
- Outcomes of skilling programmes: employment and earnings six and twelve months after completion.
- The number of young people in platform and online work.

9. Mobility: labour migration and the wish to leave

Labour migration has become a significant path for young Ugandans, especially young women working in domestic and service jobs in the Gulf. The Commissioner for Employment Services reported more than 348,473 Ugandan migrant workers deployed abroad from 2016 to March 2026 under the External Employment Programme [S12]. The Minister of State for Labour, quoted in the same report, said the sector relies mainly on low-skilled workers, particularly young women, and urged recruitment agencies to place more skilled workers [S12].

Remittances are large. The Daily Monitor, reporting Bank of Uganda data collected under an enhanced framework introduced in June 2025, gives about USD 2.5 billion in remittance inflows in 2025, about 3.8 per cent of GDP, across more than 16 million transactions with an average of USD 152 [S17]. Not all of this comes from youth or from the Gulf, and the figure is not comparable with earlier series because the collection method changed [S17].

The wish to migrate is widespread. In Afrobarometer Round 10 (2024), 52 per cent of youth aged 18 to 30 said they had considered leaving Uganda, an 11-point rise since 2017, mainly to find work or escape economic hardship [S13].

9.1 Implications

- Migration is a real labour market option and should be planned for, not ignored. Pre-departure skills training and certification can move workers into better-paid roles.
- Protection gaps are serious. Media reporting in 2026 describes stranded workers and a lack of budget for rescue [S19]. Safe migration needs licensed recruiters, enforced contracts and consular support.
- Remittances can finance youth enterprise at home if linked to savings and investment products.

10. Youth voice

Afrobarometer's Round 10 survey (2024) gives a picture of how young adults see their prospects [S13].

Finding, youth 18 to 30 (2024)	Share
Have no job and are looking for one	36%
Say the country is going in the right direction	57%
Rate the economy as bad	54%
Experienced moderate or high lived poverty in the past year	66%
Approve of government performance on job creation	36%
Approve of government performance on education	59%
Have considered emigrating	52%

Source: Afrobarometer Dispatch AD975, April 2025 [S13]. Afrobarometer's own job question is not the ILO unemployment definition, so its 36 per cent figure is not comparable with UBOS unemployment rates.

Two points stand out. Young people are more positive about the direction of the country than about the economy. And they rate government lowest on job creation. Unemployment ranked sixth among youth priorities, after health, education and infrastructure [S13]: young people see better services as part of the route to work.

11. Barometer scorecard (Tsavone judgement)

The scorecard gives Tsavone's assessment of each pillar. Level compares Uganda's position with what a fast-growing lower-middle-income economy needs. Direction compares the latest figure with the earliest comparable one. Where no comparable earlier figure exists, direction is marked 'Baseline'. These are judgements, not statistics.

Pillar	Level	Direction	Basis
Youth employment	Weak	Flat	Youth unemployment 17% (2021) [S15] and 17.9% (2025) [S5]; employment-to-population ratio 29.6% (15 to 24) [S6]
NEET	Very weak	Baseline	50.9% (18 to 30, 2024 Census) [S2]; not comparable with 41% (NLFS 2021) [S15]
Job quality	Very weak	Flat	Informality outside agriculture 88% (2021) [S15] and 87.6% (2025) [S5]; 95.1% for 15 to 24
Labour demand	Weak	Improving	Formal private employment projected to rise by 618,503 from 2023 to 2025 [S7]; about 460,000 vacancies in 2025 [S5]
Skills supply	Mixed	Improving	UCE registrations up 20.2% in 2025 [S8]; tertiary graduates up from 182,065 to 241,292 (2021 to 2023) [S7]
Skills match	Weak	Baseline	Higher unemployment among youth with specialised training [S6]; soft and IT skill gaps [S7]

Pillar	Level	Direction	Basis
Gender equality	Weak	Baseline	Young women's unemployment 21.0% vs young men 15.2% (15 to 24) [S5]
Digital access	Mixed	Improving	17.0 million mobile internet subscriptions, up from 16.5 million in Q2 2025 [S11]
Safe migration	Weak	Baseline	More than 348,473 deployed 2016 to March 2026 [S12]; protection gaps reported [S19]

12. Outlook: 2027 and beyond

This chapter is Tsavone's judgement, based on the evidence cited.

12.1 What will shape youth jobs in 2027

Driver	Expected effect	Evidence
Growth at about 6% a year	Supports job creation but has not yet reduced youth unemployment	GDP growth 6.3% (FY2024/25) and 6.4% (FY2025/26, preliminary) [S20]
Oil production from late 2026	Few direct jobs once construction ends; possible indirect jobs in services and supply	Projects reported near completion in August 2026 (see Nature and Climate Risk in Ugandan Business)
TVET Act, levy and free lower-level TVET	Potentially large expansion of training; quality and employer links are the risk	[S9]; [S10]
Rising school-leaver cohorts	More young people seeking work or further study each year	UCE registrations up 20.2% in 2025 [S8]
Climate shocks in 2026 to 2027	Losses in agriculture and informal trade, especially in Karamoja and flood-prone areas	See Nature and Climate Risk in Ugandan Business
PDM and other public programmes	Large reach; impact on youth employment is not yet evidenced	[S16]; [S2]
World Bank CPF 2026 to 2035 and NDP IV	Jobs placed at the centre of public and partner strategy	[S3]; [S14]

12.2 Expectations for the second edition

- Tsavone expects youth unemployment (15 to 24) to remain in the range of the 2025 figure unless job creation accelerates sharply. This is judgement, not a forecast model.
- The number of young people completing secondary school and TVET will continue to rise faster than formal vacancies.
- The first operational year of the skills development levy, if regulations are issued, will be a key test.
- Better data will be available if UBOS publishes NEET and earnings from the Labour Market Survey and youth internet use from the Census.

13. Implications for decision-makers

13.1 Government

1. Publish an annual jobs account that counts jobs created by sector, formality and age, so that the NDP IV target of 885,000 jobs a year can be checked.
2. Publish NEET and youth earnings in every labour survey release, by sex, disability and district.
3. Issue the skills development levy regulations with transparent governance of the Skills Development Fund, employer representation and published annual accounts.
4. Require tracer studies for publicly funded TVET and youth programmes, with results published.
5. Strengthen protection for migrant workers: licensing, enforcement and a budget for assistance.

13.2 Development partners and foundations

- Fund programmes that reach NEET youth through community channels, not only those already in school or job centres.
- Invest in employer-led training and work-based learning linked to real vacancies.
- Fund rigorous evaluation of large programmes, including PDM components that reach youth.
- Support young women into higher-paying sectors, including technology trades, where they are under-represented [S10].

13.3 Employers and investors

- Use the skills levy, when collected, as a reason to shape training curricula and offer placements.
- Address the soft and digital skill gaps reported by employers [S7] through structured on-the-job training.
- Count and report youth hires; it helps attract development finance and build reputation.

13.4 Training providers

- Prepare for registration and quality requirements under the TVET Act and Regulations 2026.
- Track what happens to graduates at six and twelve months and publish the results.
- Build in soft skills, digital skills and enterprise skills alongside technical content.

13.5 Youth organisations

- Use the data in this barometer to hold programmes to account for reach and results.
- Push for youth representation in Skills Development Fund governance and district programme committees.

14. What Tsavone will measure in later editions

The public record now gives a good picture of youth labour market status at one point in time. It is weak on four things: earnings and job quality, transitions over time, programme results, and young people's own experience. From 2027 Tsavone plans to collect primary data to fill these gaps, under our field evidence quality standard, our data protection and research ethics policy, and our youth employment and labour market assessment methods.

Indicator	Why it matters	Planned method	First edition expected
Youth earnings by sex, sector and formality	Unemployment rates say nothing about whether work pays	Youth Skills and Jobs Pulse: phone and field survey of youth aged 18 to 30 in selected districts	2027
Transition from school or training to work (months to first job)	Shows whether skills lead to work	Pulse survey panel with repeat interviews	2027 to 2028
Employer hiring intentions and hard-to-fill posts	The NHRS did not report hard-to-fill posts	Employer survey of formal and informal firms	2027
Training graduate outcomes at 6 and 12 months	No public tracer data for most programmes	Tracer studies with partner providers	2028
Youth share of programme beneficiaries	Public data do not show it for PDM	Document review; administrative data requests	2027
Migrant worker pre-departure skills and outcomes	Protection and earnings depend on skills and contracts	Survey of returnees and prospective migrants with partners	2028
Youth experience of safeguarding risks in work	Harassment and exploitation affect participation	Confidential survey module under Tsavone's safeguarding policy	2028

Tsavone welcomes partners who wish to co-fund or co-author these surveys on the basis of equitable partnership. Respondents will not be identified.

15. Methods note

15.1 Approach

This edition is a desk review of public data. Tsavone searched official sources (UBOS, including the 2024 Census, the Labour Market Survey 2025 and the National Human Resource Survey 2023/24; the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the Ministry of Education and Sports; UNEB; UVTAB; the Uganda Communications Commission; the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; the Bank of Uganda), international sources (the World Bank and Afrobarometer) and reputable media reporting of official releases. The data cut-off is 29 October 2026.

15.2 Source rules

- Every figure states its source and year in the text and is listed in the Sources section.
- Where an official report could not be opened, Tsavone used reputable media reporting of that report and names both.
- Every figure was checked against its cited source before publication.
- Figures for different age bands (15 to 24 and 18 to 30) are never combined or compared.
- Figures from different instruments (census, sample survey, administrative data) are not treated as a trend unless the methods are comparable.
- Scorecard ratings, outlook and recommendations are labelled as Tsavone judgement.

15.3 Why census and survey figures differ

The 2024 Census and the Labour Market Survey 2025 both measure youth unemployment, but they give different results: for youth aged 15 to 24, 16.7 per cent in the Census [S2] and 17.9 per cent in the survey [S5]. Censuses use shorter questionnaires and proxy respondents, while labour surveys use detailed modules administered by trained enumerators. Survey figures are generally more reliable for labour status; census figures are better for small-area detail. This barometer uses the survey for national rates and the Census for sub-regional and NEET figures, and says which is which.

15.4 Limitations

- Some key releases were reached through media summaries, for example sub-regional youth unemployment and labour underutilisation from the Labour Market Survey 2025.
- The full Census final report could not be opened; Census youth figures are taken from UBOS's International Youth Day 2025 brochure.
- Remittance figures for 2025 use a new Bank of Uganda framework and are not comparable with earlier years.
- There is no public time series on youth earnings or programme outcomes.
- This edition contains no primary data.

15.5 Quality assurance and independence

The barometer went through Tsavone's internal quality review and follows our house standards for writing, data analysis and visualisation. It was funded by Tsavone Consulting; no client or funder reviewed or approved its content. Tsavone's independence and conflict of interest standard applies to all its publications. Corrections will be published on www.tsavone.com. To report an error, write to info@tsavone.com.

16. Related publications

Publication	Use
Youth Skills, Jobs and Enterprise Practice Prospectus	Tsavone's services in youth skills, jobs and enterprise
Uganda Refugee Economy Outlook	Refugee and host youth economies
Nature and Climate Risk in Ugandan Business	Climate shocks affecting youth livelihoods
Training Catalogue	Tsavone training services

All are available at www.tsavone.com/publications. More of Tsavone's work is at www.tsavone.com. Detailed method guides, for example on youth employment programme design, labour market assessment and impact evaluation, are shared with clients on request.

Sources

All web addresses were accessed between 27 and 29 October 2026. Where an original official document could not be opened, the reporting source is listed and the original publisher is named.

No.	Source and year	Web address
S1	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024). National Population and Housing Census 2024 Final Report, Volume 1 Main (listed for reference; not opened).	https://statistics.ubos.org/nphc/reports/National-Population-and-Housing-Census-2024-Final-Report-Volume-1-Main.pdf
S2	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2025). International Youth Day Celebrations 2025 brochure (NPHC 2024 youth statistics).	https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/UBOS-INTERNATIONAL-YOUTH-DAY-CELEBRATIONS-2025.pdf
S3	World Bank (4 June 2026). World Bank Group launches ten-year strategy to drive jobs and prosperity in Uganda.	https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/06/04/world-bank-group-launches-ten-year-strategy-to-drive-jobs-and-prosperity-in-uganda
S4	Ecofin Agency (9 July 2026). Uganda's economy finds work for only one in three young people entering the labor market.	https://www.ecofinagency.com/news-services/0907-57225-uganda-s-economy-finds-work-for-only-one-in-three-young-people-entering-the-labor-market
S5	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (16 April 2026). Presentation on the Labour Market Survey 2025 Report Findings.	https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/04_2026Presentation_on_the_Labour_Market_Survey_2025_Report_Findings_16th_April_2026.pdf
S6	Nile Post via AllAfrica (April 2026). Bukedi, Teso lead as Uganda's youth unemployment climbs to 17.9 percent: UBOS.	https://allafrica.com/stories/202604230738.html
S7	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (23 April 2026). Findings of the National Human Resource Survey 2023/24.	https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/04_2026Findings_of_the_National_Human_Resource_Survey_23-04-2026.pdf
S8	Pulse Uganda (13 February 2026). UCE results 2025: a look at key figures and performance numbers (reporting UNEB).	https://www.pulse.ug/story/uce-results-2025-a-look-at-key-figures-performance-numbers-2026021310444926313
S9	ALN Uganda (2025). Uganda introduces new skills development levy under the TVET Act 2025.	https://aln.africa/insight/uganda-introduces-new-skills-development-levy-under-the-tvet-act-2025/
S10	Daily Monitor (19 September 2026). Why govt intends to make TVET education cost-free.	https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/why-govt-intends-to-make-tvet-education-cost-free-5600772
S11	PC Tech Magazine (2 December 2025). UCC report: Uganda's digital footprint grows modestly in Q3 2025.	https://pctechmag.com/2025/12/ucc-report-ugandas-digital-footprint-grows-modestly-in-q3-2025/
S12	Eagle Online (15 July 2026). Gen Tumukunde urges recruitment agencies to export skilled workers.	https://eagle.co.ug/2026/07/15/gen-tumukunde-urges-recruitment-agencies-to-export-skilled-workers/
S13	Afrobarometer (29 April 2025). AD975: Majority of youth see Uganda as moving in right direction, but economic outlook is mixed.	https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad975-majority-of-youth-see-uganda-as-moving-in-right-direction-but-economic-outlook-is-mixed/

No.	Source and year	Web address
S14	Business Times Uganda (2024). NDPIV to provide 885,000 jobs annually over the 5-year implementation period.	https://businesstimesug.com/ndpiv-to-provide-885000-jobs-annually-over-the-5-year-implementation-period/
S15	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2022). National Labour Force Survey 2021 Key Findings.	https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/National_Labour_Force_Survey_NLFS_2021_Key_Findings.pdf
S16	Nile Post via AllAfrica (20 November 2025). Govt surpasses Shs 3 trillion in PDM transfers to parishes.	https://allafrica.com/stories/202511200638.html
S17	Daily Monitor (2026). Remittances to Uganda hit USD 2.5 billion in 2025.	https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/remittances-to-uganda-hit-2-5-billion-in-2025-5411676
S18	Daily Monitor (2025). 700,000 Ugandans spend over a year jobless: report (reporting NPHC 2024).	https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/700-000-ugandans-spend-over-a-year-jobless-report-5023880
S19	AllAfrica (5 August 2026). No budget to rescue stranded Ugandans overseas: govt.	https://allafrica.com/stories/202608050096.html
S20	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2026). Preliminary Annual Gross Domestic Product 2025/26.	https://www.ubos.org/preliminary-annual-gross-domestic-product-2025-26/

Annex A: Indicator definitions

Indicator	Definition used in this barometer
Youth	Aged 18 to 30 (National Youth Council Act, 2015) or 15 to 24 (UN and ILO); the band is always stated
Labour force participation rate	Share of the working-age population that is employed or unemployed
Employment-to-population ratio	Share of the working-age population that is employed
Unemployment rate	Share of the labour force without work, available and actively seeking work or trying to start a business, under UBOS definitions
Long-term unemployment	Unemployed and looking for work or trying to start a business for more than 12 months
NEET	Not in employment, education or training, as a share of all youth in the age band
Potential labour force	People not employed who want work but do not meet both the seeking and availability conditions for unemployment
Labour underutilisation	Combined measure of time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force
Informal employment	Jobs without basic social or legal protection or employment benefits, under ILO and UBOS definitions
Vacancy	A paid post that is new, unoccupied or about to become vacant, for which the employer is taking active steps to recruit

Annex B: Checklist for youth programme designers

Use this checklist when designing or reviewing a youth skills or jobs programme.

No.	Check	Evidence that it is met
1	Which age band does the programme serve, and why?	Written definition consistent with national data
2	Does outreach reach NEET youth, not only students and job seekers?	Outreach plan with community channels; NEET share of enrolment tracked
3	Is the programme designed for young women?	Childcare, safety, timing and sector choices addressed; sex-disaggregated targets
4	Does it include youth with disabilities?	Accessibility measures; disability-disaggregated data
5	Is training linked to real demand?	Employer partners, vacancy data or a labour market assessment
6	Does it build soft and digital skills as well as technical skills?	Curriculum covers communication, customer care, IT
7	Is there work-based learning?	Placements, apprenticeships or on-the-job components with partner firms
8	Are outcomes tracked after training?	Tracer study at 6 and 12 months with employment and earnings
9	Are safeguarding risks managed?	Safeguarding plan; reporting channels; staff vetting
10	Will results be published?	Commitment to publish evaluation findings

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