

STARTUP  
KANO



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT



# WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Friends of Startup Kano Hub,

As we present our 2024 Impact Report, we reflect with pride on a year marked by purpose, progress, and partnerships.

At Startup Kano, 2024 has been about deepening our impact, expanding our reach, and strengthening the innovation ecosystem in Northern Nigeria and beyond. Through strategic collaborations, community-driven initiatives, and the relentless spirit of young innovators, we've supported groundbreaking ideas, nurtured inclusive growth, and enabled transformative change.

We are especially grateful to our partners, ecosystem collaborators, and the Startup Kano community—your trust and commitment continue to power our mission. Every milestone we celebrate today was made possible because of your trust in our work.

With Love,

**Aisha Tofa**  
**Founder / Executive Director**



# 2024 NEWSLETTER

www.startupkano.com



Monday, 14th April 2025



## BUILDING THE CITIZEN REPORTING CROSS PLATFORM

A project aimed at enabling Kano residents to report real-time emergencies and receive assistance, while promoting good governance and community engagement.

## TOP NEWS

Startup kano's Key role on the NSA domestication in Northern Nigeria

Our portfolio startups are leading social impact internationally!



Epiphany Magic Book Launches!

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Startup Kano is a leading innovation hub dedicated to promoting entrepreneurship, technology, agribusiness, and self-employment in Northern Nigeria.

With a clear vision to create an ecosystem of creative entrepreneurs that will transform society, we have made 2024 a year of significant impact and achievements.

**This year, Startup Kano has continued to:**

**Empower Startups:** Supporting creative and innovative ideas that empower businesses to thrive.

**Build Sustainable Ecosystems:** Partnering with organizations to deliver impactful projects aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and technology-driven solutions.

**Empower Women and Youth:** Creating opportunities for underrepresented groups to lead in entrepreneurship and innovation.

**Advocate for ICT Innovation:** Driving technology adoption and advocating for digital literacy in communities.

Our strategic focus on infrastructure, education, gender equality, and access to technology has positioned us as a catalyst for positive change.

This report highlights our journey, partnerships, and events over the past year that reflect our unwavering commitment to building a vibrant and resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Together with our partners, we are driving socioeconomic development and empowering the next generation of changemakers.





# STARTUP KANO AT A GLANCE

Fostering Innovation, Empowering Entrepreneurs  
and Strengthening Communities





# VISION & MISSION

Our **Vision** is to create an ecosystem of creative entrepreneurs that will change the face of our society.

**Our missions are:**

- Incubate and accelerate Startups with creative and innovative ideas.
- Build an ecosystem for creative entrepreneurs that will change the face of our society.
- Create opportunities for Women and Youth in our ecosystem
- Advocate ICT innovation and entrepreneurship in the ecosystem
- Work with organizations to deliver projects that aim at creating a sustainable ecosystem for startup group and technology innovations

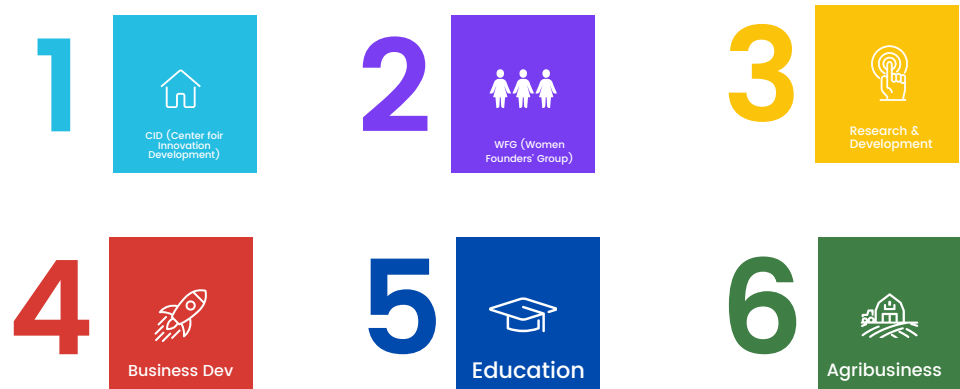
# OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

Startup Kano's strategic focus includes;

- **Infrastructure Development**
- **Entrepreneurship Support**
- **Collaboration**
- **Gender Inclusion**
- **Education, and Training.**
- **Access to Technology**

Through our local expertise, commitment to inclusivity, track record of success, innovation, adaptability, and collaborative approach, we work to catalyze positive change and create a more vibrant and resilient business ecosystem in Northern Nigeria.

## OUR VERTICALS



**“ Our Verticals are resources and initiatives that enable us to create maximum impact in our focus areas. “**





# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



# OUR NUMBERS

# 2024

# 5000

INDIVIDUALS  
EMPOWERED



# \$200K



FUNDING RAISED BY  
OUR STARTUPS

# 300



SMES  
SUPPORTED

# 1000+



WOMEN  
EMPOWERED

# 10+



STARTUPS  
NURTURED

# 50



PLWD  
EMPOWERED

# 50



PROGRAMS  
ORGANISED

# 10+

PARTNERSHIPS &  
COLLABORATIONS







# OUR PROJECTS

Initiatives That Made a Difference

# Emotional Intelligence Masterclass

Registration link:

<https://bit.ly/Elmasterclass>



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MASTERCLASS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHERN THERAPIST

### OVERVIEW:

The Emotional Intelligence Masterclass, hosted by Northern Therapist and Startup Kano, focused on equipping participants with skills to understand and manage their emotions. Held at Startup Kano's open and comfortable venue, the event offered enlightening sessions, curated slides, and a guided breathing session to promote emotional self-awareness and control.

### HIGHLIGHT:

- Understanding and Managing Emotions: The masterclass enabled participants to identify emotional triggers and taught strategies for emotional control, fostering self-awareness and personal growth.
- Guided Breathing Session: The session helped participants manage their reactions and responses to provocations, highlighting the importance of emotional self-regulation.

- Team Collaboration: The success of the event was driven by the strong teamwork and problem-solving efforts of Startup Kano interns, ensuring smooth facilitation and a welcoming environment for all.

### IMPACT:

The workshop offered practical tools for managing emotions, emphasizing the role of emotional intelligence in personal development and well-being. By providing a non-judgmental space, the masterclass encouraged self-expression and nurtured a sense of emotional safety, reinforcing the importance of emotional intelligence in both personal and professional growth.





**CRC**  
**CITIZEN**  
REPORTING CROSS  
**PLATFORM**

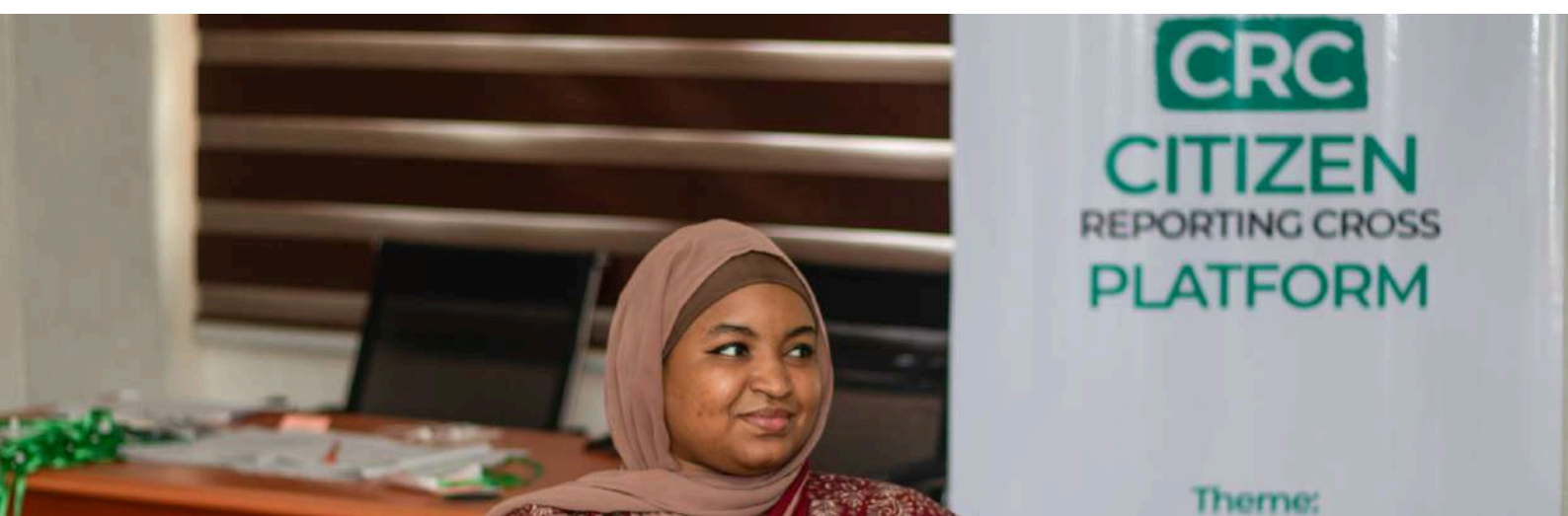
## **NIGERIAN YOUTH FUTURE FUNDS: CITIZEN REPORTING CROSS-PLATFORM (CRC) 23RD MAY 2025**

### **OVERVIEW:**

Startup Kano hosted an event to engage stakeholders in developing the Citizen Reporting Cross Platform (CRC), a project aimed at enabling Kano residents to report real-time emergencies and receive assistance, while promoting good governance and community engagement.

### **HIGHLIGHT:**

- **Good Governance Advocacy:** Mr. Farid Ilu emphasized transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness, stressing the importance of citizen participation in governance for ensuring government accountability.
- **Active Community Engagement:** The audience actively participated, identifying barriers to good governance and offering solutions, demonstrating strong community interest in the platform's success.
- **Design Thinking Session:** Usman Fori led a design thinking workshop, where participants developed user personas based on age categories to create tailored solutions for security, finance, health, and social status issues within the platform.



## NIGERIAN YOUTH FUTURE FUNDS: CITIZEN REPORTING CROSS-PLATFORM (CRC) 23RD MAY 2025

### IMPACT:

The event catalyzed valuable input for the development of CRC, with diverse community perspectives shaping the platform's design. It reinforced the need for citizen involvement in governance and highlighted the role of education, technology, and design thinking in promoting effective governance and addressing community challenges.







## CIVIC HIVE X STARTUP KANO HACKATHON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2024

### OVERVIEW:

The Civic Hive x Startup Kano Hackathon focused on fostering civic innovation and supporting young techpreneurs to address critical societal challenges through civic-tech solutions.

### HIGHLIGHTS :

- Raised awareness about the Civic Hive Fellowship across Kano and neighboring states.
- Highlighted regional talent by showcasing innovative ideas from Kano's aspiring tech leaders.
- Built collaborations with local organizations to support smooth execution.
- Engaging Pitches: Participants presented diverse, scalable civic-tech solutions.
- Expert Judges: Feedback from Startup Kano's nominated judges helped refine ideas.
- Empowering Winners: Selected fellows gained access to Civic Hive's incubation program.



**CIVIC HIVE X STARTUP KANO HACKATHON  
9TH SEPTEMBER 2024**

# IMPACT METRICS



**4 Winners**

Winners: 4 regional winners joined the Civic Hive Fellowship.

**10 ideas**

Ideas Presented: 10 impactful civic-tech solutions.



**Collaborations:**

Strengthened ties between Civic Hive, Startup Kano, and local stakeholders.

**30 Participants**

Participants: 30 innovators from Kano and surrounding regions.







## GIRL-H PROGRAM OCTOBER- NOVEMBER 2024

### OVERVIEW

We partnered with Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative (IWEI) and Mercy Corps on the GIRL-H program, an impactful initiative aimed at empowering adolescents aged 16–24 in Kano State. Focused on fostering economic resilience and addressing social norms, the program targeted adolescent girls (70%) and boys (30%) across five LGAs (Fagge, Dala, Ungogo, Kumbotso, and Tarauni). Through tailored training, mentorship, and opportunities, Startup Kano contributed expertise and resources to help participants unlock their entrepreneurial potential and thrive.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### 1. Entrepreneurship and Skills Development Trainings:

- Conducted in-person and virtual sessions on entrepreneurship, networking, and digital transformation.
- Beneficiaries: Over 300 participants from the five LGAs.

#### 2. Pitchstar Training Program (Late October–Early November 2024):

- Trained 20 MSMEs in key areas like ideation, financial literacy, branding, and business pitching.
- Culminated in a Demo Day, where participants showcased their business ideas to a panel of judges.



## GIRL-H PROGRAM OCTOBER- NOVEMBER 2024

### IMPACTS MADE

#### 1. Youth Empowerment:

- Over 13,000 adolescents were equipped with tools, mentorship, and training to access economic opportunities and pursue entrepreneurship.

#### 2. Job Fair Exhibition and Skills Workshop:

- Amina Ibrahim of Startup Kano delivered a session on Networking for Business Growth.
- Empowered attendees with practical tools to strengthen business connections.

#### 3. Economic Resilience:

- MSMEs gained critical skills to scale their businesses and compete in their industries, boosting local economic growth.

#### 4. Community Transformation:

- Supported the GIRL-H mission to challenge unhealthy social norms, promote education, and improve livelihood opportunities for adolescent girls.

#### 5. Capacity Building:

- Provided participants with practical knowledge on branding, finance, networking, and business pitching, setting them on a clear path toward sustainable growth.





## GIRL-H PROGRAM OCTOBER- NOVEMBER 2024

### IMPACT MADE




# 200 MSMEs

Over 200 MSMEs from five local government participated across diverse industries like fashion design, agro-business, health, and catering.

#### Awards and Recognition:

Startup Kano received an Award of Appreciation during the GIRL-H closeout event for its outstanding contributions



# Grant

Grants ranging from **₦200,000** to **₦50,000** were awarded, with non-winners receiving **₦20,000** each.

# 10k+ Participants

OVER **13,000** ADOLESCENTS WERE EQUIPPED WITH TOOLS, MENTORSHIP, AND TRAINING TO ACCESS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PURSUE ENTREPRENEURSHIP.





## SHECOMMERCE NIGERIA INITIATIVE (SHENI) A SAL'S EPIPHANY STUDIO PROJECT

### OVERVIEW

SHENi (She-Commerce Nigerian Initiative) is a flagship program by Sals Epiphany Studio designed to empower women-led SMEs through skills in product presentation, branding, and digital storytelling. With Startup Kano as a key partner, SHENi expanded across four impactful interventions in 2024, reaching women across Kano, Abuja, and virtually.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### SHENi Kano – The Beginning of Impact

The inaugural event in Kano laid the groundwork for SHENi's mission. In collaboration with partners including eHealth Africa, Northino, and Anatomia, the workshop delivered hands-on training in product photography, branding, and SME development. It also introduced the first-ever handbook in Africa dedicated to product presentation and photography for SMEs.



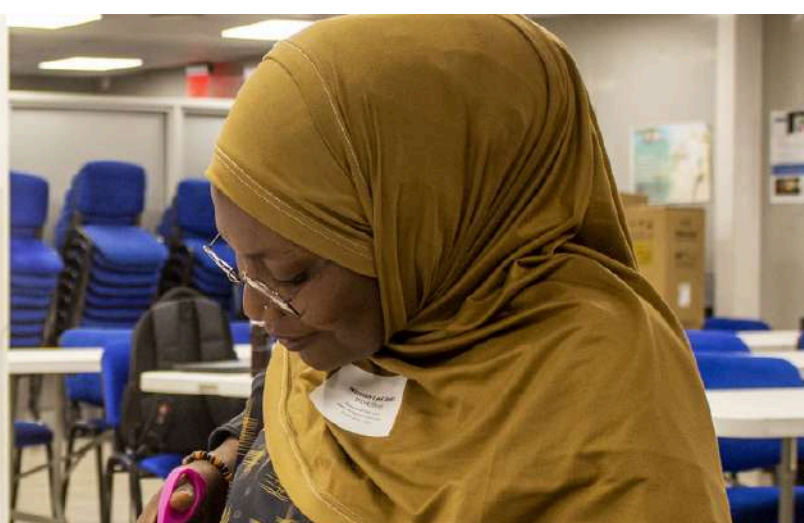
#### SHENi Abuja – Endorsed by SMEDAN

Building on Kano's success, SHENi Abuja gathered support from Abuja Enterprise Agency, BYEI Foundation, and Nile Startup Campus. The 3-day intensive trained 40 women and 25 women-led businesses, offering mentorship from branding, strategy, and photography professionals.



# EMPOWERING WOMEN-LED SMES

Product presentation and Photography Workshop.



## SHECOMMERCE NIGERIA INITIATIVE (SHENI) A SAL'S EPIPHANY STUDIO PROJECT

### HIGHLIGHTS

SHENi Goes Online – Supporting Food Vendors. A virtual session specifically for food entrepreneurs provided 10 participants with practical insights into food presentation, photography, and digital marketing. The session was led by chefs and content creators, tailored for growing an online food brand.

### CANDLE MAKING HAVEN – WELLNESS & ENTERPRISE

The final event introduced women to candle making in partnership with **Twesills**, alongside a mental health therapy session by Northern Therapist. The workshop promoted creativity, mindfulness, and entrepreneurship in wellness-based businesses.

### IMPACT





# Hub Managers Workshop

## HUB MANAGERS INNOVATION HUB WORKSHOP 25TH - 26TH JANUARY 2024

### OVERVIEW :

Organized by Startup Kano and the Northern Founders Community, this 2-day workshop empowered hub managers and owners with essential knowledge, tools, and frameworks to build sustainable innovation hubs. Focused on operations, it covered design, management, and sustainability while fostering partnerships.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT

#### 1. DAY 1: UNDERSTANDING INNOVATION HUBS

- Activities: Explored basics, SWOT analysis, and case studies of global hubs.
- Outcomes: Action plans developed and areas for improvement identified.

#### 2. DAY 2: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EVIDENCE MODELING

- Activities: Designed hub operations, partnerships, and performance tracking.
- Outcomes: Tailored organizational structures and partnership strategies created.

#### 3. KEY OUTPUTS:

- SWOT analysis, action plans, organizational charts, and partnership strategies
- Over 10 hub managers and owners from diverse locations actively participated.



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WORKSHOP: WORK – LIFE BALANCE FOR MEN

### OVERVIEW

Startup Kano and the Northern Therapists collaborated to host the Emotional Intelligence Workshop for Workplaces held at the Startup Kano Hub. The event focused on equipping participants with tools to cultivate emotionally intelligent workplace cultures, was a highly impactful and enriching experience.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

#### VENUE SETUP AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:

The Startup Kano Hub was meticulously prepared, ensuring a comfortable and functional environment for participants. Seating arrangements and workshop materials were thoughtfully organized to encourage engagement. Audiovisual aids and technical setups ran smoothly, enabling presenters to deliver high-quality sessions without interruptions.

### IMPACT:

The event fostered a professional environment for seamless learning and collaboration. Participants gained practical tools to improve communication, leadership, and workplace dynamics through emotional intelligence. The workshop also positioned Startup Kano Hub as a hub for innovation and professional growth, paving the way for inclusive and emotionally intelligent workplaces.





## PWDS TRAINING ON DESIGN AND CONTENT CREATION

**OBJECTIVE: EMPOWER PARTICIPANTS WITH FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN DESIGN AND CONTENT CREATION TO ENABLE PEER TRAINING ON CAMPUS DURING INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (IDPWD)**

### OVERVIEW

A groundbreaking initiative designed to empower Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at Bayero University Kano (BUK) by equipping them with digital design and content creation skills. This program fosters inclusivity and peer-to-peer learning, creating a ripple effect of positive change on campus.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Inclusive Communication:** Sessions incorporated sign language interpretation, ensuring accessibility and mutual respect.
- **Skill Development:** Participants gained hands-on knowledge in graphic design and content creation, tailored to their unique needs equipping them to create visually appealing and impactful digital content.
- **Leadership Building:** Equipped participants with confidence to mentor peers during International Day for Persons with Disabilities (**IDPWD**) activities.





## PWDS TRAINING ON DESIGN AND CONTENT CREATION

OBJECTIVE: EMPOWER PARTICIPANTS WITH FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN DESIGN AND CONTENT CREATION THROUGH PEER TRAINING ON CAMPUS DURING INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (IDPWD)

### IMPACT

- Empowering PWDs: Boosted participants' confidence and competence for personal and professional growth.
- Promoting Digital Inclusion: Set best practices for inclusive education within the university.
- Peer Learning: Empowered participants to share skills, amplifying the program's reach.

### NEXT STEPS

- Continuous mentorship for participants.
- Expansion to other institutions.
- Advocacy for broader digital inclusion policies.





## INNOVATION & INCLUSION IN OPEN SOURCE: EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

### OVERVIEW

The Innovation & Inclusion in Open Source event addressed the underrepresentation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the open source tech community. Through education, hands-on training, and networking, the program aimed to equip PWDs with the skills to contribute meaningfully to open source projects while advocating for digital accessibility.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT

1. Education on Open Source Technology: Participants learned the fundamentals of open source technology and its accessibility benefits.
2. Promoting Inclusive Design: Discussions highlighted the importance of inclusive design and accessibility in tech projects.
3. Showcasing Assistive Technologies: Participants were introduced to tools supporting PWDs in navigating the digital space.
4. Networking Opportunities: The event created a platform for PWDs to connect with mentors, industry leaders, and peers.
5. Accessibility Features: Implemented sign language interpretation, wheelchair access, and audio descriptions to ensure inclusivity for all participants.



## INNOVATION & INCLUSION IN OPEN SOURCE: EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

### IMPACTS MADE

1. Increased Awareness: PWDs gained insights into open source technology and its potential for fostering inclusivity.
2. Empowerment and Skills Development: Participants left with enhanced technical skills and confidence to contribute to open source projects.
3. Advancing Accessibility: Promoted a culture of inclusive design and emphasized the importance of assistive technologies.
4. Community Building: Networking opportunities connected PWDs with like-minded individuals, fostering collaboration and continued learning.



2016

**Gender**

The Women Founders Conference with 200 women in business and expert

2020

**COVID-19 App**

In Partnership with the Kano state government to keep people safe

2017

**Hub Space**

Creative Hub Managers Workshop with 25 Hubs in Africa

2021

**Re-Start Acceleration**

Trained Over 200 Entrepreneurs to access funding

2018

**PitchStar Incubation**

To create Viable startups from ideation to stars.

2022

**Communnity - Event**

SIDP – British Cuncil  
DevFest Kano  
NASA Space App Challenge

2019

**CEEP**

Empowered over 75 SME's in the ecosystem sponsored by the British Council

2023

**Ecosystem Empowerment**

UNGA – Nigeria Delegate  
NFC Ecosystem Research  
NSA State Adoption



# OUR MILESTONES

key Accomplishments





# NORTHINO WINS \$15,000

Northino Learning, an alumni startup of StartUp Kano, has continued its upward trajectory by securing a spot in the prestigious iHATCH Cohort III, a joint incubation program by NITDA (National Information Technology Development Agency) and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and it has grown into one of Nigeria's promising edtech innovators.

Recently, the startup joined the iHATCH incubation organised by NITDA and JICA — where it stood out as one of the top 3 startups, winning \$15,000 to develop its product. Through iHATCH, Northino gained mentorship, funding, and global connections, helping it refine its solution and prepare for scale.

This success shows how StartUp Kano's support helps startups grow, compete nationally, and attract bigger opportunities.

## OUR FOUNDERS ON THE FRONTLINE

Our portfolio startups have directly impacted over 250 people through training, mentorship, and creative capacity building. Notable highlights include: Schoola's tech bootcamps and mentorships, Northino's inclusive digital learning for PWDs and women, Sal's Epiphany Studio's empowerment of 70+ women and 35 SMEs, and Zainnest's support for 40+ creatives. These projects show how our startups are creating real-world solutions, driving economic inclusion, and nurturing the innovation ecosystem.

# 50+ PWDS EMPOWERED BY OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Our programs and initiatives remain committed to inclusivity, especially for People with Disabilities (PWDs). By developing accessible digital tools and services, such as Northino's AI-powered language translation tool, we've ensured that individuals with disabilities can access quality digital education. Furthermore, our workshops continue to include and empower PWDs, creating accessible career paths and educational resources that cater to their needs.

# ADVANCING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Several milestones in 2024 focused on empowering women. Sals Epiphany Studio's SHENi initiative, which trained 70 women in photography, directly impacted their economic opportunities. Additionally, Startup Kano's Empowered Women Community Program (EWCP) helped provide digital skills and entrepreneurship training to women, while partnerships like the National Girls in ICT competition further contributed to encouraging women in tech.

# POLICY AT OUR CORE

Startup Kano hosted Day 3 of the Nigerian Startup Act Domestication in Kano, delivering the Domestication Workshop, Town Hall, and Innovation Expo. This positioned us at the center of policy and ecosystem development, engaging over 100 stakeholders across academia, government, and startups to co-create Kano's innovation roadmap.





# PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Building Stronger Together





## **BigTech Career Connect Expo**

Startup Kano played a key role in the Big Tech Career Connect Expo 2024, an initiative founded by one of its mentees, the founder of Big Tech Agency. With major support from Maryam Abacha American University, the event saw maximum participation from its students and staff.

The Big Tech Career Connect Expo 2024 marks a significant milestone for Startup Kano, as it is the first of its kind, created by one of our mentees. This pioneering event showcased the immense potential within Nigeria's tech ecosystem, offering a platform for students, startups, and industry experts to connect. Startup Kano played a crucial role by facilitating pitch coaching sessions and fostering networking opportunities, reinforcing our commitment to shaping the future of tech talent in Nigeria. This event is a key stepping stone in the ecosystem's growth

## **Pan-Atlantic University Enterprise Development Center EEE Workshop**

Startup Kano participated in the Pan-Atlantic University Enterprise Development Center (EDC) Embedded Enterprise Education (EEE) Training of Trainers (ToT) held from April 15–18, 2024, at R & K Hotel, Kano. The workshop focused on strengthening trainers' abilities to teach enterprise education through immersive learning, study tours, and virtual sessions.

Through this engagement, Startup Kano enhanced its trainer capacity, gained practical insights into enterprise education delivery, and expanded its network with educators and enterprise hubs. The experience further reinforced Startup Kano's commitment to driving quality entrepreneurial education in Northern Nigeria.

Pan-Atlantic University Enterprise Development Center EEE Workshop.



## Kano Cyber Meetup

Startup Kano partnered with the Cybersecurity Education Initiative (CYSED) to host the Kano Cyber Meetup 2024, aimed at promoting cybersecurity awareness and capacity building. The event gathered professionals, students, and enthusiasts to learn about threats, tools, and best practices. Startup Kano played a vital role in community engagement, networking opportunities, and practical workshops that enhanced participants' cybersecurity skills. The meetup strengthened local talent, increased awareness, and fostered collaborations, reinforcing Kano's position as a growing hub for cybersecurity expertise.

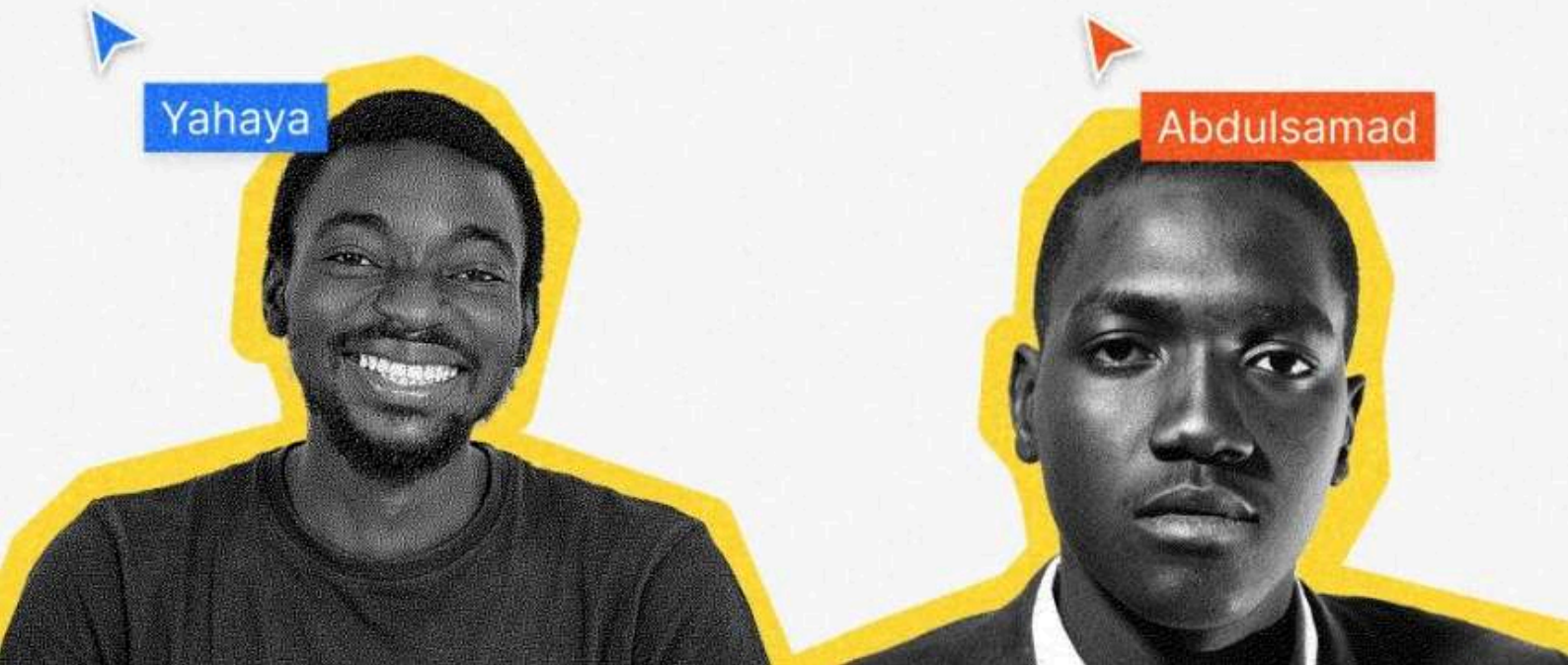
## NITDA NSA/GIZ Policy Implementation Meeting

Startup Kano participated in the NITDA NSA/GIZ Policy Implementation Meeting, contributing to discussions on building inclusive digital innovation policies in Nigeria. Representing the startup ecosystem, Startup Kano advocated for frameworks that support emerging businesses and promote digital transformation.

The team emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships among government, civil society, and the private sector, while highlighting the impact of startups in driving economic growth and innovation. This engagement strengthened Startup Kano's role as a policy influencer and champion for inclusive, youth-driven innovation ecosystems.



Register for free at [friends.figma.com/kano](https://friends.figma.com/kano)



## BUK Storytelling Festival

Startup Kano supported the BUK Storytelling Festival in January 2024 at Bayero University Kano—a cultural event celebrating storytelling, and spoken word. The festival attracted a vibrant mix of students, faculty, and community members.

This engagement deepened the organization's cultural relevance, reinforcing its commitment to blending creativity with innovation and promoting regional growth through storytelling as a tool for both social and economic impact.

## Figma Party 2024

Startup Kano partnered in the Figma Watch Party 2024, a gathering of designers, developers, and creatives in Kano, hosted at eHealth Africa. The event explored how design can drive business success and innovation.

The event was filled with incredible insights, hands-on learning and inspiring sessions on strategic design, portfolio building, and business applications of UI/UX. The event empowered participants with practical insights, hands-on learning, and networking opportunities, strengthening Kano's creative and tech ecosystem.





## Founders Friday Kano

It was exciting welcoming Cynthia E. Chisom from the SDC Startup School. We explored innovative approaches for nurturing startups and supporting entrepreneurs, emphasizing the entrepreneurial spirit at SDC Startup School. The discussions uncovered opportunities for collaborative efforts to scale and support innovations in the startup ecosystem..

## Mercy Corps Feed the Future Program:

Focused on Mercy Corps' impactful initiatives related to rural resilience and food security. The meeting with Nurein Abdulfattah (Deputy Chief of Party Feed the Future Nigeria Rural Resilience Activity) and Jamila Mahdi (Mercy Corps Feed the Future) highlighted strategies to improve rural livelihoods through sustainable practices, offering collaborative opportunities for enhancing food security and resilience-building in rural communities.



## **Mercy Corps Stakeholder Engagement & Trade Fair**

Startup Kano joined Mercy Corps and other key players in Yola for a 2-day event spotlighting business, innovation, and resilience in Nigeria's North East. From sessions on climate-smart agriculture to tech-powered marketplaces and women-led businesses, the event opened up meaningful conversations around inclusive growth. For Startup Kano, it was a chance to connect with stakeholders, showcase its work, and explore new partnerships that align with its mission to drive technology-enabled development across underserved communities.

## **Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) Workshop on ICT**

The USPF workshop in Kano brought together tech professionals and educators to tackle the challenges—and opportunities—of digital adoption across Northern Nigeria. Startup Kano contributed to conversations around digital literacy, sustainability in ICT, and the role of youth-led innovation in closing access gaps. The event also served as a platform to network, gather insight, and shape strategic ideas for how Startup Kano can lead and collaborate on scalable, future-ready ICT initiatives in the region.





## Mercy Corps Partner Day Maiduguri

Startup Kano participated in Mercy Corps' Partner Day in Maiduguri—a powerful gathering of development partners including Save the Children, USAID, and IFCD. The event focused on resilience, economic empowerment, and innovation in fragile communities. Through strategic discussions, exhibitions, and high-level engagements with government reps and development leaders, Startup Kano deepened its relationships and reinforced its commitment to tech-driven community development. The experience highlighted the value of collaborative action in creating sustainable, locally-driven impact across Northern Nigeria.

## Founders' Hub Visit

We had the pleasure of hosting the founder of Founders' Hub at Startup Kano. It was a productive visit that opened up space for meaningful dialogue around shared challenges, collaboration, and ways we can collectively strengthen our support for local entrepreneurs. Key moments from the visit were captured and will be featured in our communications to highlight the vibrant energy at our hub. We're optimistic about future collaborations and the shared potential to drive innovation and growth in our ecosystems.





## ISN PEDAC Workshop

The ISN PEDAC Workshop was both insightful and energizing. The sessions brought together key players from Nigeria's tech space to talk openly about pain points like funding, policy hurdles, and talent gaps—while also spotlighting innovations in AI, edtech, and blockchain. We left with fresh ideas, new partnerships on the horizon, and a renewed sense of purpose to drive meaningful, tech-powered change in our region.

## Arewa Tech Fest

From September 25–26, we joined Arewa Tech Fest as a proud partner. The two-day festival was a high-energy convergence of tech minds, creatives, and founders from Northern Nigeria. Startup Kano had a strong presence—speaking on panels, building partnerships, and connecting with changemakers who are shaping the region's digital future. Our participation reinforced our commitment to growing the North's innovation ecosystem and reminded us just how much potential exists when the right people and ideas collide.





## **EDC Creative Business Cup Pitch**

Our programs and partnership officer served as a judge at the EDC Mastercard Creative Business Cup Regional Competition on behalf of Startup Kano. The event spotlighted bold and innovative business ideas across multiple sectors, all aiming to solve real social and economic challenges. Judging criteria focused on innovation, impact, and sustainability. Beyond the pitches, it was a celebration of creativity and resilience, with strong networking and mentoring moments. It was a great opportunity to support emerging entrepreneurs and help shape the next generation of impactful ventures.

## **Northern Therapists Annual Marriage Conference**

Startup Kano joined therapists, counselors, and community leaders at the Northern Therapists Annual Marriage Conference. The conversations centered around the evolving dynamics of relationships and the role of therapy in strengthening family life. We explored how tech can be used to support counseling and improve access to relationship tools. The event opened doors for potential collaborations with Northern Therapists, particularly around using digital platforms to expand their impact. It was a meaningful step towards integrating tech with community well-being.





## **Nigeria Digital Economy Bill Stakeholders Engagement**

Startup Kano took part in the national conversation on the future of Nigeria's digital economy, joining stakeholders and policymakers to unpack the Digital Economy Bill. The event focused on innovation, data protection, cybersecurity, and how legislation can support startup growth. We used the platform to advocate for regional inclusion and pushed for policies that reflect the realities of grassroots innovators. The engagement not only deepened our understanding of the regulatory landscape but also positioned us for strategic collaborations going forward.

## **Kano Digital Bootcamp**

Startup Kano facilitated a session on "Communication and Collaboration" during the 3-month bootcamp organized by Kano Digital Innovation Network (KDIN). The program helped over 100 business owners embrace digital transformation, using tools like Canva, Google Analytics, and Google Workspace. Startup Kano's session focused on helping participants effectively engage customers, teams, and stakeholders through digital channels. The bootcamp significantly boosted digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, and strategic collaboration among small business owners.





## Kano State Startup Ecosystem Activation (Nigerian Startup Act Domestication)

As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening Nigeria's innovation landscape, Startup Kano partnered with the NSA Domestication Team to co-deliver the Nigerian Startup Act (NSA) State Engagement in Kano. Startup Kano hosted and coordinated the third and final day of the engagement, which featured a Domestication Workshop, Town Hall Meeting, and Innovation Expo. These sessions brought together key stakeholders from government, academia, and industry to drive conversations around local policy adoption, startup support, and practical NSA implementation.

The event was a significant step toward bridging the gap between national policy and grassroots innovation.



Through the Innovation Expo, we spotlighted over 15 startups, provided them a platform to engage with potential investors and partners, and strengthened the visibility of Kano's creative and tech talent. The collaboration laid the groundwork for state-level policy development and reinforced the role of ecosystem hubs like Startup Kano in driving inclusive and sustainable innovation.



## Empowered Women Community Program (EWCP)

Startup Kano played a major role in this initiative by Womenovate, which aimed to empower women in Kano with digital skills and mentorship. Training covered Excel, graphic design, cybersecurity, and web development basics. Beyond just skills, the program fostered a strong network of women leaders, ready to innovate and lead in their communities. Startup Kano also provided ongoing mentorship, ensuring that participants were not only equipped for success but supported every step of the way.

## WEE Policy Domestication Engagement

Startup Kano joined other stakeholders in a critical conversation about localizing Nigeria's Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy in Kano State. The engagement focused on how women in the creative and digital industries can benefit from financial inclusion. Feedback from digital learning hubs and creatives will help tailor the policy to real local needs. The event also encouraged more partnerships between government, NGOs, and the private sector to champion women's leadership and economic growth.





# PORTFOLIO STARTUPS

Success Stories in Innovation



## **Portfolio Startups: A Year of Purposeful Progress and Impact.**

In 2024, our portfolio startups didn't just grow—they transformed challenges into innovation, and vision into real-world change. From reshaping the future of education and digital payments to breaking language barriers and empowering creatives, each venture played a pivotal role in unlocking potential and deepening impact across Africa. What unites them is not only what they do, but how they do it—with purpose, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to community.

Let's explore the milestones and momentum that defined their journey this year.



## Schoola: Shaping the Future of African EdTech

Schoola continued to lead the charge in transforming education through technology in 2024, offering powerful tools to schools and educators while building strong partnerships across the continent.

Key Highlights Expanded:

- **5,000+ New Users:** Schoola saw a substantial increase in its user base, with December 2024 being a standout month with over 700 new users, reflecting the growing demand for innovative EdTech solutions.
- **New Tools Launched:**
  - The Lesson Plan Feature and Question Generation Tool were introduced to help educators streamline their workflows and create more effective lesson content.
  - The Curri SRC (Secure Resource Center) was launched as a resource management system that allows schools to better organize and manage content distribution and ensure security.
- **Reliable Support:** Schoola reinforced its reputation for dependable customer service, offering round-the-clock assistance to schools utilizing Curri SRC to ensure a smooth user experience.
- **Strategic Partnerships:**
  - Tech Savvy Teacher International and Nigerian Teachers Community further solidified Schoola's reach and ability to make a difference in the educational landscape across Africa.
  - Scholarlabs India partnered with Schoola to bring global educational insights to the platform, enhancing its offerings and capabilities.

## Northino: Breaking Barriers in Digital Education

Northino's 2024 journey was defined by its expansion into digital education, particularly with the use of AI to overcome language barriers and make learning more accessible for African native speakers.

### Key Highlights Expanded:

- **2,000+ Learners Reached:** Northino's online platform saw rapid growth, reaching over 2,000 learners who gained digital skills necessary for today's workforce, reinforcing the startup's mission of educational accessibility.
- **AI Language Tool:** The launch of Northino's AI-powered translation tool, which incorporated over 50,000 words in Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, was a breakthrough that addressed language barriers in digital education, enabling better comprehension and learning outcomes for students.
- **Award Wins:** Northino secured 1st place in the iHatch Incubation Program for the Northwest Kano Zone and 4th runner-up in the Hackaholics 5.0 pitch competition, highlighting its innovation and market potential.
- **Event Participation & Training:** Northino took part in major industry events such as DevFest Kano and YouthConnekt Africa Summit, positioning itself as a leader in digital education and forging valuable partnerships.
- **Course Expansion:** With new courses ranging from basic computer literacy to advanced programming, Northino made learning affordable and accessible by offering localized lessons tailored to different learner needs.



## Zainnest

Zainnest saw exponential growth in 2024 as it built on its strengths in digital payments while expanding its reach and refining its platform to serve users more effectively.

Key Highlights Expanded:

- **IDGA Performance Award:** Recognized for excellence in digital payments, this prestigious award acknowledged Zainnest's innovative contributions to fintech and its impact on the African market.
- **iHatch Top 10 National Finalist:** Being selected for this incubation program was a critical milestone, giving Zainnest the resources to fine-tune its business model and prepare for large-scale growth.
- **GITEX Africa Pitch Platform:** Zainnest gained global visibility by participating in GITEX, one of the largest tech events in Africa, where it showcased its innovations to international investors and stakeholders.
- **Platform Optimization:** The team focused on improving user experience, making the platform more efficient, intuitive, and responsive to customers' needs, reflecting their commitment to continuous improvement.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborations with youth-focused programs solidified Zainnest's mission to support the socio-economic development of young people, fostering financial inclusion and growth.



## Sal's Epiphany Studio

2024 was a pivotal year for Sal's Epiphany Studio. The studio not only expanded creatively but also deepened its social impact, especially through initiatives that empower women and showcase African craftsmanship.

Key Highlights Expanded:

- **Epiphany Magic Book:** A practical guide designed for both businesses and creatives to master visual storytelling and branding. The first-of-its-kind book in Africa, this initiative reinforces the studio's commitment to educating and inspiring the next generation of visual communicators.
- **She Commerce Nigeria Initiative :** By training 70 women in Kano, Abuja, and online, Sal's Epiphany Studio provided crucial skills in photography to empower women-led SMEs to better communicate their value in the digital market place, creating new career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the creative industry. Proudly endorsed by SMEDAN
- **Cavemen Launch:** The launch of Cavemen, a collaborative creative space, is a testament to the studio's vision of creating a community of creatives. It offers photographers, videographers, and designers the resources and network to build impactful content.
- **Made in Africa Campaign:** This campaign showcased the richness of African culture by offering high-quality visual content for African-made products, elevating their marketability both locally and internationally.





## Sal's Bakery

2024 was a deliciously bold year for Sal's Bakery. Known for their signature pastries and refreshing natural drinks, the brand took a major step forward by launching a successful event catering service—earning great reviews from satisfied clients across kano state.

But the big news? They're expanding! Sal's Bakery is set to unveil Sal's Cavve, a cozy sister brand offering warm, homestyle meals in an intimate dining space. With the launch coming soon, this milestone marks an exciting evolution for one of our thriving portfolio startups.





# LOOK TO THE FUTURE

What's Next on Our Agenda



## STARTUP KANO @ 9!

As we look to the future, Startup Kano is entering a new chapter. We are evolving, not just in structure, but in purpose. A transition that reflects our long-term commitment to building inclusive systems, bridging gaps, and accelerating social innovation.

Thank you for walking this journey with us. The next phase is bold, intentional, and community-led, and we're excited to shape it with you.

Turn your social media notifications on and subscribe to our newsletters to keep up with our journey!

**Good Bye!**

## JOIN OUR COMMUNITY!

Experience our events on X

Register for our upcoming incubation program; **PitchStar!**

Subscribe to our vibrant co-working space

Send us an email for partnership and collaboration requests





2016

**Gender**

The Women Founders Conference with 200 women in business and expert

2020

**COVID-19 App**

In Partnership with the Kano state government to keep people safe

2017

**Hub Space**

Creative Hub Managers Workshop with 25 Hubs in Africa

2021

**Re-Start Acceleration**

Trained Over 200 Entrepreneurs to access funding

2018

**PitchStar Incubation**

To create Viable startups from ideation to stars.

2022

**Community - Event**

SIDP – British Council  
DevFest Kano  
NASA Space App Challenge

2019

**CEEP**

Empowered over 75 SME's in the ecosystem sponsored by the British Council

2023

**Ecosystem Empowerment**

UNGA – Nigeria Delegate  
NFC Ecosystem Research  
NSA State Adoption

2024

**Emerging Portfolio**

In Partnership with the Kano state government to keep people safe



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