

Louvain School of Management

How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLAB Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?

A comparative analysis of an innovation hub in Uganda and in Belgium

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Foreword

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List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CDH	Circular Design Hub
CE	Circular Economy
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directives
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
ESRS	European Sustainability Reporting Standards
EU	European Union
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
MTIC	Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives
NDP	National Development Plan
NFRD	Non-Financial Reporting Directive
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R&D	Research and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small, and Medium Enterprises
TEA	Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
ULB	Université Libre de Bruxelles
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VAT	Value Added Tax
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
YET	Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow

1 Introduction

Innovation hubs are reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape by creating dynamic, collaborative environments where startups can thrive. These hubs are crucial in supporting entrepreneurship through resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities, fostering innovation, and addressing societal challenges such as environmental sustainability and social inclusion. During our internships at innovation hubs in Brussels and Kampala, we immersed ourselves in these environments, witnessing the struggles and successes of entrepreneurs striving to make a difference. This experience ignited our interest in understanding how these hubs operate and their impact on local economic development. We were captivated by the dynamic atmosphere of the hubs, which fueled our curiosity and motivated us to explore the nuances of innovation hubs further.

This thesis explores the role of two specific innovation hubs: StartLAB Brussels and Circular Design Hub (CDH) Kampala. Our central research question is: **”How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLAB Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?”** This question guides our investigation into the mechanisms these hubs use to facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship, the obstacles they encounter, and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges.

Innovation hubs are increasingly recognized for their role in fostering entrepreneurship and driving economic growth. They are facilities designed to support the development of startups by providing essential resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities. In the context of global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development, these hubs are uniquely positioned to lead the way in promoting innovative, sustainable business practices. The growing awareness of sustainability at StartLAB in Brussels and of the Circular Economy (CE) at CDH in Kampala highlight the urgency and relevance of studying these environments.

These hubs operate within specific entrepreneurial environments, influenced by the local economic, social, and regulatory contexts. In this thesis, we focus on two hubs: StartLAB Brussels, known for its emphasis on young entrepreneurs, and CDH Kampala, which serves as a convener and is known for its vibrant community.

This thesis aims to analyze how StartLAB Brussels and CDH Kampala contribute to the economic development of their local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation. We seek to identify the specific factors that account for the differences in their impact, providing a comprehen-

sive comparison that highlights the unique contributions and challenges of each hub.

Our research methodology includes a mixed-method approach to examine various dimensions of the hubs' impact. We conducted direct observations during our three-month internships, eight interviews, and two surveys to gather insights from entrepreneurs and staff members. Additionally, we analyzed contextual factors influencing both hubs, ensuring a thorough comparison. The findings focus on five key aspects: innovation and economic impact, access to resources and mentorship, networking and collaboration, environmental impact, and social impact.

By investigating these areas, we aim to provide a holistic view of how innovation hubs function and the value they add to their communities. The urgency of addressing global challenges underscores the role of this study, which also offers practical recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and impact of these hubs.

2 Part 1: Literature review

2.1 Chapter 1: Entrepreneurial Landscape in Belgium and Uganda

2.1.1 Defining entrepreneurship and innovation

The objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive overview of the entrepreneurial landscapes in Belgium and Uganda, laying the foundation for our study on innovation hubs in these countries. We aim to define key terms and concepts, including entrepreneurship and innovation. These definitions are essential for analyzing how innovation hubs contribute to economic growth in the unique contexts of Uganda and Belgium.

To start, let us establish the meaning of entrepreneurship. For this, we will be adopting the definition put forth by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (as referenced in U-Learn (2023)): “the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organization, and management of a productive new venture, accepting all attendant risks and seeking profit as a reward”. This definition considers the broader spectrum of entrepreneurial activity encompassing self-employment, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and high-growth firms. We chose this definition as UNCTAD is a globally recognized authority that focuses on the broader economic impacts of entrepreneurship, particularly in developing countries.

When exploring entrepreneurship, it is important to understand the difference between opportunity-driven and necessity-driven entrepreneurs. As per Giacomini et al. (2023), necessity-driven entrepreneurs are compelled to start their own businesses due to negative circumstances, often as a last

resort for survival. On the other hand, opportunity-driven entrepreneurs are motivated by positive opportunities, such as the potential for profit and personal fulfillment, to pursue entrepreneurship (Giacomin et al., 2023).

It is equally important to define what constitutes innovation in the context of business. The OECD/Eurostat (2018) defines business innovation as “a new or improved product or business process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the firm’s previous products or business processes and that has been introduced on the market or brought into use by the firm.” The OECD’s definitions are widely used in academic research globally, making them robust for comparative analysis across different countries and contexts, including Belgium and Uganda.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are closely linked. According to Schumpeter (as cited in Teixeira et al. (2018)), entrepreneurs are considered key economic players who disrupt equilibrium by introducing new resource combinations and production methods. They are vital to economic systems, constantly seeking new opportunities and unafraid of taking risks (Teixeira et al., 2018). Meyer and De Jongh (2018) argue that entrepreneurship is essential for long-term economic growth and development as it fosters innovation and adapts to economic and technological changes.

According to Bakashaba (2018), a conducive environment is crucial for effective entrepreneurship, which can be achieved through well-defined government policies. Moving forward, we will analyze the entrepreneurship environments of Belgium and Uganda and explore how local contexts influence the relationship between entrepreneurship and innovation.

2.1.2 Context in Belgium

General Numbers and Trends

Belgium follows the European Commission’s definition of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs):

- A ‘Micro Enterprise’ has fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet below €2 million.
- A ‘Small Enterprise’ has fewer than 50 employees and an annual turnover or balance sheet below €10 million.
- A ‘Medium Enterprise’ has fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover below €50 million or balance sheet below €43 million.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute a dominant force in Belgium's business landscape, comprising 99.8% of registered firms in 2022 (OECD, 2024). Micro-enterprises with up to 9 employees constituted 14.3% of all firms (OECD, 2024). According to OECD (2024), a crucial aspect of SME sustainability and growth lies in their access to adequate financing channels. While the outstanding stock of SME loans remained stable, lending conditions have fluctuated since 2018 (OECD, 2024).

The Belgian entrepreneurship landscape is quite innovative and international, as shown by the latest report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), about 28.0% of early-stage entrepreneurs in Belgium reported having an innovative orientation between 2011 and 2014, suggesting their products or services were new to some or all customers (Holvoet et al., 2015). In the period from 2011 to 2014, a significant proportion of early-stage entrepreneurs in Belgium (28.0%) were engaged in activities with at least 25.0% of their customers from outside the country, highlighting strong international outreach (Holvoet et al., 2015). Conversely, the Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) index of the adult population (18-64 years), rose from 5.4% to 6.2%, between 2014 and 2015 (GEM, 2015). While these rates are lower compared to the average of global innovation-driven economies, they reflect the scope of active entrepreneurial efforts within the early stages of business development in the country (Holvoet et al., 2015).

Furthermore, recent data shows positive trends in new firm creation between 2021 and 2022, the new business density, which is defined as the number of newly registered corporations per 1,000 working people (ages 15-64), increased from 4.97 to 6.34 (World Bank, 2024).

Policies and strategies

Belgium's entrepreneurial policy environment faces critical challenges, characterized by a lack of clear vision and fragmented initiatives, as detailed by Holvoet et al. (2015). The report points out that Belgian policies often fail to support the distinct needs of necessity-driven and opportunity-driven entrepreneurs effectively. According to Giacomini et al. (2023), the inefficiency of current policies seldom differentiates between these two entrepreneurial motivations. Both Holvoet et al. (2015) and Giacomini et al. (2023) suggest a move towards more nuanced and targeted policy measures to support a diverse entrepreneurial landscape in Belgium.

At both the federal and local levels, policy steps have been made to facilitate SMEs' access to finance. The main objective of policy actions in 2021 and 2022 was safeguarding robust enterprises from COVID-19 and the energy problems that ensued from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine

(OECD, 2024). For instance, the "Overbruggingslening" seeks to assist Flemish businesses that are severely in need of liquidity as a result of the conflict in Ukraine, growing energy prices, and general price increases (OECD, 2024). The September 2022 launch of the "Fonds de Transition" is a program, whose aim is to provide funding to SMEs in Brussels that must change their production processes and business models to comply with local, national, and international environmental and climatic goals (OECD, 2024).

Belgium is working on boosting entrepreneurship and self-employment for women, youth, seniors, the unemployed, immigrants, and people with disabilities (OECD/European Commission, 2023). The Brussels Capital Region and Flanders are simplifying regulations for entrepreneurs by removing the business management certificate requirement, while Wallonia still requires the certificate (OECD/European Commission, 2023). Youth entrepreneurship is a top priority in all regions, with several initiatives in place, such as the Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (YET) in Brussels (OECD/European Commission, 2023). This initiative offers training, networking, and support programs, through several youth-focused incubators (OECD/European Commission, 2023).

Country-specific barriers

Entrepreneurs in Belgium encounter challenges stemming from a lack of clear vision and fragmented policy initiatives, as well as inefficiencies in policy differentiation (Giacomin et al., 2023; Holvoet et al., 2015). The last GEM report mentions that the fear of failure prevents half of respondents who believe there are strong chances for the start of a new business from taking action, which is high compared to other benchmark countries such as Denmark, France, and Germany (Holvoet et al., 2015). In Belgium, the individual self-perception of starting a business is seen as a good career choice, though the national esteem for successful entrepreneurs remains low, fostering hesitancy and fear of failure (Holvoet et al., 2015). This perception is among the lowest in the EU, with only Spain and Croatia scoring lower (Holvoet et al., 2015). In 2014, 31.0% of early-stage entrepreneurs in Belgium reported starting their businesses out of necessity (Holvoet et al., 2015). While this figure is the highest out of all other innovation-driven economies, which had an average of 18.0%, it still indicates that the majority of entrepreneurs in Belgium were driven by opportunity (Holvoet et al., 2015).

2.1.3 Context in Uganda

General Numbers and Trends

According to the Uganda Investment Authority (n.d.), MSMEs are defined as follows:

- A 'Micro Enterprise' is an enterprise that employs up to four people and has an annual sales/revenue turnover or total assets not exceeding UGX 10 million (or approximately €2,461.40, using the exchange rate from May 6, 2024 (XE.com, 2024)).
- A 'Small Enterprise' employs between 5 and 49 people and has total assets between UGX 10 million and UGX 100 million (or approximately €2,4614.00, using the exchange rate from May 6, 2024 (XE.com, 2024)).
- A 'Medium Enterprise' employs between 50 and 100 people and has total assets of more than UGX 100 million but not exceeding UGX 360 million (or approximately €88,610.40, using the exchange rate from May 6, 2024 (XE.com, 2024)).

Combined, these MSMEs represent roughly 1.1 million businesses and support around 2.5 million employees (National Planning Authority, 2020). UNCTAD (2022) reports that MSMEs contribute to 90.0% of its private sector, underscoring their essential contribution to the country's economic stability and job market. Furthermore, the latest report from the GEM (2014) reported a Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in 2014 of 35.5% of the adult population (18-64 years). This rate significantly exceeds the global average TEA of 13.1%, indicating a high level of engagement in setting up or running new businesses (GEM, 2014).

Uganda has a young population, with over 75.0% under 30 years old (UNCTAD, 2022). High youth unemployment pushes for entrepreneurship as a solution (Bakashaba, 2018). As Bakashaba (2018) points out SMEs play a vital role in reducing poverty in Uganda. Tibaingana (2019) further argues that supporting small businesses is crucial for economic growth and community needs since their spill-over effects are always enormous.

Policies and strategies

Several policies and strategies have been put in place to support the growth and sustainability of MSMEs in Uganda. The MSMEs Policy (2015-2025) was developed by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives (MTIC) and approved in 2015. The National Development Plan III (NDP 2020/21-2024/25) builds on the objectives of previous development plans and focuses on enhancing value addition and increasing the competitiveness of Ugandan enterprises. Uganda's Government Vision 2040 provides a roadmap and strategies to transform Uganda from a predominantly low-income country to a competitive upper-middle-income country within 30 years. Both Vision 2040 and NDP III provide the institutional framework for policy formulation aimed at promoting entrepreneurship (UNCTAD, 2023).

Country-specific barriers

Despite the Ugandan government's ambitious strategies to promote entrepreneurship, many barriers hinder the success of MSMEs. In fact, according to the National Planning Authority (2020) most of the startups do not last more than two years.

To begin with, it is important to note that in Uganda, over 50.0% of the economy comes from the informal sector, which also provides over 80.0% of employment opportunities (International Labour Organization, 2021). However, formalization is crucial for accessing formal finance, markets, licenses, business bank accounts, and business development services necessary for business growth (U-Learn, 2023). MSMEs do not register due to high costs, complications, and a lack of knowledge of relevant institutions (Bakashaba, 2018; U-Learn, 2023). Despite implementing reforms to simplify registering a business, Uganda still faces high levels of informality (UNCTAD, 2023).

Furthermore, according to National Planning Authority (2020), 74.0% of MSMEs are limited in their growth due to lack of access to finance. Financial institutions require collateral and evidence of consistent income, making it difficult for MSMEs to secure loans (Tibaingana, 2019; U-Learn, 2023). As a result, most MSMEs rely on informal financial services and non-bank financial institutions (UNCTAD, 2023). Despite government efforts, financial literacy remains a key constraint for financial inclusion (UNCTAD, 2023).

Moreover, entrepreneurship in Uganda is often driven by necessity rather than opportunity, resulting in many startups being abandoned once stable jobs are found (Tibaingana, 2019; U-Learn, 2023). Such businesses lack significant investment in innovation or long-term development and mostly imitate existing enterprises (U-Learn, 2023). Tibaingana (2019) further notes that this mindset is deeply embedded in cultural and historical contexts and hampers the growth of these startups.

Uganda has a collectivist culture where successful individuals are expected to help their struggling relatives and friends by providing them with jobs and redistributing their wealth (Bakashaba, 2018; Khayesi et al., 2017). This may sometimes constrain the growth of entrepreneurial firms, but it can also contribute to the growth and development of recipients by providing them with skills and resources (Khayesi et al., 2017).

Finally, according to Bakashaba (2018), other barriers to entrepreneurship include poor infras-

tructure, electricity insecurity, corruption, high taxes, low digital literacy levels, and a need for better access to ICT.

2.1.4 Comparison of Belgium and Uganda

As we analyze the entrepreneurial landscapes in Belgium and Uganda, we remain aware of the unique challenges faced by entrepreneurs in each country. Belgium, as a developed country, and Uganda, as a developing country, present distinct realities. Throughout this thesis, we strive to keep these differing contexts in mind.

General Numbers and Trends

In Belgium and Uganda, the definitions of MSMEs in terms of employment size and financial thresholds vary significantly. For example, in Belgium 'Micro Enterprises' are enterprises having fewer than 10 employees and a turnover or balance sheet below €2 million. In contrast, Uganda's 'Micro Enterprises' include up to four people and have a revenue turnover or total assets not exceeding 10 million UGX, or approximately €2,461.40, using the exchange rate from May 6, 2024 (XE.com, 2024). This difference in scale reflects distinct economic environments and challenges from a developed and a developing country. MSMEs play a critical economic role in both Belgium and Uganda, where they constitute 99.8% and 90.0% of the private sector, respectively (National Planning Authority, 2020; OECD, 2024).

According to the World Bank (2024), the new business density in 2018 in Uganda was 0.88, the number of newly registered corporations per 1,000 working people (ages 15-64). In comparison, Belgium had a new business density of 6.34 in 2024. However, to provide a more accurate comparison, we will use Belgium's new business density of 3.5 in 2018. The lower new business density in Uganda can be attributed to the high proportion of informal businesses, which is not the case in Belgium.

Comparing entrepreneurial activity in Uganda and Belgium reveals important differences. The Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) index in Belgium shows a modest increase from 5.4% in 2014 to 6.2% of the adult population in 2015 (Holvoet et al., 2015). Conversely, Uganda's TEA in 2014 was remarkably high at 35.5% of the adult population, significantly surpassing the global average of 13.1% (GEM, 2014). This contrast underscores the role of entrepreneurship as a crucial economic driver in Uganda (Bakashaba, 2018).

Recent data highlight a notable increase in entrepreneurial activities in both Belgium and

Uganda. In Belgium, the number of newly registered companies with limited liability saw a 28.0% rise from 2021 to 2022 (World Bank, 2024). Similarly, in Uganda, the rate of new business creation rose by 21.9% during the same period (GEM, 2014).

Policies and strategies

Uganda and Belgium both strive to foster entrepreneurship through governmental policies and initiatives, yet the focus and scope of their approaches reveal contrasting challenges and objectives. Uganda has implemented broad strategies such as the MSMEs Policy (2015-2025), National Development Plan III, and Vision 2040 aiming to transform the nation into a competitive upper-middle-income country by 2040. These policies are designed to enhance value addition and competitiveness across Ugandan enterprises (UNCTAD, 2023).

In contrast, Belgium's policy environment has been critiqued for lacking clarity and cohesion, especially in addressing the needs of different types of entrepreneurs (Giacomin et al., 2023). The focus here has shifted towards safeguarding businesses from recent economic shocks and adapting to meet environmental and climate goals (OECD, 2024). While both nations are actively developing their entrepreneurial sectors, Uganda's strategies are primarily growth-oriented and inclusive of economic upgrading, whereas Belgium's recent policies are more reactive.

Country-specific barriers

In Belgium, entrepreneurship is predominantly driven by opportunity, with 79.0% of individuals starting businesses to pursue a market opportunity (Holvoet et al., 2015). Conversely, in Uganda, entrepreneurship often stems from necessity, a response to high unemployment and economic need, where starting a business is a means of survival (Tibaingana, 2019). This difference can be explained by Belgium's generous welfare system and high unemployment benefits, which allow job seekers to meet their individual needs (Giacomin et al., 2023).

Khayesi et al. (2017) argues that due to Uganda's collectivist nature, entrepreneurs are expected to contribute to the well-being of their social networks. Therefore, it diverts business profits to meet communal needs (Khayesi et al., 2017). In contrast, Belgium's individualistic culture emphasizes personal achievement, leading to higher rates of opportunity entrepreneurship (Assmann and Ehrl, 2021).

Fear of failure impacts entrepreneurship differently in Belgium and Uganda. In Belgium, 49.0%

of potential entrepreneurs who see good business opportunities are deterred by fear of failure, making it a significant barrier (Holvoet et al., 2015). In contrast, only 12.6% of Ugandans report fear of failure as a deterrent, well below the global average of 34.2% (GEM, 2014). This suggests that Ugandans are less hindered by fear, possibly due to greater economic necessity driving entrepreneurial efforts.

In Belgium, SMEs benefit from a relatively stable financial environment with government-backed initiatives providing significant support, despite rising interest rates and tightening credit conditions (OECD, 2024). Conversely, in Uganda, entrepreneurs rely on informal financing due to the limited availability of formal financial services (UNCTAD, 2023).

2.2 Chapter 2: The Rise of Innovation Hubs

2.2.1 Defining innovation hubs

In this chapter, we delve into the functionality, characteristics, and various types of innovation hubs. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that there is no official or institutional definition for innovation hubs, and the literature uses many different definitions. Frequently, the term "hub" is used interchangeably with other labels such as innovation labs, incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces (Jiménez and Zheng, 2017; Mwantimwa et al., 2021).

As defined by AfriLabs and Bridges (2019) a hub is "a center, structure or network composed of actors supporting or facilitating the development of an environment conducive to entrepreneurship or innovation." For clarity and consistency, this thesis refers to all these entities collectively as "hubs":

- **Incubators:** Defined by the European Commission (2019) as support structures aiding entrepreneurs in business creation and development. AfriLabs and Bridges (2019) further specifies that incubators help early-stage startups transform ideas into ventures by offering advisory services, resources, workshops, and hands-on training.
- **Accelerators:** Focused on speeding up the business creation process and preparing entrepreneurs for significant capital infusion (European Commission and OECD, 2019).
- **Co-working Spaces:** Shared physical workspaces that provide office facilities and a community for startups, small companies, and independent workers, promoting peer learning and collaboration (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019).

This section will explore the common characteristics and services offered by hubs. Emphasis will be placed on how these hubs facilitate innovative and entrepreneurial activities through a variety

of support mechanisms.

Innovation hubs are collaborative communities of entrepreneurial individuals with diverse knowledge and creativity (Toivonen and Friederici, 2015). They promote networking, mentorship, and community building among innovators (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). The main objectives of these hubs are fostering collaboration, openness, community, and diversity to enhance innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems (Friederici, 2019a; Jiménez and Zheng, 2017). They aim for social and economic impacts and act as interfaces for various stakeholders, including government representatives, investors, experts, training providers, and NGOs (Friederici, 2019a). Hubs are part of broader ecosystems. In the business context, an ecosystem is defined by AfriLabs and Bridges (2019) as a dynamic framework comprising stakeholders like startups, hubs, investors, and academic institutions. These entities interact to foster innovation and enhance the business environment across various sectors and regions (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019).

There exist many different types of incubators and hubs, but for this thesis, we will focus on two overarching categories outlined in the study by U-Learn (2023): for-profit and non-profit. For-profit incubators offer a variety of resources to support new businesses, including rental space, financing solutions, capital, and business mentoring. Non-profit incubators, on the other hand, are established by public and private organizations to promote entrepreneurship, empower marginalized groups, or support specific industries or regions (U-Learn, 2023). Within these two categories, there are various sub-types of incubators, such as multi-purpose incubators that accept all types of businesses, and specialized incubators that focus on specific activities, industries, or sectors (Tibaingana, 2019; U-Learn, 2023). Some virtual incubators operate entirely online. The European Commission (2019) identifies additional categories based on affiliations, such as university, government, non-profit, and private sector. Private incubators, as argued by Karambakuwa and Bayat (2022), tend to prioritize investment potential, growth, and technology transfer, while government incubators aim to promote job creation and economic growth.

Incubators and hubs offer a range of services to help startups and entrepreneurs succeed. They provide physical infrastructure such as workspace and specialized equipment, as well as digital infrastructure like free or low-cost bandwidth (European Commission and OECD, 2019; Friederici, 2019b). Additionally, they offer business support services, including management training, business counseling, mentoring, and access to capital (Mwantimwa et al., 2021; Tibaingana, 2019). Professional development opportunities like workshops, seminars, and networking events are also available (European Commission and OECD, 2019). Furthermore, incubators often provide specialized services like legal and managerial support to help startups navigate complexities (European

Commission and OECD, 2019). By providing these resources and services, incubators and hubs empower startups to grow and innovate, contributing to the entrepreneurial landscape's economic development.

In line with these support mechanisms, Draper (2024) defines five stages of startups beginning with the Development/Seed stage, where a business idea is transformed into reality through market research and feasibility analysis. Next is the Startup Stage, where the business is legally established, products or services are developed and marketed, and the business model is refined based on feedback. In the Growth/Survival Stage, the business generates consistent revenue and acquires new customers, optimizing operations to stay competitive. The Expansion/Rapid Growth Stage focuses on entering new markets and expanding distribution channels, leveraging established sales and marketing models to capture a larger market share (Draper, 2024).

2.2.2 Trends and Notable Examples of Innovation Hubs in Europe and Africa

The landscape of innovation hubs has evolved significantly since the inception of the first co-working spaces in the San Francisco Peninsula during the mid-2000s (Jiménez and Zheng, 2021). This section explores the global spread and impact of innovation hubs, specifically examining their roles in economic development and technological innovation within the contexts of Africa and Europe.

Today, innovation hubs are not just confined to the Western world but are a worldwide phenomenon. These hubs are crucial in the network of global knowledge exchange, continually adapting and evolving to stay at the forefront of technological advancements and economic transformation (Nature Research Custom Media and CIDEG, 2022).

The growth of innovation hubs has been particularly noteworthy in Africa, with 643 hubs identified in 2019 (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019). This surge was largely influenced by Nairobi's iHub, which demonstrated that a single hub could significantly impact the economic trajectory of a low-income nation (Friederici, 2019a). Furthermore, AfriLabs, a network that connects African innovation hubs, has played a crucial role in this expansion by promoting entrepreneurship and offering platforms for Africa-tailored solutions (Friederici, 2019a). This network now includes over 200 member hubs from 46 countries, further emphasizing the importance of collaborative networks in fostering innovation ecosystems (Dosso et al., 2021). The majority of incubators in Uganda are owned by the government through its various agencies like public universities and research institutions, while donor supporters own the other incubators and a few are privately owned (Ssekiziyivu et al., 2021). The sectors that are mostly supported by incubators in Uganda include agribusiness, ICT, and renewable energy (Ssekiziyivu et al., 2021).

Several European cities secured positions in the top 20 of the Global Innovation Hub Index, demonstrating Europe's critical role in shaping the global innovation landscape (Nature Research Custom Media and CIDEG, 2022). This prominence underscores the continent's continued influence in advancing technological, economic, and sustainable development worldwide. Europe's business ecosystem features a diverse range of incubators and accelerators (European Commission and OECD, 2019). According to European Commission and OECD (2019), many of these incubators prioritize inclusive entrepreneurship by assisting underrepresented groups like women, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. These incubators demonstrate success through metrics such as job creation, revenue growth, and successful graduates. Policymakers in Europe are increasingly acknowledging the pivotal role of these incubators in driving economic growth and innovation, leading to initiatives aimed at enhancing and expanding the incubation ecosystem (European Commission and OECD, 2019).

To illustrate the potential of hubs here are two examples of influential and inspirational hubs, one located in Europe and the other in Africa. According to Elfitesse (2023), Station F, which was established in Paris in 2017, is recognized as the world's largest startup incubator, with around 1,000 startups. Station F has established itself as a hub competing with global cities like London and New York (Elfitesse, 2023). Station F has set a benchmark in the global innovation landscape, inspiring the creation of similar hubs worldwide by demonstrating the effectiveness of a comprehensive ecosystem that integrates education, business, and diverse entrepreneurial pursuits (Elfitesse, 2023).

iHub in Nairobi, founded in 2010, serves as a collaborative workspace where technology community members, including industry professionals, academics, and venture capitalists, converge to share ideas and foster innovation (Friederici, 2019a). According to Friederici (2019a), the hub has been instrumental in connecting local innovators with global technology networks. Many hubs in Africa referred to iHub as their role model (Friederici, 2019b).

2.3 Chapter 3: Contributions of Hubs

2.3.1 Innovation and economic impact

Business incubators are designed to provide a supportive environment for new entrepreneurs to help their businesses survive and grow (Adriansyah and Rimadias, 2024; Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019; Tibaingana, 2019). Business incubators play a significant role in fostering economic development by helping new businesses succeed, which in turn generates employment and promotes economic growth in the region (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019; Friederici, 2019b; Mwantimwa et al., 2021; Tibaingana, 2019; Torun et al., 2018).

According to Mwantimwa et al. (2021), innovation hubs in Africa, play an important role in driving economic development by fostering startups and supporting technological innovations. They accelerate the innovation process by offering an environment conducive to testing and developing new ideas and products. Additionally, these hubs are crucial in capacity building, providing training and developmental resources to young entrepreneurs and innovators (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). Mwantimwa et al. (2021) also mentions the ability of innovation hubs to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, facilitating the transition of ideas into marketable products or services. In Africa, innovation hubs are instrumental in driving the digital and mobile revolution, enabling the continent to take a technological leap forward and accelerate its development pace (Jiménez and Zheng, 2021). These hubs strive to expand networks and form global alliances to cultivate their ecosystems, adopt best practices for managing hubs, and provide services (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019; Jiménez and Zheng, 2021). Beyond their immediate environment, some innovation hubs in Africa, extend their influence to national policy formulation, playing a significant role in shaping policies that foster technological advancement and innovation-driven growth (Mwantimwa et al., 2021).

Similarly to Africa, incubators in Europe contribute to local economic development (European Commission and OECD, 2019). The European Business and Innovation Centres Network, for example, helps connect business and innovation centers in the European Union in order to create a community of professionals able to help, start, and scale innovative businesses (European Commission and OECD, 2019). Additionally, rural innovation hubs are a driver of economic growth and inclusion in European rural areas. These hubs primarily provide access to digital technologies and internet, important for reaching larger markets and improving operational efficiencies (Dyba et al., 2020). Approximately 20.0% of rural businesses generate significant revenue through online channels, demonstrating how digital hubs can substantially enhance local economic growth (Dyba et al., 2020). Moreover, hubs focused on circularity in European cities promote collaboration and sharing of infrastructure, services, and resources, thereby increasing the efficiency and competitiveness of industries (Mendez Alva et al., 2021). These collaborations lead to cost savings and more sustainable economic growth. The strategic positioning of these hubs near urban centers also allows industries to benefit from closer proximity to markets and labor pools, further driving economic advantages (Mendez Alva et al., 2021).

European policymakers recognize startups as important drivers of employment and innovation, while also acknowledging the inherent risks associated with them (Van Weele et al., 2016). To mitigate these risks, European governments are increasingly supporting startups through incubators,

some of which have established a successful track record, making them legitimate actors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Van Weele et al., 2016). Van Weele et al. (2016) notes that these incubators, along with the networks formed among the incubated startups, can engage in institutional entrepreneurship by lobbying for startup-friendly regulations and promoting successful role models through national events.

2.3.2 Access to resources and mentorship

Globally, business incubators and accelerators have become vital for supporting new and growing businesses. They offer a range of services such as coaching, mentoring, networking, and access to finance, which have been important in enhancing business survival and growth (Adriansyah and Rimadias, 2024; AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019; European Commission and OECD, 2019; Tibaingana, 2019). Additional resources provided by incubators that also support the development of startups include co-working spaces, internet access, and mentorship, (Dyba et al., 2020; Mwantimwa et al., 2021). Additionally, they host interactive and developmental events including presentations, hackathons, pitching contests, and group meetings focused on specific topics of interest (Friederici, 2019a). Training sessions on skills and targeted mentorship sessions are also common, offering guidance and support to participants (Dyba et al., 2020; Friederici, 2019a).

In Africa, hubs rarely offer funding or other tangible resources directly, except for the provision of workspace (Friederici, 2019b). They do offer training programs to enhance startups' financial knowledge, marketing capabilities, and business strategies (Karambakuwa and Bayat, 2022). Friederici (2019b) argues that participants primarily join hubs to utilize free or cheap bandwidth and office space, while also deriving valuable cognitive benefits from others.

In Europe, business incubators play an important role in helping startups attract funding from various sources including venture capital and angel investors, essential for their growth and scaling (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019). They facilitate connections within social and business networks, helping startups gain access to resources and potential partners or clients (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019). Furthermore, incubators in Europe cater to niche fields, providing specialized support and expertise tailored to specific industry needs, thereby enhancing the chances of success for startups in diverse sectors (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019). While this detail is documented in European contexts, such support structures could similarly benefit startups in Africa, though specific studies on these structures are less documented.

2.3.3 *Networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing processes*

Innovation hubs are dynamic ecosystems that foster the production and transfer of knowledge (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). These hubs provide environments conducive to networking and sharing of intangible resources such as skills, expertise, and knowledge, leading to organizational learning and innovation (Rese et al., 2020). The open nature of co-working spaces within these hubs promotes social exchange and face-to-face interactions that help transfer tacit knowledge, such as personal insights and intuitions (Mwantimwa et al., 2021; Rese et al., 2020).

According to Rese et al. (2020), knowledge sharing in hubs is driven by individual motivation, with reputation enhancement and community reciprocity playing significant roles. However, time constraints and insufficient interactions among co-workers can hinder knowledge exchange. Rese et al. (2020) suggests using tools like member directories and centralized communication platforms to improve interactions and foster a more integrated community.

Innovation hubs facilitate cognitive benefits like motivation, comfort, and inspiration through vibrant community interactions (Friederici, 2019b). Toivonen and Friederici (2015) underscores the importance of diversity within these hubs, where 'creative clashes' between individuals from different backgrounds stimulate innovation. Additionally, peer learning is recognized as one of the most significant benefits of business incubation by the European Commission and OECD (2019).

Beyond individual hubs, the broader networks they foster facilitate the dissemination of information, expertise, labor, and capital (Karambakuwa and Bayat, 2022). These networks support startups by fostering a learning environment conducive to business development through the cross-pollination of ideas (Karambakuwa and Bayat, 2022). Additionally, events such as hackathons and pitch nights can promote interactions between individuals and groups who might not typically meet, thereby enhancing the overall value of the hubs and encouraging diverse collaborations (Toivonen and Friederici, 2015).

Moreover, innovation hubs are vital for networking and offer communal spaces that foster interactions among entrepreneurs (Friederici, 2019b; Mwantimwa et al., 2021). Hubs in Africa serve as the first point of contact for foreign actors entering the continent and provide an orientation point for novice entrepreneurs (Friederici, 2019b). These hubs enable entrepreneurs to connect with global markets and networks, expanding their opportunities beyond local boundaries (Friederici, 2019b).

2.3.4 *Environmental impact*

Innovation hubs play a pivotal role in steering technological and industrial growth towards sustainable practices. As noted by Kolade et al. (2021), in Africa for instance, the continent's developmental stage offers unique opportunities to bypass outdated technologies and embrace greener, more efficient solutions. These hubs are ideally positioned to lead advancements in renewable energy, smart cities, and Circular Economy models, leveraging Africa's relative lack of technological lock-in to effect environmental leapfrogging (Kolade et al., 2021).

Similarly, in Europe, according to Bank et al. (2016), SMEs have the potential to operate sustainably and minimize their environmental impact, therefore it is essential to raise their awareness and encourage proactive sustainability planning. According to Epistithiou (as cited in European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), 2022), digital innovation hubs function as one-stop shops that guide SMEs on digital and green transitions. Trade unions, civilian society organizations, employers' associations, and public authorities need to work together within them (European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), 2022).

Despite the critical role hubs can play in environmental sustainability, there is relatively little literature focusing on the environmental impact of innovation hubs unless they are specifically environmentally focused.

However, some hubs do prioritize environmental sustainability. For instance, Rural Digital Innovation Hubs promote sustainable rural development by focusing on sustainable economic factors, efficient resource utilization, and biodiversity protection (Stojanova et al., 2022). They provide infrastructure in rural areas, offering fast internet access and support services like networking, training, and business advisory, which promotes social equality (Stojanova et al., 2022). In all, these hubs enhance local resilience, promote sustainable rural development, and tackle digital exclusion by integrating rural communities into broader economic and technological networks (Stojanova et al., 2022).

Similarly, Circular Economy incubators play a crucial role in promoting environmental stewardship. By fostering the reuse, recycling, and upcycling of materials, these incubators significantly reduce waste and emissions (Millette et al., 2020). This approach not only mitigates pollution but also promotes resource efficiency through industrial symbiosis, transforming waste from one process into inputs for another (Mendez Alva et al., 2021; Millette et al., 2020). Additionally, Circular Economy incubators facilitate the development of innovative business models and sustainable technologies that decrease reliance on virgin materials and protect natural ecosystems, contributing

to a broader strategy of sustainable economic growth (Mendez Alva et al., 2021; Millette et al., 2020).

In Brussels, the Public Incubators are enhancing the environmental focus by integrating within their incubation programs a specialized monitoring and coaching approach that aligns with the Regional Innovation Plan (BEE-SPRB et al., 2022). This plan focuses on developing incubated companies that are models of environmental and social best practices, further supporting the transition towards sustainable economic activities (BEE-SPRB et al., 2022).

Examples of real-life hubs include GreenLab London and TheCircularLab, among others. GreenLab London serves as a multi-disciplinary innovation lab, providing an incubator workspace for those in urban farming and agritech startup businesses. Their ultimate goal is to redesign food systems and create experimental bio-materials that will lead to more circular urban environments (GreenLab, n.d.). Meanwhile, TheCircularLab, located in Madrid, is an open innovation center that concentrates on studying, trialing, and developing best practices within the packaging sector and its subsequent recycling. The center is dedicated to promoting sustainable practices and specializes in the Circular Economy (TheCircularLab, n.d.).

2.3.5 *Social impact*

According to Friederici (2019a), one of the hub's objectives is often to achieve positive social impact in addition to economic development. The European Commission and OECD (2019) notes that many business incubators seek to build an entrepreneurial community by strengthening entrepreneurship networks in a local area and contributing to local and regional economic development. Several factors, such as offering strong pre-incubation services and ensuring strong linkages with mainstream business support providers, make business incubators and accelerators effective in promoting social inclusion (European Commission and OECD, 2019). Previous studies of incubators, particularly in the technology sector, are noted for the substantial social capital they generate among tenants, fostering trust, norms, and expectations that are essential for successful entrepreneurial relationships (Luik et al., 2019).

In Africa, innovation hubs often embody both global and local cultural elements, positioning themselves as part of a worldwide entrepreneurial culture while also embracing local counter-cultures (Toivonen and Friederici, 2015). This dual approach allows them to integrate global influences with local norms, creating inclusive spaces that celebrate diverse values and behaviors, thereby enriching the innovation process (Toivonen and Friederici, 2015). These hubs also contribute to societal innovation through community co-creation, offering opportunities for members to design solutions that empower local businesses (Mwantomwa et al., 2021). Additionally, the core

values of innovation hubs are shaped by the “global social entrepreneurship movement”, providing a sense of shared values and purpose that motivates members to be part of a global community (Toivonen and Friederici, 2015). Hubs also address local skill gaps and inspire young entrepreneurs by providing relevant training and showcasing innovative technologies, thereby performing an inspirational role (Friederici, 2019b).

According to the European Commission and OECD (2019), business incubators and accelerators have significant potential to foster inclusive entrepreneurship by offering tailored support services that help entrepreneurs from under-represented groups overcome barriers and succeed. These entities enhance local economic development and strengthen entrepreneurship ecosystems by linking various stakeholders in both the public and private sectors (European Commission and OECD, 2019).

University Business Incubators in Europe enhance the entrepreneurial culture within universities and the broader community, promoting entrepreneurship as a viable career path (Adriansyah and Rimadias, 2024). Furthermore, rural digital hubs in Europe help improve the education and living conditions in rural areas by providing access to internet and digital services, which is crucial in regions where educational attainment and access to technology are significantly lower than in urban areas (Dyba et al., 2020). The hubs aim to reduce educational disparities and boost social inclusion, contributing to community development (Dyba et al., 2020).

Additionally, hubs focused on circularity involve a diverse range of regional stakeholders including industry, civil society, local authorities, and research and technology organizations (Mendez Alva et al., 2021). This collaborative framework enhances community involvement and local economic development by fostering social inclusion and building networks across various sectors, thus contributing to a collective responsibility towards sustainable practices (Mendez Alva et al., 2021; Millette et al., 2020).

2.4 Chapter 4: Challenges and critics of innovation hubs

2.4.1 Challenges of innovation hubs

Innovation hubs may face several challenges that can impact interaction dynamics and community support. These challenges can be related to crowding issues, where the space might be too crowded or not crowded enough, leading to difficulties in interaction dynamics (Friederici, 2019b). Additionally, too stable or too dynamic environments can impact a hub’s innovation potential, as it may miss out on new influences or lack mutual familiarity (Friederici, 2019b). Engagement issues are also a concern, as visitors or partners may lack real engagement and commitment, which can

undermine community support (Friederici, 2019b). Finally, there is a need for more structured support services, moving away from open networking to more hands-on services to better support the community (Friederici, 2019b).

Measuring the impact of innovation hubs presents another significant challenge. According to Friederici (2019b), this is due to the reliance on simple quantitative metrics like attendance, memberships, and the number of startups created. These measures often fail to capture the true effectiveness of hubs, leading to difficulties for hub leaders in understanding the impact chain of their organizations (Friederici, 2019b). Furthermore, the absence of a standard methodology complicates the assessment of business incubators, making it hard to compare results across different studies (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019; Torun et al., 2018). This issue is exacerbated by a lack of sufficient success stories and historical data of hubs, which hinders benchmarking and the identification of best practices (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019). As Alpenidze and Pauceanu (2019) points out, academic research on business incubators often struggles with these limitations, and the impact of incubation can take a long time to materialize, adding to the complexity of evaluation.

Additionally, innovation hubs in Africa often encounter a shift in responsibilities from civil society, private sector, and government, as they are tasked with unlocking opportunities that may exceed their operational scope and capabilities (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019). This overextension can lead to challenges in effectively meeting the expectations placed upon them (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019). Similarly, Van Weele et al. (2016) argues that Western European incubators are only a partial solution to institutional problems that run too deep for any single incubator to solve, a fact policymakers should be more aware of.

Funding issues are another significant challenge. According to AfriLabs and Bridges (2019), more than 110 innovation hubs in Africa have shut down due to sustainability issues and dependence on external donors. Accessing funding and connecting with investors has been a challenge for many of these hubs (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019). The availability of funding is limited and external, further exacerbating the resource challenges that hubs face (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). There are also significant challenges in Africa related to inadequate skills and knowledge among actors of hubs, as well as difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled personnel (AfriLabs and Bridges, 2019; Dosso et al., 2021; Mwantimwa et al., 2021).

2.4.2 *Critics of innovation hubs*

Critics question the overall effectiveness and impact of innovation hubs, noting that they have made only minimal direct contributions to startup creation and success (Friederici, 2019b). Friederici

(2019a) points out the absence of reliable evidence indicating that innovation hubs effectively support startup growth or contribute to development. Despite the rapid proliferation of hubs, assessing their true impact on socioeconomic development remains a challenge and is often difficult to verify (Friederici, 2019a).

In Africa, innovation practices are often influenced by Western perspectives, which may not align well with local realities (Jiménez and Zheng, 2017). Jiménez and Zheng (2017) argues for the need to recognize diverse development narratives and evaluate innovation practices based on local merits. Additionally, critics point to a disconnect between the goals of hubs and the needs of their operational environments, which can result in hubs failing to meet societal expectations (Dosso et al., 2021; Mwantimwa et al., 2021).

In Uganda, Tibaingana (2019) notes that incubators lack collaboration, leading to startups moving from one to another without sustained growth. Incubators tend to focus on immediate sales rather than comprehensive business development and often provide minimal support such as space provision (Tibaingana, 2019). Moreover, most incubators offer neutral services, without considering the size and growth stage of businesses (Tibaingana, 2019). A study from U-Learn (2023) notes that most hubs in Uganda receive subsidies, which leads to a prioritization of the desires of development partners over the actual needs of MSMEs (U-Learn, 2023). According to U-Learn (2023), there is currently no financially sustainable model for hubs in Uganda due to their reliance on subsidies.

In Western Europe, Van Weele et al. (2016) argues that incubators have limited potential to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems. While they can provide some resources and network connections, they only provide symptomatic solutions rather than addressing institutional causes of malfunctioning entrepreneurial ecosystems (Van Weele et al., 2016). Additionally, Van Weele et al. (2016) argues that startups in Europe lack sufficient market orientation, possibly due to the fact that European incubators are often established and supported by governments and universities. To address this issue, Van Weele et al. (2016) suggests that incubators should also focus on being more market-oriented by seeking private funding and hiring staff with entrepreneurial experience. In contrast, many incubator staff in Europe tend to come from a policy or academic background (Van Weele et al., 2016).

2.5 Chapter 5: Summary and gaps of the literature review

The literature review examines the entrepreneurial landscapes in Belgium and Uganda, exploring key concepts such as entrepreneurship and innovation. It highlights the significant role of MSMEs

in both economies, noting their importance despite facing distinct challenges influenced by differing economic, cultural, and policy contexts. The review emphasizes how these regional disparities impact the effectiveness of innovation hubs. However, using the latest GEM data for Belgium and Uganda as the main comparison source might not accurately reflect the current conditions, as it is dated from 2014 and 2015. Additionally, comparing innovation hubs across different countries, such as Belgium and Uganda, poses a significant challenge due to the considerable differences in their economic, social, and cultural contexts.

The importance of innovation hubs is underscored in their contribution to fostering entrepreneurship and stimulating local economic development. The review details the services these hubs provide, including mentorship, training, and workspace that support startups and entrepreneurs. It further explores how these hubs facilitate collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities, which help foster innovative and economic growth.

Additionally, the review addresses the social and environmental impacts of innovation hubs. It points out their potential to promote inclusive growth and sustainable practices, highlighting that while hubs are often celebrated for their economic contributions, their socio-environmental impact is less documented and understood, suggesting areas for further research and evaluation. By including those aspects, a more holistic impact evaluation can be achieved, providing a more complete picture of a hub's impact on its community. The review highlights the lack of a standardized definition and measurement methods for assessing the impact of innovation hubs, making it difficult for hub leaders to grasp the extent of their organizations' impact. The review emphasizes the need to address these gaps to gain a better understanding of the intangible impact of these hubs.

3 Part 2: Empirical research: analysis of the StartLAB and Circular Design Hub cases

3.1 Chapter 1: Methodological Approach

3.1.1 Purpose of the research: research question and objectives

The literature review of this thesis investigates the entrepreneurial landscapes of Belgium and Uganda, emphasizing the crucial role of MSMEs and innovation hubs in fostering local economic development and entrepreneurship. Despite significant contributions, there remains a substantial gap in effectively measuring and understanding the broader impacts of these hubs, especially their intangible and socio-environmental impact across different national contexts.

The overarching research question for this thesis is:

”How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLAB Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?”

This question is addressed through a comprehensive examination of the roles innovation hubs play in promoting economic development and entrepreneurship in their local ecosystems. The study evaluates the contributions of two case studies: StartLAB Brussels and Circular Design Hub (CDH) Kampala. The analysis will focus on their impact on innovation, economic development, access to resources and mentorship, and facilitation of networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. Additionally, the study explores the social and environmental impacts of these hubs, which are often less documented but critically important. By comparing the entrepreneurial landscapes of Belgium and Uganda, the study identifies key factors that lead to variations in the hubs’ impacts and provides practical recommendations to enhance the efficiency and impact of innovation hubs like StartLAB and CDH.

3.1.2 Research methodology

There are two main research methodologies: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research aims to understand problems deeply, without focusing on numerical representativity (Almeida et al., 2017). According to Almeida et al. (2017), it tries to produce in-depth information to understand the problem’s various dimensions. This type of research is concerned with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified as it focuses on explaining the dynamics of social relations, working with meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes (Almeida et al., 2017). On the other hand, quantitative research identifies trends among study groups but does not explain the underlying reasons for these trends (Goertzen, 2017). It involves collecting and analyzing numerical data through surveys or experiments, often with larger sample sizes (Arema Connect, 2014). Questions are typically closed-ended and aim to measure the percentage of people who agree with a statement (Arema Connect, 2014).

In our study, we used a mixed-methods approach, which included both qualitative and quantitative methods. We conducted eight interviews with startups and directors of Circular Design Hub (CDH) Kampala and StartLAB Brussels, using semi-structured interviews to gather rich, qualitative data. We also conducted a survey among the startups at both hubs to gather quantitative data to identify and confirm broader trends and patterns regarding the impact of the hubs on their local ecosystems. By combining these methods, we were able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of both the measurable impacts and the underlying reasons for these outcomes. This provided

us with a foundation for our conclusions on how these innovation hubs contribute to their local economies.

3.1.3 Case Selection: Why StartLAB and Circular Design Hub?

Our research adopts a multiple case study approach to investigate two innovation hubs: StartLAB in Brussels and the Circular Design Hub in Kampala. Our internships in these hubs have provided us with valuable insider perspectives. Charlotte completed a three-month internship at StartLAB Brussels, where she worked for Meet My Job, one of the incubated startups. Meanwhile, Ophélie spent two months at CDH in Kampala, working together with the staff to help manage the hub. These unique positions allowed us to observe day-to-day practices and dynamics within the hubs. By comparing these cases, we aim to identify similarities and differences among hubs operating in vastly different entrepreneurial contexts.

To address the research question of this thesis, we conducted interviews with both managing directors and entrepreneurs of the hub. To obtain data from the startups, an online survey was created, with 30 responses from each hub. Additionally, a survey was conducted for the hub staff, which garnered 8 responses from CDH staff and 5 from StartLAB. The idea behind this was to get multiple perspectives from different hub members, including hub managers, staff, startups, and tenants. This approach aimed to establish a comprehensive overview of both hubs' ecosystems.

Subsequently, six entrepreneurs were selected for interviews, three from each hub. The interviewees were chosen based on their time spent and their experience at the hub, making them suitable candidates for providing deeper insights. For StartLAB, entrepreneurs who had been through all stages of the incubation program were selected, while for CDH, all three entrepreneurs were hub tenants for several years. A brief presentation of the profiles of the individuals interviewed is provided in Appendix 1.

3.1.4 Data collection

As mentioned before, this thesis employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis.

For the quantitative data collection, we conducted two identical online surveys across both hubs to ensure comparability. The first survey targeted companies within the hubs. A total of 60 responses were collected, with 30 responses from each hub. It explored various themes relevant to our research question, such as company overview, collaboration and internal dynamics, hub support

and impact, and the specific challenges and needs within their operational context. The second survey focused on hub staff members, seeking insights into the support provided to entrepreneurs and the perceived strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of each hub. The company and staff survey can be found respectively in Appendix 12 and 13. Furthermore, the responses from StartLAB's entrepreneurs are available in Appendix 14 and Appendix 15 for CDH, while the staff responses from StartLAB are presented in Appendix 16 and Appendix 17 for CDH. We also computed some percentages ourselves based on the amount of time the same answers were given, and these calculations can be found in Appendix 18, which provides a clear comparison of StartLAB and CDH.

In our qualitative research, we utilized two methods: observations and in-depth interviews. Firstly, the observation method involves observing processes or behaviors taking place in an organization over a defined period of time (Jacquemin, 2017). There are two types of observational data collection: participant and non-participant. Participant observation means the researcher plays a formal, specific role in the organization, which may or may not be concealed, and interaction with those observed is profound (Jacquemin, 2017). For this thesis, participant observation was used to compare and understand the context of people's behavior within the hubs. The objective was to describe common dynamics and practices observed within hubs and how these compared with participant responses during interviews. This was performed during our internships, where Charlotte spent three months at StartLAB and Ophélie spent two months at CDH.

Secondly, data was collected through in-depth interviews. Researchers follow different formats for conducting interviews, which are categorized into three types: non-structured, semi-structured, and structured (Jacquemin, 2017). For this thesis, the interviews were conducted following a semi-structured format. This format requires an interview guide consisting of a set of predefined questions, but freedom is given to explore some of the questions in greater depth (Almeida et al., 2017). All interviews were conducted in-person, except for one which was conducted online. The interviews for the position of hubs directors and entrepreneurs had different focus areas. The interview for the hub director was aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the hub was managed and organized. It focused on themes such as management, funding, community engagement, support for startups, partnerships and collaborations, impact and success, and challenges. On the other hand, the interview with the entrepreneurs aimed at obtaining more detailed information on the survey responses that specifically focused on collaboration and partnerships within the hub, the hub's impact, and its operating environment. The transcripts of the interviews with the hub managers can be found in Appendix 3-4 and their interview guides in Appendix 2. The interview guide and the transcript of the interviews with the entrepreneurs can be found in Appendix 5 and Appendix 6-11, respectively. To transcribe the interviews, consent was obtained to record the discussions from the

interviewees.

3.2 Chapter 2: Presentation of StartLAB Brussels

3.2.1 Introduction of StartLAB

Caroline Cogels, director of StartLAB, explained during her interview the origin and evolution of the hub. StartLAB has its roots in the 1990s at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). ULB professor Olivier Witmer and VUB professor Thomas Crispeels started supporting students interested in entrepreneurship in the 2000s, which led to the creation of the StartAcademy in 2002. StartLAB was officially created at ULB in 2016 and StartVUB was launched in 2018. The two entities were later merged in 2022 to have a larger impact on young entrepreneurs, including students and talents under the age of 30.

StartLAB is a non-profit incubator that aims to promote entrepreneurship among young people in the Brussels region. It is a multi-purpose incubator that accepts all types of businesses. However, Mrs. Cogels, explained that the staff is currently questioning the positioning of StartLAB. They are wondering whether they want to focus exclusively on impact-driven projects or whether they want to remain a multi-purpose incubator. While StartLAB is not currently based on a campus or run by a university, it is still influenced by them. For example, StartLAB follows the academic calendar and has partnerships with ULB and VUB universities. StartLAB gives workshops at these universities to raise students' awareness of entrepreneurship, and some professors provide their input to help the incubator define its programs. Students are encouraged to join the incubator and the professors Oliver Witmer and Thomas Crispeels are still part of the team as academic directors. Furthermore, the governance model of StartLAB is a collaborative decision-making meaning strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff, members, and possibly external partners.

The vision of StartLAB Brussels is to become the largest incubator for young entrepreneurs who want to run impact projects by 2030, as stated by Mrs. Cogels. Their mission, as noted on their website, is to provide effective support to young entrepreneurs in developing their future or existing businesses. They are dedicated to delivering top-notch programs and services in the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation. As pioneers, they always strive for progress, results, and innovation (StartLAB Brussels, n.d.).

Their values are family, challenge, making a difference, and caring. The director, Mrs. Cogels, explains that they believe in the power of sharing and that is why they put the community first. The value of challenge means that they are constantly reviewing their program to ensure it is of the

highest quality. The value of making a difference stands for creating meaning and purpose. The last value, as mentioned on the website, is "we care", which emphasizes prioritizing people. They believe a startup's success relies on the entrepreneur(s) driving it forward. That is why they foster a nurturing and supportive environment (StartLAB Brussels, n.d.).

3.2.2 Services offered by StartLAB

The StartLAB program is free for individuals under 30 and consists of five phases, which include workshops, masterclasses, and coaching sessions. However, once their business achieves certain revenue milestones like €100,000 or €1 million, they kindly request a one-time contribution of €2,999 or €9,999 (excluding VAT) respectively (StartLAB Brussels, n.d.). The initial phase is DISCOVER, where you will get help identifying your product market fit. The second phase is EXPLORE, where you will develop and test your solution. The third phase is called VALIDATE, where you will need to evaluate the market's viability by making your first sales. This is followed by the LAUNCH phase, where you will develop a market presence and win over customers. Finally, there is GROW, where the goal is to achieve sustainable growth and present your project to investors (StartLAB Brussels, n.d.).

In addition to the program, the hub offers a variety of other services to help incubate startups from start to launch. The entrepreneurs have free access to a co-working space with meeting rooms where they can welcome their first clients or customers if needed. The co-working space also includes a shared kitchen, free coffee, and Wi-Fi connectivity. The hub provides the opportunity to build a strong network by organizing networking events, connecting them with experts and coaches, and fellow entrepreneurs from other incubators.

3.2.3 StartLAB's ecosystem

StartLAB is an incubator hosting a variety of startups in different stages of development. The survey that we conducted among 30 startups, revealed that more than half of them are in the Startup Stage (60.0%), followed by the Development Stage (23.3%) and the Growth Stage (10.0%). The remaining startups were equally divided between the Expansion and Maturity Stages, with 3.3% each.

All startups that participated in the survey were classified as Micro Enterprises, as they have less than 10 employees. However, it is important to note that we were not able to include all startups and alumni of StartLAB in the survey, and some have already benefited from the program and grown significantly, such as Kazidomi, which now has around 40 employees. The startups at StartLAB

operate in a wide range of sectors, reflecting the incubator's multi-purpose nature. These include energy, advertising, recruitment, medical industry, education, cosmetics, and more. There was no particular trend identified among the entrepreneurs' answers.

The incubator's stakeholders include the entrepreneurs themselves, as well as the coaches, experts, and guests who participate in workshops, masterclasses, coaching sessions, and networking events. StartLAB also has a number of external stakeholders, including the government, who provide subsidies through the Brussels Economy and Employment Program as they are part of the Young Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (YET) initiative. The foundation PULS, which promotes and stimulates entrepreneurship, also offers them financial and non-financial support to promote and stimulate entrepreneurship, for instance, the staff can participate in workshops designed for managers.

Private sponsors like BNP Paribas Fortis and Acerta offer financial aid to StartLAB in exchange for workshops. The StartLAB also partners with ULB and VUB universities, as well as other incubators like Venture Lab and Yncubator. They take turns organizing sector days for entrepreneurs in specific industries. Additionally, StartLAB has partnerships with Ephec Entreprendre and StartLAB ICHEC, all of which are funded by the same initiative YET. The StartLAB also participates in several entrepreneurship events, such as those organized by Startit KBC.

3.3 Chapter 3: Presentation of Circular Design Hub Kampala

3.3.1 Introduction of Circular Design Hub

Jean Makki, the director of Circular Design Hub (CDH), explained during her interview the origin and evolution of the hub. Circular Design Hub, originally known as Design Hub Kampala, was founded in 2017 in Kampala by a mother company called Mango Tree Educational, a company developing social behavior tools through creative arts. Facing difficulties in sourcing local creative talent, Mango Tree decided to find a space where like-minded people could come together and be tenants and foster collaboration. However, after four years of recognizing the creative sector's limited growth and funding, they decided to pivot towards a more impact-oriented mission. During this period, the hub partnered with Close the Gap, which aims to bridge the digital divide by refurbishing IT devices donated by European companies for social projects in developing countries at affordable rates. The hub then rebranded to the Circular Design Hub, aligning with Close the Gap's efforts in the Circular Economy (CE).

CDH is a privately owned, for-profit hub with a social business model. It is currently a multi-purpose hub that accepts all types of businesses. They do not have any affiliations with governments

or universities but work with the private sector, such as Close The Gap. As part of their rebranding, they aim to become a specialized incubator focusing on the CE. CDH governance is based on a hybrid model between an executive committee, meaning strategic decisions are made by the hub director together with the heads of departments, and departmental autonomy, meaning departments within the hub make their own strategic decisions independently, guided by overall hub goals, based on the situation or type of decision being made.

Hub director, Jean Makki, expressed the vision of CDH: "As a business incubator, our goal is to build such a sustainable ecosystem, that speaks to social impact, and innovation and to build interconnectedness beyond just the Ugandan landscape." Additionally, she outlined the key values that guide CDH's actions of supporting and accelerating sustainable businesses that have a focus on social impact and a circular value system.

3.3.2 Services offered by Circular Design Hub

CDH offers a variety of support and services designed to accommodate the diverse needs of its tenants. Mrs. Makki emphasizes that they quickly realized the need for a flexible approach to support. "Our starting point was to support startup types, but after two years, we recognized that there is no one-size-fits-all support for startups. Different founders seem to come here for different reasons. Some are seeking collaboration, others want to build on their ideas, some need business development support, and some just need a physical presence to subsidize their rent costs," explains Mrs. Makki. This insight has led to the development of tailored packages that consider the different needs and cash flow situations of different startups. The hub operates on a flexible subscription-based model, which occasionally includes in-kind contributions instead of traditional fees.

The hub provides several workspace options, including permanent private office spaces. For more flexible needs, it offers a co-working space accessible via day passes, 10 or 16-day passes, monthly passes, and shared desks for up to three people. Additionally, the virtual office option allows companies to use the hub as their official business address without maintaining a physical office onsite, including services like package reception.

The space comes with a variety of amenities, including a shared meeting boardroom (free for one hour daily or at a reduced rate for longer bookings), reliable access to water and electricity (including backup power), and Wi-Fi connectivity. Additionally, the space offers convenient reception and postal services, 24/7 security and office access, logo representation, and access to an on-site café with discounted rates. Tenants can also take advantage of the shared kitchen facility, as well as limited business development services and HR services. Finally, members of the community can

enjoy access to networking events and discounted rates for use of the events hall.

3.3.3 Circular Design Hub's ecosystem

According to the results of our CDH survey, which gathered 30 responses, 50.0% were in the growth phase, followed by 26.7% startups, 13.3% expansion, 6.7% development, and 3.3% maturity. The majority of companies surveyed fell in the Small Enterprise category, with 5-49 employees, representing 73.3% of respondents. Micro Enterprises, with 0-4 employees, accounted for 20.0% of respondents, while Medium Enterprises, with 50-100 employees, accounted for 6.7%. The surveyed companies represented a variety of sectors, including construction, agriculture, NGOs, and HR as the most common. Other industries included ICT, finance, and education among others.

Moreover, director Mrs. Makki emphasizes the hub's strategic approach to building a diverse community combining locals and expatriates to enhance market connectedness beyond Uganda. She also notes the strategic balance between startups and scale-ups at the hub. This balance is intentional and supports their sustainable business model. Scale-ups generally have better cash flow and contribute more financially, which allows the hub to be more patient with startups. This setup also promotes internal trade and collaboration and provides startups with the traction they need through first-market opportunities within the hub.

It is also important to mention the role of external stakeholders, such as the government. CDH has faced challenges with government support. According to Mrs. Makki, current policies do not fully recognize the value of innovation hubs, focusing more on tax collection than on fostering entrepreneurship. To address this, the hub participates in StartUp Uganda, an association of eight hubs, lobbying for better support for startups. They are currently collaborating with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) to develop new startup policies, indicating a potential shift towards better governmental support.

Additionally, the hub benefits from its membership in Afrilabs, a network connecting innovation hubs across Africa. As Mrs. Makki explained, this partnership has enabled the hub to get insights into other African ecosystems, facilitating learning and development. Afrilabs offers exchange programs, capacity building for hub managers, and project opportunities, significantly enhancing knowledge sharing and operational insights.

3.4 Chapter 4: Results and discussion: StartLAB vs CDH

3.4.1 Innovation and economic impact

As emphasized in the literature, business incubators play a significant role in fostering economic development by helping new businesses succeed, which in turn generates employment and promotes economic growth in the region (Alpenidze and Pauceanu (2019); Friederici (2019b); Mwantimwa et al. (2021); Tibaingana (2019); Torun et al. (2018)). This chapter examines and compares the contributions of StartLAB and Circular Design Hub (CDH) to innovation and economic impact. Despite the importance of these contributions, measuring their impact remains challenging, a difficulty highlighted by both hub directors during their interviews.

While StartLAB is interested in innovative and ambitious ideas, particularly those that are environmentally sustainable and have a positive societal impact, they recognize that the true measure of a project's success is determined by its acceptance and performance in the market. Caroline Cogels, StartLAB's director, emphasized that although the selection process primarily focuses on the entrepreneurs themselves, innovative projects are also highly looked after.

Jean Makki, CDH's director, highlights the misconception regarding innovation in Uganda, which tends to narrow down the definition of innovation to IT-focused solutions. In that regard, CDH seeks to be a platform showcasing and liberating various forms of innovation. Mrs. Makki states that their goal is to support the ecosystem and encourage innovation beyond just IT-related endeavors. .

To track the program's success, StartLAB uses Wikiflow software, which records data such as startups' market entry and progression through different phases. Mrs. Cogels explains that this software attempts to capture their economic impact, although measuring this can be challenging, especially when defining what constitutes an employee, as distinctions between trainees, freelancers, and full-time staff can blur the data. Despite these challenges, StartLAB reports a 90.0% survival rate for startups completing its 3-year program, emphasizing its role in fostering sustainable business ventures.

Similarly, CDH reports a 78.0% success rate based on the retention of companies that remain in operation at the hub or after leaving. According to Mrs. Makki, the success of a hub is determined by the growth of the companies it supports. The fact that CDH has paying startups is a positive sign that these businesses are generating revenue. She mentioned that the growth of these companies in terms of size, as well as their transition from one co-working package to another, is an indication

of the hub's growth. However, Mrs. Makki notes that it is challenging to measure economic contributions precisely.

According to our company survey, both StartLAB and CDH contribute to job creation. StartLAB's companies employ at least 65 people, while CDH's companies employ at least 313 people. However, not all of these employees work directly at CDH. Some companies only operate part of their business at the hub, while others are international companies with a branch in Uganda at the hub. It is also worth noting that we did not receive responses from all the companies currently working at both hubs, so these employment numbers could be even higher.

Friederici (2019b) highlights that relying solely on basic quantitative metrics such as attendance, memberships, and the number of startups formed may not fully reflect the actual effectiveness of hubs. The economic influence of StartLAB and CDH goes beyond these statistics. Friederici (2019b) adds that hub leaders often struggle to grasp the complete impact of their organizations. This was evident in the interviews with the directors, as they found it challenging to provide a clear response regarding the hubs' economic effects.

Mrs. Cogels emphasizes that StartLAB's impact is closely tied to its staff and budget. The hub faces challenges such as high turnover among its team, which can lead to a loss of knowledge and limited historical context. The staff survey revealed that half of the employees has been with StartLAB for less than a year. Financial stability is another issue mentioned by the director, as the hub relies heavily on two-year subsidies from the Brussels-Capital Region, making it vulnerable to political decisions. One of our interviewee, Guillaume Massard, an entrepreneur at StartLAB, has raised concerns that this reliance on subsidies drives a focus on the number of projects rather than on quality. He questions whether StartLAB's primary objective is to introduce young individuals under 30 to entrepreneurship or to create tangible jobs and success stories. He argues that focusing on quantity can lead to the approval of underdeveloped projects, potentially diluting the hub's economic impact.

Additionally, the staff mentioned that compliance with reporting requirements and other regulations across Belgium's three regions can be complex. Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay, an entrepreneur from StartLAB, noted during her interview the difficulty of adhering to three sets of laws. Additionally, the company survey showed that language barriers add further complexity to the situation.

CDH faces significant challenges due to the lack of governmental support, which hinders its economic impact. Mrs Makki, the hub's director, points out that the government fails to recog-

nize the value of innovation hubs, focusing mainly on tax collection rather than supporting startup growth. She argues that startups, especially in their early stages, should not face heavy taxation and suggests that the government could subsidize these rates and offer partnerships to support the growth of startups. Ultimately, CDH aims to become a hub where the government and private sector can collaborate to foster innovation. To achieve this goal, CDH has partnered with Startup Uganda, an organization that brings together eight hubs in Kampala to lobby for better startup policies. This important partnership aligns with Mwantimwa et al. (2021)'s findings on the role of African innovation hubs in shaping policies that foster technological advancement and innovation-driven growth.

Additionally, Mrs. Makki points out the lack of emphasis on research and development (R&D) within the startup ecosystem. The pressure to rapidly market products discourages substantial investment in R&D, undermining long-term innovation. She suggests that increasing dedicated funding for R&D could positively impact this dynamic, allowing founders to experiment and refine their offerings before launching them to the market, thereby enhancing the overall quality and impact of innovations. This viewpoint is in line with the criticism presented by Tibaingana (2019), which suggests that incubators should prioritize comprehensive business development over immediate sales. However, Mrs. Makki emphasizes the critical need for funding to sustain and expand such initiatives, a challenge echoed frequently by staff members in the survey. This lack of funding is a common challenge, not just for CDH but for many innovation hubs across Africa. As highlighted by AfriLabs and Bridges (2019) and Mwantimwa et al. (2021) many hubs have ceased operations due to sustainability challenges and an over-reliance on external donors.

Furthermore, one interviewee from CDH, Emmanuel Semuntenga, highlights significant financial challenges faced by startups, including high costs of legal business registration and the lack of affordable resources, which force many to start in the informal economy and cause them to miss out on opportunities to secure corporate clients. As U-Learn (2023) underscores, formalization is essential for gaining access to finance and markets. These challenges are confirmed in the company survey, where limited funding and high taxation were frequently cited as major challenges. Additionally, 66.7% of companies reported receiving no governmental support, significantly impeding their growth and expansion efforts.

3.4.2 Access to resources and mentorship

Survey data reveals a difference in perception regarding the support for company growth between the two hubs. At StartLAB, 56.7% of entrepreneurs felt that the hub supported them by providing the necessary resources and infrastructure. In contrast, only 43.3% of CDH entrepreneurs reported receiving similar support.

Staff surveys from both hubs underline a commitment to providing dynamic co-working spaces that enhance collaboration, creativity, and networking opportunities. The emphasis on dynamic co-working spaces supports findings by Dyba et al. (2020) and Mwantimwa et al. (2021), which note that such environments are crucial for fostering collaboration and providing access to essential resources like internet connectivity and mentorship.

At StartLAB, the staff describes the co-working space as a cornerstone for entrepreneurial activities, enabling founders to meet potential clients, partners, and investors. Entrepreneurs at StartLAB value the free and stimulating office space as it facilitates interaction and idea-sharing.

Similarly, CDH staff highlights their tailored approach to business support, offering flexible workspace options and various business support initiatives according to the needs of their clients. Benefits at CDH include rent discounts and increased business visibility within the hub. The physical layout and management of the hub's space create networking and collaboration opportunities. However, entrepreneurs at CDH also emphasized the importance of stable internet, reliable electricity, and issues with the heat in their workspaces, with 33.3% citing this as their biggest challenge at the hub. This reflects broader barriers to entrepreneurship in Uganda, such as poor infrastructure and electricity insecurity, which remain significant issues (Bakashaba, 2018).

StartLAB and CDH offer tailored mentorship with notable differences in their approaches and effectiveness. StartLAB's program consists of the five stages mentioned earlier (Discover, Explore, Validate, Launch, and Grow), which include workshops, masterclasses, and coaching sessions. This structured mentorship, which includes sessions from academic directors, mirrors the successful strategies highlighted in European incubators, which are documented to enhance startup growth by providing targeted expertise and support (Alpenidze and Pauceanu, 2019).

StartLAB provides free mentorship for entrepreneurs under 30 and maintains a robust mentorship infrastructure, validated by 83.3% of its entrepreneurs. Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay's interview points to high-quality mentorship at StartLAB. This is confirmed by the staff survey indicating that StartLAB benefits from the expertise of academic directors affiliated with Solvay and VUB, ensuring high-quality educational content. The hub also has a large panel of approximately 70 coaches in different domains of expertise. According to Mrs. Cogels, the current matchmaking process for entrepreneurs seeking a coach is quite time-consuming. To request a coach, an entrepreneur must submit a formal request to the project manager during the second stage of the program. The project manager will then review the coach's area of expertise in order to make an appropriate match. It

is important to note that the process is not automated at this time. However, through the survey, we gathered suggestions on how the hub could better support the entrepreneurs in achieving their goals. One of the main suggestions was the need for more access to experts, particularly at the early stage of their development. Enhancing program quality through highly qualified trainers was also identified as an area for improvement in the staff survey.

Furthermore, our interviewee Mr. Massard points out an area of improvement and suggests a "buddy program" to promote collaboration and sharing between entrepreneurs from different stages. This was echoed by the staff survey, where they acknowledged the need to organize more cross-functional activities to foster teamwork. Finally, Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay highlights concerns over low attendance at the workshops and events. The staff also recognizes the need to increase engagement among incubatees at different levels of progress. This suggests a need to address barriers to participation at StartLAB.

On the other hand, CDH does not offer a structured training or incubation program. Mentorship at CDH is more ad hoc, based on entrepreneurs' demands. One staff member mentioned, for instance, offering assistance in finance, accounting systems, and tax matters. Mentorship also occurs through events and themed discussions, where internal staff and invited experts share their knowledge and coach tenants. However, this approach may not be sufficient, as only 16.7% of the entrepreneurs reported receiving training and development programs. According to the survey, entrepreneurs at CDH suggested introducing more apprenticeships, training programs, and workshops/seminars for better support. CDH director, Jean Makki, emphasized the challenge of affording the right talent to build effective programs. She explained that while experts are needed, they are quite expensive. Without the necessary funds to hire these experts, CDH often relies on junior staff, which can compromise the quality of support and training provided to startups. This situation confirms the challenges in Africa related to inadequate skills and knowledge among hub actors and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled personnel, as highlighted by AfriLabs and Bridges (2019), Dosso et al. (2021), and Mwantimwa et al. (2021).

Regarding access to finance, both StartLAB and CDH report modest success in facilitating funding opportunities for their entrepreneurs, with 20.0% and 16.7% of respondents, respectively, acknowledging such support. This similarity suggests that while both hubs attempt to aid in securing finance, there remains significant room for improvement.

Entrepreneurs at StartLAB primarily rely on their own revenues and sales (73.3%), with additional support from friends and family (26.7%) and government grants (20.0%). While several

StartLAB companies indicated no issues in securing financing, some noted obstacles such as lacking a VAT number and being in the early stages of their projects. Additionally, they mentioned the time-consuming process of securing funds in Belgium accompanied by administrative barriers.

Similarly, CDH entrepreneurs also depend largely on their own revenues and sales (73.3%), but with a notable contribution from donations (20.0%) and a more diverse financing profile, including venture capital and alternative financing. However, there is a lack of bank loan support, with entrepreneurs citing ineligibility for small businesses to apply due to high interest rates and complex loan processes. This aligns with UNCTAD (2023) findings that MSMEs rely heavily on informal financial services and non-bank institutions. Additionally, some entrepreneurs at CDH highlighted challenges with the country's tax system, characterized by high tax levels for MSMEs. Other barriers include limited access to donor agencies.

Finally, the survey conducted with entrepreneurs highlighted areas where companies need further support or resources. CDH identified finding funding opportunities and financial support as their biggest challenge (36.7%), a sentiment echoed by some StartLAB companies (20.0%). Other companies expressed a need for additional staff. Nevertheless, a notable number of startups at StartLAB indicated they did not require extra support from the hub.

3.4.3 Networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing processes within hubs

The entrepreneurial survey highlights significant engagement in collaboration within StartLAB and CDH, with 50.0% and 66.7% of companies respectively participating in internal collaboration. StartLAB shows a preference for informal knowledge exchange, including the exchange of best practices (73.3%), whereas CDH demonstrates a balanced approach between informal interactions (50.0%), and formal partnerships (65.0%), meaning companies purchase each other's services or products. This indicates a more structured collaboration at CDH compared to the relatively informal nature at StartLAB. This is likely because StartLAB primarily consists of startups in their launching phase (60.0%), while 50.0% of the companies at CDH are in a more advanced stage, the growth phase. Consistent with findings by Mwantimwa et al. (2021) and Rese et al. (2020), the dynamic ecosystems of hubs foster significant networking and knowledge-sharing, leveraging the open nature of their co-working spaces to facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge such as personal insights and intuitions.

Both hubs actively foster business relationships. For instance, our interviewee, Benitta Nabadda, details their provision of HR services to other companies within the hub. Conversely, they hire another company to help them with their marketing. Similarly, StartLAB facilitates inter-company

client relationships, such as the collaboration between Meet My Job and Give Actions, a committed marketing agency. Mr. Massard, CEO of Meet My Job shared that he purchases Give Actions advertising services.

Externally, StartLAB and CDH extend their network through partnerships and events, which enables them to connect their entrepreneurs with significant market opportunities and networks. Such networks, not only boost individual startups but enhance the hubs' value by promoting interactions and also strengthen the overall ecosystem by fostering a conducive environment for business development (Karambakuwa and Bayat, 2022; Toivonen and Friederici, 2015). StartLAB, as noted by Caroline Cogels, frequently collaborates on pitch nights and other networking events with neighboring hubs, enhancing community connections. Conversely, Jean Makki highlights how CDH serves as a gateway for business opportunities, explaining that development partners often reach out to the hub when they have openings or programs suitable for startups. However, despite these efforts, there is room for improvement; the staff survey suggests a need for more collaborative efforts with other hubs to enhance community growth, and 16.7% of CDH entrepreneurs found establishing client and partner connections to be their main challenge, a figure comparable to the 20.0% reported by StartLAB.

According to the staff survey, StartLAB prioritizes structured networking events like mixers and workshops, which are instrumental for professional interactions. However, Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay mentioned that those events are too similar, which limits the opportunities for networking. According to our interviewees, informal interactions at StartLAB, such as those during lunchtime can significantly aid in the sharing of ideas and knowledge. Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay emphasizes that these informal exchanges enable entrepreneurs to expand their understanding and approach to business challenges, illustrating the significant value of community support within the incubator environment.

Our interviewee from CDH, Mrs. Kobusingye, describes a unique approach to fostering network growth through community lunches. These lunches encourage members to interact with unfamiliar faces, thereby broadening their professional networks within the hub. While valued, those community activities could benefit from more diversity to enhance effectiveness, as indicated by a desire for more community events expressed by 26.7% of respondents. Furthermore, 23.3% of the companies at CDH recommend the hub to organize more networking events and enhance opportunities to meet people in the same field.

In line with recommendations by Rese et al. (2020), the adoption of more structured communica-

tion platforms could further enhance these interactions, fostering a more integrated community and optimizing the knowledge-sharing processes within each hub. Both hubs utilize digital platforms like WhatsApp to inform and engage their community. However, there is a noted gap in structured platforms for sharing best practices, particularly at CDH, where director Jean Makki stresses the need for curated platforms to facilitate more intentional knowledge exchanges. Furthermore, Mr. Semuntenga emphasized in his interview the evident educational advantages of being part of a hub as observing the successes and failures of other companies allows for mutual learning. Likewise, Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay, our interviewee from StartLAB, considers these interactions essential for challenging and refining their business strategies.

3.4.4 Environmental impact

Both StartLAB and CDH are assessing their environmental sustainability positioning. Caroline Cogels, the director of StartLAB, notes that the hub is contemplating integrating startups' social or environmental impact into their selection criteria. Currently, as a generalist incubator, StartLAB accepts a diverse array of businesses but is evaluating the possibility of specializing in the future. CDH, with its recent rebranding as the Circular Design Hub, has taken a step further towards promoting environmental sustainability. While they remain a multi-purpose hub accepting all types of businesses, there is a desire to figure out their niche expertise in the Circular Economy (CE). According to Jean Makki, the director of CDH, specializing in this area would allow them to develop stronger programs and secure targeted funding. CDH's ultimate goal is to become the reference point for CE in Uganda, where businesses can turn to for guidance and support. This strategic focus is echoed by Bank et al. (2016), which highlights the benefits of being sector-specific, including the availability of specialized equipment and premises, as well as sector-specific knowledge and know-how that can precisely satisfy the needs of tenants.

Both hubs have taken initiatives, such as programs and partnerships, to promote environmental stewardship. StartLAB has partnered with Pulsitive.impact to integrate sustainability into its entrepreneurship programs through workshops. The hub also organizes workshops and seminars centered around sustainability topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to raise awareness among entrepreneurs. During the program, entrepreneurs are asked to translate their objectives into social and environmental KPIs, and understand how these translate into their business, as stated by Mrs. Cogels.

CDH encourages its startups to enhance their environmental impact through indirect inspiration. Mrs. Makki mentions that they have certain community principles and practices that they hold their clients to, starting with small initiatives such as trash sorting and energy conservation. Additionally,

the hub hosts events and community talks on CE principles. They also support businesses in CE through partnerships like Ekilawuli Community Art, which upcycles glass waste and empowers rural women through craftsmanship training. CDH offers free business development services, space for training and events, and hosts exhibitions to showcase their work, along with a concept store inside the hub.

Moreover, both hubs contribute to environmental sustainability indirectly by supporting startups that integrate green practices into their core business models. At StartLAB, 66.7% of the companies surveyed reported having or aiming to have a positive environmental impact. Meanwhile, at CDH, although 100.0% of surveyed companies claimed to have or aim for a positive environmental impact, careful consideration is necessary when interpreting these figures based on observations and business activity analyses. However, both StartLAB and CDH have companies that exemplify genuine environmental stewardship. For example, Klareco, a company at StartLAB, helps other companies manage energy more efficiently by analyzing building data to ensure compliance and reduce costs, and Lucid uses recycled and locally sourced materials to make sustainable clothing. Similarly, CDH has companies like CoolBricks, which manufactures bio-stabilized earthen bricks from cow dung, providing an eco-friendly building solution, and Fiber Foods, which sells dehydrated jackfruit from Ugandan agroforests as a sustainable meat alternative. Additionally, other companies may not focus on environmental impacts as their core business but still strive to minimize their environmental footprint.

StartLAB and CDH are both facing financial constraints when it comes to enhancing their environmental efforts. Mrs. Cogels has expressed concern that StartLAB lacks the necessary resources to raise awareness about sustainability. Likewise, Mrs. Makki from CDH has acknowledged that adopting eco-friendly practices induces a significant expense for the hub. She suggests identifying creative solutions for the desired practices and partnering with individuals or organizations who can provide financial support.

Moreover, our interviewee Mr. Van der Meerschen from StartLAB, points out that while there is growing awareness of environmental issues in Brussels, the lack of regulatory frameworks hampers clear visibility and action. He argues that specific legislation is necessary to push for broader environmental responsibility within the business community. In Uganda, Mrs. Makki highlights that CE remains a relatively new and undefined field, with a lack of sufficient expertise. She notes that many individuals still struggle to understand how they fit into that conversation. Moreover, the staff survey conducted at CDH expressed concerns that various entrepreneurs and stakeholders may be unfamiliar with the concept of the CE or may not fully grasp its potential benefits.

3.4.5 *Social Impact*

StartLAB and CDH have distinct approaches in their support of entrepreneurs and community building, reflecting their different positioning on social impact and diversity. StartLAB's director Mrs. Cogels emphasizes their focus on nurturing the entrepreneur's potential rather than solely concentrating on their initial business idea. She explains that their current impact is focused on supporting as many entrepreneurs as possible. They are not just looking at the viability of their initial projects, many of which change during the program, but aim to awaken an entrepreneurial mindset. Additionally, Mrs. Cogels says they have built a community of entrepreneurs with different backgrounds and nationalities.

Conversely, CDH focuses on the community at the hub, director Mrs. Makki highlights that CDH provides a platform that allows the community to grow together, which fosters grounded companies and mutual inspiration. She also mentions that CDH actively cultivates a diverse community, incorporating expatriates to extend market connectivity beyond Uganda, essential for local founders aiming to access broader markets. This approach is supported by Friederici (2019b), who points out that African hubs are key for connecting local startups with global networks. Additionally, Toivonen and Friederici (2015) notes that such hubs blend global and local elements to create inclusive spaces that enhance innovation through diversity.

Both StartLAB and CDH prioritize community well-being and engagement by fostering inclusive and supportive spaces for entrepreneurs and emphasizing personal well-being in addition to professional success. This aligns with the research by Luik et al. (2019), which highlights the social capital generated by incubators among tenants.

At StartLAB, our interviewee Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay, highlights the importance of the community: "Entrepreneurship is all about ups and downs. It is important to be surrounded by people who are going through the same experience as you." The survey showed that 13.3% of the companies support each other by sharing knowledge and offering open support, and 13.3% also believe their presence alone reduces isolation. In the staff survey, employees mentioned contributing to community engagement by actively seeking feedback, communicating with incubatees to share news, celebrating achievements, exchanging ideas, and solving problems. While social activities like game nights are initiated by both staff and entrepreneurs, opinions on the sufficiency of these events vary; one interviewee desires more informal gatherings to enhance connectivity, whereas others believe the current offerings are adequate. Overall, 70.0% of startups believe the hub has fostered a supportive community.

Similarly, CDH fosters a collaborative community through regular activities like weekly community lunches, facilitating informal interactions among different players within the hub. Director Jean Makki explained her commitment to fostering relationships beyond the businesses, regularly checking in on both business progress and personal well-being. This approach builds loyalty and a family-like bond with current and former members. However, there is a need for more proactive engagement at CDH to encourage community interaction, as noted by our interviewee Mrs. Nabadda. This perspective was shared by 23.3% of the respondents in the company survey, who expressed a desire for more community engagement activities.

Furthermore, two interviewees from StartLAB emphasized the importance of improving the integration of newcomers into the community. Mr. Van der Meerschen highlighted the necessity for new members to have a more prominent presence, noting that the same individuals often frequent the hub. Mr. Massard proposed the establishment of a "buddy program" to pair experienced members with new entrepreneurs for guidance and assistance. Similarly, Mr. Semuntenga from CDH pointed out gaps in the orientation of new members into the hub's culture, suggesting that ongoing cultural initiation sessions could help newcomers integrate more smoothly. Companies having recently joined the hub confirmed this by mentioning that they have not yet experienced the expected business support or community impact from their involvement in the hub.

Moreover, StartLAB and CDH extend their social impact through community engagement initiatives and collaborations with local organizations, focusing on outreach beyond their immediate entrepreneurial networks. Mrs. Cogels from StartLAB mentioned their efforts in community engagement by collaborating with local associations like Jump naar Werk. This association facilitates the transition from education to the job market by organizing workshops in Dutch-speaking Brussels secondary schools. They also have contact with several teachers to contribute to their courses on entrepreneurship.

Mrs. Makki mentioned that CDH is often recognized as a community convener and is frequently asked to co-host events with other ecosystem players. Currently, CDH has several ongoing programs with local associations. One of these programs is the Munze Art Program, which enhances art students' visibility and commercial potential by providing them with mentorship and the opportunity to showcase and sell their art at CDH. Another example is the SheBang Fashion Show which addresses sexual and reproductive health topics among young girls from the slums of Kampala through fashion shows and workshops. This program empowers them to create reusable pads and explore entrepreneurship. In addition to the organized programs, spontaneous collaborations between companies within CDH also make a significant contribution to the local community. For instance, Mr.

Semuntenga explained during his interview that his company Kampabits, an ICT school within the hub, invites women-owned companies from the hub to engage with the students. These sessions aim to inspire young women by demonstrating successful female-led business models. Furthermore, the hub provides Kampabits alumni students with the opportunity to return for access to resources such as internet and computers. This support enables them to pursue professional projects and support themselves financially.

Additionally, StartLAB and CDH have an indirect social impact through the startups they support, which focus on addressing various societal challenges. At StartLAB, 73.3% of the startups surveyed report aiming or having a social impact. For example, Lileo designs wearable breast pumps to enhance the health and well-being of mothers, addressing gender equity and maternal health, and Unago aids in the socio-professional reintegration of individuals with criminal records, contributing to reduced recidivism and unemployment. Similarly, 100.0% of the companies at CDH report having or aiming to have a positive social impact. However, based on our observations and business analysis, this statement requires careful consideration. Some notable examples include Kampabits, which offers ICT training to youth from informal settlements, aiming to improve their employment prospects significantly, and 100 Weeks, which provides weekly cash donations to families to lift them out of extreme poverty, addressing critical issues of poverty.

StartLAB's director, Mrs. Cogels, admits that it is difficult to measure the full extent of the hub's social impact. This is mainly due to her recent arrival at StartLAB, making it challenging to gauge the long-term effects of their social initiatives comprehensively. Furthermore, the staff survey highlighted a recurring issue of effectively engaging the community. As a result, the hub struggles to foster strong connections between entrepreneurs at different stages of their development.

At CDH, both staff and entrepreneurs have underscored the cultural challenges they face, particularly those related to gender dynamics in Uganda. Our interviewee Mrs. Atim describes the difficulties women encounter in male-dominated industries where they struggle to be taken seriously. This experience is supported by CDH's director, Mrs. Makki, who has found it necessary on occasions to include a male colleague in meetings to ensure her views are respected and acknowledged. Moreover, the company survey reveals that gender-based challenges are widespread, with reports of microaggressions and gender-based violence reflecting broader societal issues. These findings highlight the critical role hubs like CDH can play in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship. By providing support tailored to the needs of under-represented groups, hubs can help these entrepreneurs overcome systemic barriers and achieve success, aligning with strategies recommended by the European Commission and OECD (2019) for fostering inclusive environments.

3.5 Chapter 5: Recommendations for innovation hubs: StartLAB and CDH

To enhance the services offered by CDH and StarLAB to support entrepreneurship in business creation and development in Kampala and Brussels, we will present various recommendations. These recommendations are primarily based on the analysis of interviews and surveys conducted at both hubs, as well as on our own reflections. We have considered the practical constraints of implementing some ideas mentioned in the interviews.

3.5.1 General recommendations for hubs management

The lack of documentation and sharing of best practices between hubs highlights a critical area for improvement. Mrs. Makki, points out the absence of an official measurement system. This problem also impacts StartLAB, where Mrs. Cogels, has concerns about a loss of knowledge due to frequent staff turnover and challenges in gathering precise data to assess the hub's effectiveness. To address these issues, both hubs would benefit from implementing a formal system to document processes and outcomes. This should include both successes and failures, providing a detailed analysis of the support startups require and identifying patterns that reveal long-term needs.

Given that the hub's impact is largely dependent on the startups it supports, we recommend the implementation of customized self-evaluation grids to effectively assess and evaluate the startups. We have elaborated such an evaluation grid in Appendix 19, which includes a common grid that can be used by both hubs, a specific grid for StartLAB, and a specific grid for CDH. Regular completion of these grids will provide essential data that enhances support systems and documents successful practices. This will offer a comprehensive overview of the internal ecosystem, especially at CDH, where resident companies contribute to a dynamic community. The insights gained will improve linkage among companies, support their transitions to a circular economy, identify industry gaps when space becomes available, and measure their impact more accurately. These grids will assist StartLAB in evaluating performance based on CSRD, NFRD, ESRS, and ESG criteria. These criteria and standards are part of the EU's regulatory framework aimed at improving corporate transparency and sustainability reporting. Filling out these grids is particularly important given the stringent regulatory environment in Europe. Although startups may not yet be required to report under these regulations, aligning with CSRD, NFRD, ESRS, and ESG criteria from the beginning will prepare them for future compliance. This proactive approach ensures that startups are well-positioned to meet regulatory requirements as they grow and scale. Additionally, adhering to these standards can enhance their attractiveness to investors who prioritize sustainability and compliance. We suggest beginning with an orientation session to introduce the grid's purpose and benefits. This should be followed by training to ensure accurate completion. It is important to

submit data semi-annually to maintain continuous monitoring. The hubs should review the data regularly and provide customized feedback to identify areas for improvement. The grid should be updated periodically to align with the evolving needs of the startups and the hub.

Additionally, broadening their networks and collaborating with other hubs could benefit hub members by providing more potential client contacts. To harness the full potential of innovation, we propose that CDH and StartLAB actively seek and strengthen international and regional cooperation, especially under the framework of SDG target 17.6. This target, which is part of SDG 17 - "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development" - emphasizes enhancing North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation to improve access to science, technology, and innovation. It also aims to enhance knowledge sharing through coordinated mechanisms, including those at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism (United Nations, n.d.). Such collaborations can facilitate a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, where both sides benefit from shared experiences and innovations. By implementing these collaborative measures and creating a structured approach to documentation, CDH and StartLAB can further enhance their support systems for entrepreneurs.

To reduce dependency on governmental subsidies, we encourage StartLAB to diversify its funding sources. As suggested by Mrs. Cogels engaging more private sponsors aligned with the hub's entrepreneurial mission could partly solve the problem. Additionally, we suggest establishing an alumni funding network to create a self-sustaining ecosystem where past beneficiaries support new entrepreneurs. This approach not only secures financial stability but also enhances StartLAB's autonomy, allowing it to innovate and support its community with fewer external constraints.

Finally, it is also crucial for hubs to maintain a clear focus on their core mission amidst the daily demands of supporting entrepreneurs. Through our observation we noticed that CDH's staff struggled to articulate the incubator's fundamental vision and purpose, highlighting the risk of losing sight of their overarching goals in the busy day-to-day operations. This was also mentioned by Mr. Massard that StartLAB should find their focus: learning entrepreneurship to the youth or support sustainable and successful startups.

3.5.2 Recommendations to improve startup support

To improve access to funding for its entrepreneurs, we encourage both CDH and StartLAB to create a centralized database that lists seed capital, angel investors, and impact investors. We suggest this database to be readily accessible to all hub members and include detailed information on potential funding opportunities. Currently, CDH posts messages in the WhatsApp community group.

However, we feel that a structured resource like an online repository or a comprehensive portfolio would be more effective and accessible for entrepreneurs when needed, as messages may get lost.

Furthermore, we encourage to follow the suggestion of our interviewee Mr. Massard, both CDH and StartLAB could benefit from establishing a buddy or partner program where well-established hub members mentor newcomers. This program would involve more experienced entrepreneurs sharing best practices, resources, and strategic guidance with new members. This can facilitate knowledge transfer, help avoid common pitfalls, and accelerate the growth of emerging startups.

For StartLAB this program would involve pairing startups in the final phase of incubation with new entrepreneurs. Upon joining, new members would sign an agreement committing to support another member for a specified period, such as six months. This agreement would include responsibilities such as explaining the operations of StartLAB, welcoming them into the office environment, and being available to answer questions. Currently, at StartLAB, if newcomers are reluctant to integrate, they may struggle to fit in, which can be challenging. By implementing this program, StartLAB can ensure a more welcoming and supportive community, encouraging newcomers to actively participate and thrive within the hub. Additionally, this mentor system should enable projects in phase four of incubation to communicate with alumni, facilitating a comprehensive support network. This structured approach ensures that experienced entrepreneurs share best practices, resources, and strategic guidance with new members, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.

To address the challenges of integrating newcomers into the CDH community, we suggest implementing a structured welcome process, such as during the weekly community lunch. This process would include a dedicated introduction segment for new companies, granting them a few minutes to introduce their team and business objectives, showcase their products or services, and potentially provide a brief demonstration or slideshow. Additionally, they would share their location within the hub to encourage visits from fellow members. Finally, a Q&A session would allow existing community members to engage with the newcomers, asking questions and initiating discussions that could lead to potential collaborations and a warm welcome into the community.

Finally, to address the low attendance rate during workshops, our suggestion for StartLAB is to implement stricter attendance policies. Based on suggestions from entrepreneurs such as Mrs. Thillaye du Boullay and Mr. Massard, StartLAB could introduce penalties for non-attendance, such as charging a fee or expelling participants after missing three workshops. By ensuring consistent participation, StartLAB could maximize the benefits of its educational offerings and foster a more

committed and engaged entrepreneurial community.

3.5.3 Recommendations to improve their environmental impact

Both StartLAB and CDH can significantly enhance their environmental impact efforts. Given their role in nurturing future entrepreneurs, they have a responsibility to promote sustainability. By making sustainable practices an integral part of the business model for all startups they support, these hubs have the opportunity to play a crucial role in encouraging companies to adopt eco-friendly practices. This showcases the significant potential of innovation hubs in sustainable economic development.

We encourage StartLAB to clearly define its stance on environmental impact to better align with its core value of “making a difference,” as supported by Bank et al. (2016), which argues for raising awareness and proactive planning to minimize environmental footprints in European SMEs. This lack of clear direction has resulted in minimal initiatives aimed at minimizing the hub’s environmental footprint. The absence of a strong environmental stance or substantial green policies means that StartLAB has yet to leverage its potential to contribute positively to environmental sustainability and align with its broader mission of shaping a brighter future. If StartLAB decides to position itself and have more impact, we suggest them to integrate environmental impact assessments into their program for new startups. By integrating it into their program, StartLAB can foster a community of entrepreneurs dedicated to creating positive environmental change.

Criticism of CDH mainly revolves around the implementation of its CE initiatives. Staff members have pointed out that the hub needs to increase its efforts to raise awareness about the CE. However, there also seems to be a lack of ownership of CE principles among staff members, which hinders broader and more effective implementation. Moreover, while there are plans to enhance the hub’s infrastructure to be more sustainable, such as repairing solar panels and installing rain-water collection systems, the high costs involved have delayed these improvements. This could also address the issues related to poor infrastructure, such as heat problems. Additionally, there is a call for greater engagement from hub tenants in the circular transition of the hub. Despite rebranding to emphasize a focus on the CE, based on observations, some feel that the changes are mostly nominal and require more substantial follow-through to truly transform CDH into a model of circular practices.

Given CDH’s large event hall and its community role, hosting more events to highlight CE or green sector companies could boost awareness and attract potential tenants, particularly through fairs where Ugandan green startups can showcase their projects. This approach not only enhances

the hub's green credentials but also fosters a community of environmentally focused entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the funding challenges and the lack of interest in R&D, we recommend that CDH establishes partnerships with corporate entities interested in advancing CE and social entrepreneurship in developing countries through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. This could involve collaborating to create a makerspace for prototyping, providing startups with the facilities to develop and refine their innovations effectively. Additionally, partnering in the development and implementation of an incubation program focused on CE would help cultivate a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. While this is being addressed, we suggest identifying and suggesting external programs, workshops, and online resources that startups can utilize for training and support. This is in line with the needs expressed by its entrepreneurs. Additionally, establishing partnerships with university professors in the field of CE can provide CDH and its startups with valuable access to expertise. Such partnerships would help secure vital resources but also connect startups with broader networks and expertise, enhancing their potential for success and impact in the community.

4 Conclusion

Our thesis aimed to provide an answer to the following question: **"How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLAB Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?"**

To explore this question, we conducted a comprehensive literature review covering innovation hubs, the entrepreneurial landscapes of Belgium and Uganda, and key concepts in entrepreneurship and innovation. We investigated the impact of these hubs on innovation, economic growth, access to resources and mentorship, and their roles in networking and collaboration. In order to fully comprehend their contribution to their local ecosystems, we also examined their environmental and social impacts. Finally, to maintain a balanced perspective, our review encompasses the challenges and criticisms faced by innovation hubs.

Our empirical analysis employed a mixed-method approach, including firsthand observations during our internships, interviews with hub directors and entrepreneurs, and surveys of entrepreneurs and hub staff. This combination of methods provided diverse insights into the operational dynamics and impacts of each hub.

Our findings indicate that CDH and StartLAB contribute to the economic development of their

local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation across five key areas, with specific factors accounting for differences in their impact:

1. **Innovation and Economic Impact:** Both hubs support new, innovative businesses and job creation, driving economic growth. However, they face challenges in accurately measuring these economic contributions due to the difficulty in tracking indirect effects on the local economy, as well as long-term benefits that may not be realized for several years. StartLAB benefits from substantial government subsidies, allowing for comprehensive support and free resources for entrepreneurs, although it is heavily dependent on these subsidies. Its impact is further influenced by navigating the trilingual legal landscape, complicating compliance and administration. Conversely, CDH operates with limited governmental support but leverages its influence to lobby for better policies in favor of startups. It relies more on junior experts due to funding constraints and encounters infrastructure issues like unstable internet and electricity, which hinder consistent support and mentorship. Additionally, the success of CDH may be influenced by Ugandan gender dynamics, considering that the director, being a woman, may encounter unique challenges in the local business environment.
2. **Resource and Mentorship Access:** Both hubs enhance access to resources and mentorship through various programs and support structures. Although StartLAB experiences high staff turnover, affecting continuity and quality of mentorship, it offers structured mentorship with comprehensive training programs and personal coaching. In contrast, CDH provides informal, demand-driven mentorship without a formal structure. The difference in approach reflects the availability of resources and organizational strategies shaped by their local contexts. Despite their efforts, both hubs demonstrate modest success in facilitating funding opportunities. In Uganda, MSMEs face heavy taxation, high costs of legal business registration, and ineligibility to apply for bank loans, underscoring the need for robust funding support at CDH.
3. **Collaboration and Networking:** Both hubs facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing through dynamic co-working spaces and strategic partnerships. They organize events that connect entrepreneurs with wider networks and market opportunities. Community composition significantly influences collaboration within both hubs. StartLAB, with many early-stage startups, fosters informal exchanges, while CDH, hosting more established startups, sees more formal business partnerships. This difference is also related to their focuses: StartLAB prioritizes nurturing individual entrepreneurs, while CDH emphasizes community development among existing startups. Additionally, CDH serves as a reference point for foreigners entering Uganda, extending market connectivity beyond the country. Finally, both hubs recognize the need for more organized digital platforms to enhance best practice exchanges.

4. **Environmental Impact:** Both hubs aim to increase their commitment to environmental sustainability. StartLAB is considering integrating environmental criteria into their startup selection process, while CDH aspires to be the reference point in CE in Uganda. They both recognize the need for improvement but cite financial constraints as a limiting factor for expanding these initiatives. While there is a growing awareness around environmental sustainability in Belgium, StartLAB has not yet established a clear stance on environmental issues. Conversely, in Uganda, CE is an emerging field lacking expertise, but CDH has positioned itself as a hub for CE despite these challenges.
5. **Social Impact:** Both hubs contribute significantly to their local ecosystems through partnerships with local organizations and support for startups addressing societal issues. StartLAB engages in educational programs, while CDH participates in community-centered initiatives, with a shared focus on entrepreneurship. Internally, they prioritize community well-being and create inclusive, supportive environments for entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLAB Brussels significantly contribute to their local ecosystems' economic development through tailored approaches in entrepreneurship and innovation, shaped by their distinct local contexts and challenges.

4.0.1 Limitations of our thesis

Our thesis focused on analyzing the contribution of innovation hubs to the economic development of their local ecosystems and the factors accounting for their differences. We conducted in-depth analyses of two specific cases: StartLAB Brussels and Circular Design Hub Kampala. We gathered data through firsthand observations during our internships, interviews with hub directors and with three entrepreneurs from each hub, as well as surveys of both entrepreneurs and hub staff members.

Through our research, we identified certain limitations. The scope of our thesis was broad, as we tried to fully comprehend the contributions of innovation hubs by covering economic, environmental, and social impacts, as well as the access to resources and mentorship and the networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing processes happening through hubs. This broad scope may have prevented a deeper dive into any single aspect of innovation hubs' contributions. A more focused study on one dimension might have allowed for a more thorough analysis. Additionally, the business models of StartLAB and CDH differ significantly, StartLAB focuses on developing entrepreneurs through a subsidized program, whereas CDH provides office and co-working space primarily to established businesses. However, we aimed to capture the essence of innovation hubs, recognizing common characteristics across all types of innovation, while also acknowledging these

differences.

Our thesis, centered on two distinct case studies, cannot be generalized to all innovation hubs. We examined StartLAB in Belgium and Circular Design Hub in Uganda, countries with very different realities. Although we have strived to contextualize our analysis based on the specific environments of these hubs, it is important to recognize the constraints of our perspective. Despite our research into the Ugandan context and Ophélie's two-month stay in Uganda, we have to admit that this may not fully capture the complex nuances and substantial differences between these two diverse operational environments.

In terms of data quality, our survey achieved a representative response rate, but the extensive length of the survey may have prevented more in-depth responses. In addition, the subjective nature of personal interviews means that this information, while valuable, is based on individual perceptions and experiences, which may not necessarily reflect the views of all members of the hubs. Furthermore, the insights gathered from our interview with Caroline Cogels, StartLAB's Director, must be interpreted with caution, given that she only recently took up her post in February 2024, which may limit the depth of her observations on the hub's longer-term operations and impacts.

Finally, our observational data could be influenced by our respective positions within the hubs. Ophélie, as an intern for CDH staff, and Charlotte, as an intern for a startup at StartLAB, could introduce biases affecting our perspective and analysis. While these diverse viewpoints contribute to our deeper understanding of the hubs, they might also color our interpretations of the hubs' dynamics. We did try to remain objective considering how our positions in these organizations could affect our observations.

4.0.2 Avenues for future research

Based on the findings from this thesis, we identified two promising areas for future research.

Firstly, the under-utilization of digital platforms within innovation hubs presents a significant opportunity for improvement. Future studies could explore the role of these technologies in enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing both within and between hubs. This research could focus on how digital tools and databases can be effectively used to disseminate valuable information, such as funding opportunities, and to facilitate the exchange of best practices among startups and entrepreneurs within similar sectors. Additionally, it could investigate strategies for implementing these technologies to foster inter-hub cooperation, including cross-national partnerships, sharing successes and lessons learned across different innovation ecosystems. Furthermore, it could analyze

the prospects artificial intelligence (AI) could play in this area, by leveraging AI to analyze data trends and provide insights that enhance the sharing of best practices at the hub level. Additionally, it could investigate the barriers that prevent the optimal use of digital platforms, aiming to identify and overcome these obstacles. This approach could greatly improve the operational efficiencies of innovation hubs.

Secondly, despite the critical importance of environmental and social considerations in today's world, there is limited literature on the impact of innovation hubs in these areas, underscoring a need for more research. Future studies could assess how hubs can effectively support startups that prioritize sustainability and social responsibility. This research would delve into the ways in which hubs integrate sustainability into their operations, their effectiveness in fostering environmental awareness, and the challenges they face. By identifying effective strategies and common obstacles, the study could offer actionable recommendations for hubs to better support green and social ventures. Additionally, it would explore the role of innovation hubs as incubators of ethical entrepreneurship, aligning their practices with global sustainability goals and societal needs, providing a framework for enhancing their overall impact.

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A Appendix

A.1 Appendix 1: Interview Profiles

Name	Title	Hub	Date	Type	Appendix
Caroline Cogels	Managing director	StartLAB	08/05/2024	Video call	Appendix 3
Jean Makki	Hub Director	CDH	19/03/2024	In person	Appendix 4
Guillaume Massard	Founder - Meet My Job	StartLAB	05/04/2024	In-person	Appendix 6
Maxime Van der Meer-schen	Co-founder - Give Ac-tions	StartLAB	11/04/2024	In-person	Appendix 7
Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay	Co-founder - Klareco	StartLAB	11/04/2024	In-person	Appendix 8
Emmanuel Semuntenga	Project Manager - Kam-pabits	CDH	22/03/2024	In-person	Appendix 9
Annet Kobusingye and Ann Mary Atim	Finance Administrator and Copywriter - The Brand Factory	CDH	22/03/2024	In-person	Appendix 10
Benitta Nabadda	HR administrator - Sparks Talent Solutions	CDH	22/03/2024	In-person	Appendix 11

A.2 Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview guide for hub director

Date:

Interviewer:

Interview mode: In-person/ video call

Introduction:

- Presentation of ourselves, the thesis, and our goals, as well as the research question.
- Briefly introduce the purpose of the interview and how the information will be used.
- Ask about confidentiality and ask for consent to record the interview for analysis purposes.

Background:

- Can you introduce yourself, and tell me a little about your work, and what you do? What does it involve?
- How do you define your role inside the hub? How long have you been working at the hub?

General questions about the hub:

- What is the history of the Hub? What are the key milestones?
- What defines the vision and primary goals of the Hub? Could you elaborate on the strategic objectives set to achieve this vision?
- What are the values that drive the activities of the hub? And how are they implemented in the hub's activities concretely? Do you have a Code of Conduct?
- What are the key criteria or qualities you look for when selecting startups to join the hub's program? Do they have to fit into your value system?

Support and funding:

- Does the Hub benefit from government support? If so, in what forms? How critical is this to support your operations?
- Beyond government support, how does the Hub secure external funding? Please specify the types of funding sources, including grants, investments, and partnerships.
- Do the start-ups need to contribute to benefit from your services?

Community engagement and support for startups:

- How do you support start-up ups? What things have been put in place for them? What specific programs or initiatives does your hub offer to support entrepreneurs and innovators?
- What strategies do you employ to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within your community?
- Could you share examples of how collaboration is encouraged among your members? (spoken and unspoken rules) How do you encourage knowledge sharing and learning among startups and team members?
- What types of community engagement initiatives are put in place by the hub?
- How would you say the hub contributes to the well-being of its members?

Partnerships and collaborations:

- Can you describe any partnerships or collaborations with local industries or businesses that have contributed to the success of the hub and/or of startups in your hub?
- How does your hub foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within the local ecosystem?

Impact and success:

- How do you measure the success of the hub? What does success look like to you?
- What are the success rates of startups associated with your hub?
- How do you measure the economic impact of your hub on the local ecosystem?
- Can you discuss any future plans or initiatives aimed at further enhancing your hub's impact on the local ecosystem?
- In what ways does your hub influence local policies towards entrepreneurship and innovation?
- What unique challenges does your hub face due to its location and the local economic environment?

Financial Sustainability and Management:

- Can you describe the primary revenue streams for the Hub? How have these evolved over time?
- What are the major cost drivers for the Hub, and how do you manage these costs effectively?
- What financial challenges has the Hub faced, and how have you addressed them?
- What is your hub's governance model? How are strategic decisions made? How many people are involved in decision-making? How is power distributed in these decisions?

Other:

- In terms of environmental sustainability, what are the actions taken by the hub?
- In terms of environmental sustainability, how do you support/encourage the start-ups to take action?

Double materiality is about understanding how two major types of impacts intersect: how sustainability issues can affect an organization's financial health (financial materiality), and how an organization's actions can positively or negatively impact society and the environment (impact materiality).

- How do you balance achieving your financial goals with your commitment to social and environmental responsibility? Are there any strategies or practices that have helped you manage this balance?

- How do you analyze the impact your company has on the society and the environment? Is it taken into account when making strategic decisions?

Specific for StartLab:

- What is the success rate of the start-ups benefiting from your program? How do you measure the job creation resulting from the startups incubated within your hub?
- How do you ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of startups after they graduate from your program?
- How do you measure the social impact of startups incubated within your hub, beyond economic indicators?
- What criteria must be met to obtain the subsidies? How is your success measured? (ex. number of projects that raise certain amount of money, or number of projects started)

Conclusion

- Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
- Offer an opportunity for them to ask questions or add anything else they feel is important.
- Explain the next steps in the process and how the information will be used.

A.3 Appendix 3: Interview with StartLAB's director, Caroline Cogels

Interview StartLAB: Caroline Cogels

Date: 08/05/2024

Intervieweur: Charlotte Caprasse

Mode d'entretien: video call

Introduction du mémoire

Charlotte Caprasse

Notre objectif est de mieux comprendre l'écosystème du hub (différences de niveaux de maturité, durée de l'engagement, diversité des secteurs représentés), ainsi que la dynamique interne au sein des incubateurs. Nous menons une analyse comparative entre le Circular Design Hub Kampala et StartLab Brussels afin d'étudier les contributions économiques directes, telles que la création d'emplois et les taux de réussite des startups, mais aussi les impacts indirects, y compris la promotion d'une culture de l'innovation et de la collaboration, l'attraction des investissements et l'influence des politiques locales sur l'entrepreneuriat. En outre, nous visons à identifier les défis et

les avantages uniques auxquels chaque hub et ses startups sont confrontés en raison de leur contexte géographique et économique.

Voici notre question de recherche: "How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLab Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?"

Charlotte Caprasse

Tout d'abord, as-tu des questions concernant le sujet de notre mémoire ?

Caroline Cogels

Non, c'est très clair, merci.

Charlotte Caprasse

Parfait ! Une autre question avant de rentrer dans le vif du sujet. **Y a-t-il des informations qui doivent rester confidentielles ? Si oui, lesquelles ?**

Caroline Cogels

Je ne crois pas, mais envoie-moi toujours un mail après l'interview pour que je sois sûre.

Charlotte Caprasse

Pas de souci, je ferai ça. **Comment définis-tu ton rôle au sein de l'incubateur ? Depuis combien de temps travailles-tu au StartLAB ?**

Caroline Cogels

Bonjour, je m'appelle Caroline Cogels et je suis assez nouvelle au StartLAB, car je suis arrivée il y a seulement 2 mois. Je tiens donc à te dire que tu devras mentionner dans les limitations de ton mémoire que je ne suis pas en mesure de répondre à toutes tes questions, soit parce que je n'ai pas assez de recul, soit parce que je n'ai pas assez d'expérience. Mais je vais quand même essayer de répondre du mieux que je peux à tes questions.

Charlotte Caprasse

Parle-nous un peu de votre travail et de ce que vous faites. En quoi cela consiste-t-il ?

Caroline Cogels

Je suis la directrice du Startlab Brussels. En tant que directrice, mon rôle est assez diversifié. Voici

les points les plus importants de mon rôle. Le premier consiste à encadrer et faire fonctionner le StartLAB en lui-même. Le deuxième comprend tout ce qui touche au team management. Donc, ceci est le one to one, que ce soit avec le staff du lab ou avec les entrepreneurs, je suis là pour les aider à manager leurs priorités. Après, nous avons la gestion du day to day de l'incubateur, comme par exemple les présences aux workshops, repenser le contenu du programme, retravailler les fonds et objectifs à plus court terme. Il y a aussi toute la partie networking, donc rencontrer d'autres incubateurs et l'écosystème de l'entrepreneuriat au sens plus large. Pour finir, nous avons aussi le reporting et data management du StartLAB. Pour résumer, je suis un peu la cheffe d'orchestre du lab.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quelle est l'histoire du StartLAB ? Quels sont les moments clés ?

Caroline Cogels

L'histoire de StartLAB remonte aux années 1800-1900 dans un contexte académique à l'ULB et la VUB. Ensuite, dans les années 2000, ces deux universités n'avaient aucun lien entre elles. Olivier Witmer a constaté que l'intérêt de certains étudiants pour l'entrepreneuriat était très présent. Certains voulaient aller plus loin que les cours qu'ils suivaient. Olivier a donc décidé de les suivre et les aider et soutenir dans le développement de leurs projets. Dans les années 2000, je ne sais plus exactement quelle année, il y a eu une tendance de compétitions de business plan et d'entrepreneuriat. Cette tendance a fait son chemin au StartLAB aussi et a accéléré notre développement. En 2016, le StartLAB à l'ULB a été créé et deux ans plus tard à la VUB. Les actions des deux incubateurs prenaient place de manière isolée. Ils se sont rendu compte que ce n'était pas efficace en plus du fait que Bruxelles soit trilingue. C'est pour cela que les deux entités sont maintenant liées. Maintenant, le public cible va au-delà des étudiants, nous visons les jeunes entrepreneurs jusqu'à 30 ans. Par contre, il y a encore une influence des universités, par exemple on suit encore le calendrier académique. Pour finir, en 2022, la fusion des deux incubateurs a eu lieu. Par fusion, je veux dire qu'on met nos ressources en commun pour avoir plus d'impact aussi bien sur le public francophone, anglophone et néerlandophone.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quelle est la vision et les objectifs principaux du StartLAB ? Pourriez-vous élaborer sur les objectifs stratégiques fixés pour atteindre cette vision ?

Caroline Cogels

La vision du StartLAB Brussels est de devenir le plus grand incubateur pour les jeunes entrepreneurs qui ont envie de mener des projets à impact. Concrètement, nous voudrions, pour 2030, soutenir

1000 entrepreneurs par an sur les 3 ans d'incubation. Pour 2030, nous voudrions aussi 100 numéros de TVA par an. Ensuite, nous voudrions avoir 5 success stories par an. Ce qu'on veut dire par success stories, c'est avoir des startups qui, après les trois années d'incubation, ont des employés et qui ont un chiffre d'affaires.

Nous avons plusieurs piliers stratégiques et plans d'action pour parvenir à atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés pour 2030. Le premier pilier est la transformation digitale. Car si nous voulons soutenir 1000 entrepreneurs, il sera nécessaire d'automatiser une partie de notre travail. Ce que je veux dire par là est de développer une plateforme numérique avec un meilleur accès. Elle nous permettrait de suivre les projets de plus près et de suivre le stade d'avancement des projets. On voudrait aussi automatiser et faciliter le matchmaking entre les projets et les coachs.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment fonctionne le matchmaking aujourd'hui ?

Caroline Cogels

Aujourd'hui, le processus de matchmaking demande énormément de temps. Un entrepreneur qui voudrait avoir un coach aujourd'hui doit faire la demande auprès du project manager. Il peut faire cette demande à partir de la deuxième phase du programme. Les entrepreneurs doivent écrire une lettre de motivation en expliquant leurs attentes, leurs demandes et surtout leur projet. Le project manager va regarder le domaine d'expertise du coach afin de créer le bon match. Aujourd'hui, il n'y a donc rien d'automatisé dans ce processus.

La deuxième phase consiste à pouvoir faire appel à un coach pour avoir un accompagnement sur mesure. Comme nous sommes un incubateur généraliste, nous avons des projets dans pleins de domaines différents. Les incubés aussi ont tous des backgrounds différents et il y a même une diversité de nationalités. Nous voudrions donc être en mesure de pouvoir les soutenir du mieux qu'on peut par le biais de coachs, mais pas seulement. Nous pensons que digitaliser nous permettrait d'offrir des compléments de formation pertinents aux backgrounds des incubés et d'offrir une opportunité d'apprentissage complémentaire. C'est l'idée de l'accompagnement sur mesure.

Le deuxième pilier est l'amélioration du contenu du programme que nous offrons. On essaye de se remettre constamment en question pour pouvoir offrir un soutien de qualité à nos entrepreneurs.

Le troisième pilier est le mentorship. Ce que je veux dire par là, c'est d'avoir plus de projets et plus de coachs. On veut essayer de voir ce qu'on peut mettre en place pour attirer plus de

coachs, mais aussi les soutenir. On aimerait leur offrir des formations pour les aider à coacher nos entrepreneurs de la meilleure manière.

Enfin, nous avons le dernier pilier qui est le real estate. Si nous voulons accueillir plus d'entrepreneurs, il va falloir déménager dans un plus grand bâtiment. Notre ambition est de nous installer à Usquare, qui offre un espace énorme. Le Fablab en fait partie, le Fablab s'occupe de la partie prototype, ce qui serait bénéfique pour nos entrepreneurs. De plus, il y a aussi des citoyens et des enfants qui y vivent. Le but serait aussi de créer un lien avec les entrepreneurs et de sensibiliser les gens au monde de l'entrepreneuriat. On voudrait favoriser le partage de connaissances. Ceci rejoint mon point de vouloir offrir un soutien sur mesure et de partager les connaissances.

Charlotte Caprasse

Que voulez-vous dire par soutenir des projets à impact ? Quel est le sens du terme impact dans ce contexte ?

Caroline Cogels

Quand je dis qu'on voudrait soutenir des projets à impact, je veux dire par là que pour l'instant, on a envie d'avoir de l'impact en accompagnant le plus d'entrepreneurs possible. Aujourd'hui, nous mettons notre focus plus sur l'entrepreneur que sur le projet en lui-même. Le côté positif de cette approche est que tu as des personnes qui ont le mindset et qui développent l'idée, ou tu aides à développer ce mindset. Souvent, les entrepreneurs arrivent avec un projet mais ce n'est pas celui-là qu'ils vont développer. Nous faisons donc plus attention à la personnalité de l'entrepreneur qu'à son projet.

De plus, quand je parle d'impact, je veux dire qu'on essaye de conscientiser les entrepreneurs qui rentrent au lab. On fait ceci par le biais de workshops, comme par exemple des workshops sur la sustainability. On leur demande aussi pendant le programme comment ils traduisent leurs objectifs en KPI et comment ça se traduit dans leur business. La question qu'on s'est récemment posée avec le staff du lab est : est-ce qu'on devrait se positionner par rapport à ça ? Est-ce que ça devrait devenir un critère de sélection ? Car aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas encore présent dans les critères de sélection. Ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui, c'est d'essayer, à travers les workshops, de planter une petite graine dans la tête de nos entrepreneurs et de faire mûrir la réflexion. On doit décider si on a plus envie de mettre l'accent là-dessus ou non. Ceci n'est pas encore bien défini au StartLAB car on ne se positionne pas encore là-dessus, on se positionne comme un incubateur généraliste. Dans nos projets, nous en avons qui ne seront jamais scalables et d'autres qui le sont. Le fait de ne pas être spécialisé dans un domaine comme la tech, par exemple, nous aide à avoir des projets plus

diversifiés et ça, je trouve ça top qu'ils puissent tous faire partie du StartLAB. Mais il est vrai que nous nous posons la question si nous voulons rester un incubateur généraliste ou non.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quelles sont les valeurs qui guident les activités du StartLAB ? Et comment sont-elles concrètement mises en œuvre dans les activités du StartLAB ? Avez-vous un code de conduite ?

Caroline Cogels

La première valeur est, je dirais, la famille et la diversité. La communauté du StartLAB est très diverse. Nous avons des personnes qui viennent de différents milieux et avec des expériences très différentes. Nous croyons au partage et c'est pour ça que nous mettons en avant la communauté. Par exemple, nous mettons nos entrepreneurs en lien avec le network de l'entrepreneuriat.

La deuxième valeur est ce côté challenge et la remise en question. On remet notre programme constamment en question, pour offrir un programme de qualité. Pour l'instant, toutes les personnes qui sont passées par le lab ont mis leurs touches personnelles dans les programmes. Certaines touches ne sont plus vraiment d'actualité. Nous aimerions revenir à un programme qui ressemble plus à celui du début, c'est-à-dire plus axé sur les bases et avoir un enseignement plus qualitatif.

Pour finir, la dernière valeur, c'est l'impact. Mais comme je l'ai déjà dit avant, c'est compliqué de le mesurer et ce n'est pas encore bien défini quel impact nous aimerions avoir.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quels sont les critères clés ou les qualités que vous recherchez lors de la sélection des start-ups pour rejoindre le programme du StartLAB ? Doivent-elles correspondre à votre système de valeurs ?

Caroline Cogels

Les entrepreneurs qui sont acceptés dans notre programme doivent signer une convention. Après, nous avons certains critères que les entrepreneurs doivent remplir :

Est-ce que la personne a moins de 30 ans ? Nous n'avons pas de critère académique ni de lieu de résidence. Ça doit être la première entreprise qu'elle crée car c'est mieux si la personne est débutante. Ensuite, nous avons 2 processus de sélection, un en janvier et l'autre en septembre. Les entrepreneurs postulent en ligne via notre site et ils doivent aussi écrire une lettre de motivation et puis la personne a un entretien avec deux programmes managers. Nous choisissons plutôt les entrepreneurs que les projets, même si on essaye d'avoir des projets innovants, mais la vraie question

est : est-ce que tu es prêt à t'investir dans la communauté, est-ce que tu es coachable et ouvert au feedback ? Et après, ils doivent aussi remplir un questionnaire avec des citations.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et combien d'entrepreneurs s'inscrivent par semestre ?

Caroline Cogels

Environ 70 entrepreneurs et 40 projets et il y en a qui partent après 2 semaines ou la phase discover, il y en a qui partent déjà après 3 jours ou même 2 semaines, les gens ne se rendent pas toujours compte de l'investissement que ça demande. Car il y en a beaucoup qui ont encore une activité à côté mais il n'y a pas de secret, il faut s'y mettre à fond pour qu'un projet fonctionne.

Charlotte Caprasse

Le StartLAB bénéficie-t-il d'un soutien gouvernemental ? Si oui, sous quelle forme ? Dans quelle mesure est-ce essentiel pour soutenir vos opérations ?

Caroline Cogels

La plus grosse partie de nos ressources sont les subsides qui viennent de la région Bruxelles Économie et Emploi au travers de YET. Car le StartLAB répond à un appel à projets pour la sensibilisation des jeunes à l'entrepreneuriat. Nous recevons des centaines de milliers d'euros en subsides. Ceci peut paraître énorme mais ça part vite car il faut déjà payer 6 employés du lab, les bureaux, les coachs et tout ce qui doit être mis en place pour les programmes. On calcule que le coût d'un incubé par phase c'est en moyenne de 3000 euros.

On répond donc à un appel à projets sur base de 500-700 euros de subsides sur deux ans. En contrepartie, nous devons faire un reporting sur nos activités. Ce qui est compliqué, c'est que nous devons prendre en compte plusieurs entités juridiques. Il y a la partie néerlandophone et francophone, ce qui est compliqué, c'est que les dates des appels d'offres sont différentes. Il faut donc faire plusieurs rapports et d'administrations à des moments différents, ce qui prend énormément de temps.

Charlotte Caprasse

Au-delà du soutien gouvernemental, comment le StartLAB obtient-il un financement externe ? Veuillez préciser les types de sources de financement, y compris les subventions, les investissements et les partenariats.

Caroline Cogels

Nous avons également de l'aide de fondations. Avant, nous recevions de l'aide de la fondation Bernin. On recevait des subsides, je dirais environ 100 000 euros par an. Malheureusement, la fondation a changé ses critères et nous ne rentrons plus dedans. La fondation a décidé de venir en aide aux personnes défavorisées.

Maintenant, nous pouvons compter sur le soutien de Pulse de manière financière mais aussi via des workshops. Le staff du Startlab peut participer à des workshops destinés à tous les dirigeants de leurs partenaires. Les workshops sont intéressants et ils abordent un panel large de sujets.

Pour finir, nous avons aussi des sponsors privés. Ceci représente une petite part de notre aide financière. Un de nos sponsors est BNP Paribas Fortis ou encore Acerta et Daoust. Leur aide financière représente maximum 10 000 euros. En échange des aides financières, on anime des workshops. On aimerait développer plus de partenariats privés car le sponsor peut faire la différence, même si ce n'est pas notre première source de revenus, ce sont les petites gouttes qui peuvent aider à remplir le vase.

Charlotte Caprasse

Les start-ups doivent-elles contribuer pour bénéficier de vos services ?

Caroline Cogels

Non, c'est gratuit pour les incubés entre 18 et 30 ans. Pour les personnes de plus de 30 ans, le coût est de 3000 euros par trimestre. Je dois t'avouer que je ne sais pas si les entrepreneurs doivent reverser une partie de leurs bénéfices quand ils atteignent un certain chiffre d'affaires. Je dois avouer que je ne suis pas certaine de cette information. Envoie-moi un email après notre interview et je vérifierai cette info. Ce que je sais, c'est que la seule chose qu'ils doivent faire, c'est de signer une convention et de la respecter.

Charlotte Caprasse

Peux-tu décrire des partenariats ou des collaborations avec des industries ou des entreprises locales qui ont contribué au succès de l'incubateur et/ou des start-ups dans l'incubateur ?

Caroline Cogels

Nous avons des partenariats avec d'autres incubateurs, comme par exemple le StartLAB ICHEC, le Venture Lab et Y-incubateur. Le partenariat vient de base par i-entreprendre. À tour de rôle, on organise des journées sectorielles pour des incubés dans les secteurs en question.

On a aussi un autre partenariat avec Ephec entreprendre, qui n'est pas vraiment un incubateur, et aussi StartLAB ICHEC. Ce qui nous lie, c'est Hub Brussels, car on est financé par la même enveloppe, le YET, dont je t'ai parlé avant. Ensemble, nous organisons des événements comme par exemple des apéros pitch. Ceci consiste à choisir un thème, disons sur le cosmétique. Alors cet événement est destiné aux projets dans le domaine et ils rencontrent les autres entrepreneurs du même secteur. Ils auront l'occasion de faire leur pitch et d'en discuter ensemble. Au StartLAB, on a par exemple la marque Nolla.

Ensuite, on a des partenariats avec la VUB et l'ULB. Ceci est plus un partenariat historique. Nous sommes encore en contact avec des profs pour faire de la sensibilisation dans les universités. Ou bien les profs nous aident à définir les programmes.

Il y a d'autres projets de partenariat comme le Wagon pour essayer de voir de faire des choses ensemble mais ce n'est pas encore très concret. Pour finir, on participe à des événements. Par exemple, récemment nous avons été chez Startit KBC.

Charlotte Caprasse

Peux-tu décrire les principales sources de revenus du StartLAB ? Comment ont-elles évolué au fil du temps ?

Caroline Cogels

Les subsides de la région et les autres petits partenariats et sponsoring et fondations, comme je l'ai décrit dans un des points précédents. Nous sommes une ASBL, donc notre but n'est pas de faire du profit. On veut juste avoir assez de revenus pour pouvoir survivre au quotidien, payer les workshops, etc.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment mesurez-vous le succès du StartLAB ? À quoi ressemble le succès pour vous ? Et comment mesurez-vous la création d'emplois résultant des start-ups incubées dans votre incubateur ?

Caroline Cogels

Pour mesurer le succès de notre programme, nous utilisons le logiciel Wikiflow. Dans ce logiciel, on peut introduire plein de données, comme par exemple la date d'entrée d'une startup, mais aussi les dates de quand elle passe de phase en phase. Dans le logiciel, on introduit aussi son impact économique mais c'est très compliqué à mesurer. Car on prend contact avec les alumni une fois par

an pour avoir une idée de l'évolution. On pose donc des questions sur le nombre d'employés et sur leur chiffre d'affaires mais ce n'est pas toujours facile car qu'est-ce qu'on comprend par employés ? Certaines startups vont nous dire "nous sommes 10 employés" mais après on va constater qu'en fait, il s'agit de 5 stagiaires et le reste de freelance. Ce n'est donc pas facile de suivre l'évolution des startups qui sortent du lab. Mais récemment, j'ai consulté les chiffres et si je ne dis pas de bêtises, il me semble qu'il y a un taux de 90.0% de survie pour ceux qui ont fait les 3 ans du programme.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quel est l'impact de StartLAB sur l'environnement au sens large ?

Caroline Cogels

Je t'avoue que je ne suis pas en mesure de répondre à cette question car je n'ai pas assez de recul pour mesurer l'impact. Je peux seulement te donner une petite partie de réponse. Je dirais que notre impact plus vaste est qu'on éveille le mindset entrepreneurial. Je ne dis pas que tous les incubés qui rentrent au StartLAB vont finir entrepreneurs et que leur idée va fonctionner mais on éveille un mindset entrepreneurial. Ces personnes-là vont donc entreprendre en interne et faire bouger les choses.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quels types d'initiatives d'engagement communautaire sont mises en place par le StartLAB ?

Caroline Cogels

Je t'avoue que je n'ai pas assez de recul pour te donner une réponse complète. Je peux te donner une partie de réponse. Je dirais que pour l'engagement communautaire, on se positionne dans le passage à l'action. Par exemple, on anime des jeunes qui sont paumés et on les sensibilise à l'entrepreneuriat. Un exemple est avec l'association Jump naar werk, à Tour et Taxis, qui aide des jeunes qui sont dans un autre monde. On s'investit, même si on ne voit pas de intake. Donc je dirais qu'on est fort dans la sensibilisation, tout comme animer des workshops dans des universités ou même ici, au lab même, on accueille des étudiants en communication ou tourisme. On est en contact avec leurs profs et on contribue à leurs cours.

Par contre, nous n'avons pas les ressources pour sensibiliser sur la durabilité. Mais par exemple, dans le programme, il y a des workshops avec Pulsitif. Mais c'est vrai que quand on prend des exemples de startups qui sortent du lab, on aime bien mentionner les projets qui ont un impact positif soit sur la société, soit sur l'environnement.

Charlotte Caprasse

Est-ce que tu as encore des choses à rajouter ?

Caroline Cogels

Un autre point qui est important à mentionner et qui a un impact sur le succès, c'est l'équipe du lab. Car l'impact que tu as dépend du budget et du personnel. Ici, au lab, on est 6 personnes qui travaillent à temps plein. L'équipe est composée de 3 programmes managers et d'une responsable marketing et communication. On a aussi 2 personnes en mi-temps, un office management et une personne qui est responsable de l'administration, de la comptabilité, des fiches de salaire, etc. Et pour finir, il y a moi, la directrice. Il faut dire que l'équipe est très junior et elle a besoin d'être guidée. En tant que nouvelle directrice, c'est un gros challenge d'avoir peu de contexte de choix historique. Car il y a peu de gens qui ont beaucoup d'expérience. Nous avons seulement Julie qui est là depuis 6 ans et Léa qui est responsable marketing et qui est là depuis 1 an. Pour le reste, nous sommes tous assez nouveaux dans nos positions. N'hésite pas à nous envoyer ton mémoire quand il est terminé.

Charlotte Caprasse

Je ferai ça avec grand plaisir ! Un tout grand merci pour ton temps et pour tes réponses.

Caroline Cogels

Il n'y a pas de quoi et bonne chance pour l'écriture de ton mémoire.

Charlotte Caprasse

Merci beaucoup et bonne fin de journée.

A.4 Appendix 4: Interview with CDH's director, Jean Makki

Date: 19/03/2024

Interviewer: Ophélie Martinot

Interview mode: In-person

Ophélie Martinot

Hi Jean, So you already know who I am, you already know the goal of my thesis. But to remind you quickly, it's mainly to learn about the impact the hub has on the local community, and how the internal dynamics of the hub work and also to analyze the ecosystem of the hub at large. It will only be used for academic research. And so for confidentiality, we can either agree that everything

is not confidential. Or you can also tell me for a few questions, if you wouldn't like to have them published, we can also do that. Or nothing published at all, and then the interview will be in a confidential part.

Jean Makki

Yeah, I think it will take it question by question.

Ophélie Martinot

First, **can you introduce yourself?**

Jean Makki

Hello I am Jean Makki, I am the managing partner of the Circular Design Hub, formally Design Hub Kampala. And I've been the managing partner for the last two and a half years. And before that, I was the business development director.

Ophélie Martinot

So can you tell me a little bit more of **what your role includes?**

Jean Makki

It's a bit of a one man show. Because we have a really small management team. So I take over the business direction, oversee the day to day operations and running of the hub. I am in charge of trying to find local partnerships, and really build the visibility of what the hub is trying to do beyond the community here, but in the Ugandan ecosystem as well.

Ophélie Martinot

So about the hub itself, **when was it founded?**

Jean Makki

In 2017.

Ophélie Martinot

Can you tell me a little bit more about the **history of the hub?**

Jean Makki

It was founded by a mother company called Mango Tree Educational, and what Mango Tree did was to make social behavior tools, and they needed a lot of creatives to make that happen. Graphic

designers, animators, and just people in the creative arts space. Because it was a comms agency. It was always a struggle to find that kind of talent. Why? Because the creative arts talent in Uganda was a bit limited. You couldn't find so many experts in certain areas, but they were there. So fast forward Mango Tree decided to find a hub where you can get like-minded people to come and be tenants, but also you can collaborate with them to then implement their programs. And so a lot of the hubs that existed were very IT hubs, so they're all focused on tech. There seemed to be a drive and excitement for us to have a creative hub that was interested in showing the economic value of the creative industry to a big spectrum. So we decided to open as Design Hub Kampala so that we can attract anyone in the design space. Which had a lot to do with the creative sector. First of all, it started by Mango Tree which made a call to a couple of clients that it knew and said, "How do you feel about being in a place where we could sit together but also collaborate? You can work with independent things, but we can also work with things together." It was started on those grounds.

Ophélie Martinot

And you recently rebranded? Can you tell me more about that?

Jean Makki

So after four years, again, our goal was, you know, we started off in the creative sector, and we realized that first, it's not a very heavily funded sector. And we were trying to be sustainable and continue to find what it is that we feel strongly about. Our background back then was in I think co-creation and collaboration. And we wanted to be more impact-oriented, like having a general ethos. And during COVID, which was a big moment for us to kind of think about pivoting, we had tested the creative sector, we had attracted companies in that space, but something was still not growing. We then met a partner from Mombasa called Close the Gap. And it was really refreshing to see what they were doing. It almost made innovation tangible, and they were really in a circular space, you could see the immediate impact of that. So when you talk about innovation, you talk about tech. And what Close the Gap was doing is provide solutions actually, for that tech pipeline in a way that's environmentally sustainable and good. And just the value system around the circular economy felt like it really fit perfectly with everything Design Hub was trying to do, even with their creative sector. And so, while Close the Gap was interested in expanding to Uganda, it was a good opportunity to kind of dream together, about how we then could repurpose our foundation in the Design Thinking world to now emerge with a circular economy, which seems like it fits really well with what we're doing hence rebranding to Circular Design Hub, without leaving behind the design part of what we're doing but embracing something that will fit nicely with the value we wanted to achieve.

Ophélie Martinot

Could you define the vision in short of the Circular Design Hub?

Jean Makki

That always catches me somehow. What is a summarized way to say our vision? As a business incubator, our goal is to build such a sustainable ecosystem, that speaks to social impact, and innovation and to build interconnectedness beyond just the Ugandan landscape.

Ophélie Martinot

So now about **the values that drive the activities of the hub**. Which one are those?

Jean Makki

To build support and accelerate sustainable businesses that have a focus on social impact and a circular value system.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you have a **code of conduct**?

Jean Makki

Yes, we do. But it is not something that we refer to, or that has been revised over time.

Ophélie Martinot

When you select startups, to become tenants or coworkers, do you check that they fit with those values or do you stay open to all?

Jean Makki

We like to be intentional to see that they fit with those values, part of our boarding process, when people make inquiries to be part of the space, is that we always like to ask them what they do. And that's our checking, is what you're doing anywhere aligned to the things that are relevant to us? It's also an opportunity for us because some of them could be service-based companies, like there's a law firm, for example, and they may not particularly be circular, but what's the value system around that? And also to help them understand this is the community that we have, how do you then plug into it even when you are not maybe a circular business, for example, you would be abiding by these things that we stand for. So we try to infuse that as part of the onboarding process.

Ophélie Martinot

Yes. Because you have HR companies, marketing companies, law, etc?

Jean Makki

Yes, we have all these functions.

Ophélie Martinot

Does to hub benefit from any government support?

Jean Makki

Definitely not.

Ophélie Martinot

But would governmental support be critical to support your organization?

Jean Makki

I think it would be very critical. I think first, it will be very critical for the government to understand the value of what the hub is. How the government has interacted with us is seeing property management and so they see rental tax, for example, without an understanding of what we are doing. How can we better be supported? So there seems to be a mismatch in appreciating what innovation hubs bring. It's very private sector-led and they also hope that in this place, they can collect taxes from founders. But again, there are like idea phase companies, so they should not really be taxed. We should be a place that the government collaborates with to give incentives for people to innovate. It would be really nice if the government did proper. We are working towards this through an association that we founded to collaborate with other hubs, which is called Startup Uganda.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you have any other external funding?

Jean Makki

We don't have any external funding. We have occasional grants that allow us to do activities.

Ophélie Martinot

And the startups need to contribute to benefit from the services?

Jean Makki

Yes, it's subscription-based. Occasionally, we have some startups that do not contribute financially but maybe contribute in kind to be able to access the service. Like the charging station, outside is

not really paying rental fees. But their station can be used for marketing the hub because that's what the company can afford to exchange.

Ophélie Martinot

From what I've seen, you're very flexible with payments, there are a lot of discounts being made. So it's all tailored to the specific startup and what they can bring?

Jean Makki

Yes.

Ophélie Martinot

Now more about the support for the startups. How do you specifically support them? What has been put in place?

Jean Makki

Our beginning point to support startup types, we did realize, after two years that there's no one-size-fits-all support for startups, different founders seem to come here for different reasons. First, we've taken it upon ourselves to understand that and why you are choosing to be in a hub. Some of them are looking for collaboration, some of them want to build on their ideas, some are looking for business development support in that direction and some of them just want a physical presence, that's all, they've understood the business they're doing. They like to think this is strategic and they just need their cost of rent subsidized for them. So we work around an approach, like you said, which is tailored around them. One of the things we have put in place is flexible infrastructure. So we have a lot of different packages, that are tailored making sure that they can use the facilities depending on what their cash flow looks like. The other part that we have done is we also are interested in diversity and market connectedness beyond Uganda. So we have intentionally built a diverse community in terms of culture and that has been very relevant for especially local founders because they do want to get connected to other markets and other communities. So building or curating a community that has that mix, has been our way of going. We are going to make sure that we have some Europeans around, some Asians, and how do we attract those people into the space? The other way has been, that we are a gateway for opportunities. So because we are a hub, by default development partners would reach out if they have calls for applications and opportunities for founders. In that way, if MasterCard has a big promotion, and it's looking for founders in tech, they're going to reach out to the Circular Design Hub. Can you forward us some people that be great, and that is opportunity mapping for our startups as well. The other has been really building the linkages for opportunities in-house. And we've kind of don't have a straightforward way that

we do that because we have built an intimate relationship around our community. We know that there is this person that is good at this thing and we know where to connect them and what doors to open for them as well. Occasionally, when we do have grants, our startups have first priority to be part of the activities that benefit from those grants. I think our latest one has been with RVO and we provided them a pipeline that then allows them to get Seed Capital.

Ophélie Martinot

About the unspoken rules of collaboration inside the hub, could you give me examples of those?

Jean Makki

I think part of those unspoken rules is because we have an OD onboarding process that helps us articulate our value to our clients and say like, okay, so you're interested in some companies of the hub, and we're also keen to make sure we know what you're looking for so that we can connect you to those opportunities. People come on board with an awareness that the hub can connect them to opportunities. Could you ask that question again?

Ophélie Martinot

Some examples of collaboration? Like between the companies that are present in the hub, have you noticed a lot of collaboration?

Jean Makki

Yes, first I think I needed to say that we have a healthy mix of startups and scale-ups. We intentionally did that because it is best for our sustainable model. Scale-ups can pay a bit more and they will have better cash flow to pay, which helps us then be patient with startups. But they also provide first-market opportunities, so in terms of purchasing goods from each other internally, which is what startups need traction for. For you to show that you have a business case, you must have sold to someone or worked with somebody. We see that that naturally kind of happens and people get services from each other. An architect is going to support the design company to kind of come up with ways they can make this, which is an expense that sometimes is on the house and sometimes with a very minimal fee. And that's some examples of them. But the bigger collaboration. So in 2018, we had a project with booking.com, that came to the hub because that was the main partner, but really the implementing partners were for tenants. Fast forward as your career moves that has been scaled so rapidly in the hospitality industry of Uganda, which continues to be run by Iota Networks, which was one of the players that did the booking.com project. So one of our tenants, at EVO, Mango Tree, Eye Openers Works, and two other companies have since also had partnerships with people that are not just within the space, but affiliated to the space as well. So through these

programs, for example, it allowed us to kind of share funds together between partners.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you also notice sharing of best practices between companies in the same industry, for example?

Jean Makki

I think there has been a desire, but there's no clear platform where that's actually done. Beyond the fact that we have conversations about, hey, if you're both in architecture, how are you maneuvering with this thing? Or, you know, like directors of different companies coming together saying, what are your strategies around this thing, but it's not curated, With that level, of like an intentional platform. Projects just seems to organically happen.

Ophélie Martinot

Thank you. **Then, on the community engagement initiatives that are inside the hub, can you mention a few of those and how they work?**

Jean Makki

Luckily, for us, some, you already know. Yes, but the goal was to have platforms that allow those interactions to happen. We have bi-weekly themed conversations and those are supposed to be like capacity building. So pick a topic that's of relevance to most founders, find somebody who's an expert in that area, to come and talk, you know, teach or guide. We are meant to have every week lunch, it's a more casual meet together. But the reason why you bring different players in one place is that they can form collaboration or foster some kind of blend with each other. We try to build a more natural setup to make sure that those conversations are being facilitated. The goal is to also have social drinks on the last Friday of the month, things like that. We also used to have creative talks. This was kind of intentional for the creative industry to kind of come and share best practices, learnings, and trends that could also help with the collaboration. That has since a bit faded away but we hope to kind of bring back some of these.

Ophélie Martinot

And all of these are offered for free?

Jean Makki

Yes, and all of these are offered for free. So those are enhanced ones, and then we always get requests from other ecosystem players that need us to co-host with them activities that they're running. One

of them was the women's program, Her Working Women wanted to work with us to have like market days as well. And we have a lot of partnerships that look like that, because they feel like, again, we're a convener. So how do they bring their program to fit into our community? While it's not driven by a community, we get to kind of co-host. And then you know, the community gets to benefit from things like this.

Ophélie Martinot

I also see that some of the tenants are organizing activities or events, like for example, the sector lab, events which are also free for everyone and serve as a platform for networking.

Jean Makki

Yeah.

Ophélie Martinot

So how would you say you contribute to the well-being of the members? I mean, in a less business way.

Jean Makki

First, the hub is a very social business. So my personal drive has been to actually foster relationships with the businesses. And I have check-ins, which are not so much to check on their business, but also just the human part of the people running their businesses, and to nourish that. So a lot of times, it's coffee dates to just check in on how you are doing as a person. This has also built more loyalty because people feel like we are interested and invested in them. As the managing partner, I am interested and invested in the founders that I hear out, what they're building, and the things in their lives. I think that has really helped us have such a contained family, it feels like there's a bond that exists. Because it's worth pursuing it beyond the business relation.

Ophélie Martinot

Then about more the partnerships and collaborations with the local industry. So for example, startup Uganda is one of them. Can you explain a bit more?

Jean Makki

So I am actually the founding member of Startup Uganda, where I'm also the Vice President. It came from my need to also find other hubs in what they're doing, and how we could better collaborate. So with 8 of us, we started Startup Uganda to onboard other hubs. Through this, we can start talking to each other, and figure out a way that we can connect to the government. Like I said, the

government is very detached from what the private sector is doing in the innovation space, there's not a big understanding of what a startup actually is, and what it needs to thrive. As you realize, we have a lot of freebie and subsidized rates, which is needed to help startups grow, while those rates could be subsidized by the government and we could be partners. I found that, as a hub, I don't have enough power to make noise, but as all hubs, we can collect and we lobby. In 2018, we started Startup Uganda and from that, we're building a startup policy now with the government and have started to form roundtable conversations. I think that's part of the ecosystem connectedness and power that we're starting to build.

Ophélie Martinot

Now, would you say the government is interested in listening?

Jean Makki

I think there's more interest now because they see more of us. That's why they're now on board with building a startup policy with the Ministry of Trade, which is in its benchmarking phase at the moment.

Ophélie Martinot

Any other relevant partnerships?

Jean Makki

Other partnerships include Afriblas. Afrilabs is more continent-based which is Africa, and an association of other hubs, and that gives us insights on what's happening in other ecosystems and learnings. It has given me exchange programs, and capacity building for me as the hub owner, just to learn from other owners in terms of programs. It also gives opportunities for projects for hubs. I think it's been very instrumental in knowledge sharing.

Ophélie Martinot

About the programs and the partnerships, I think I have all the information. Okay, the next question is **how do you measure the success of the hub?**

Jean Makki

The success of the hub to me has been measured by the growth of the companies and their growth journey and what that looks like. Like I said, we want to build sustainable businesses, a lot of hubs that are supporting startups have been driven by grants. The fact that first of all, you have paying startups, is a sign that they're doing business that can actually pay them. When we see these

companies, growing for example in terms of size, then that means the hub is growing. Some are moving from one package to another package, and that defines growth for me. I think, in a very difficult-to-measure way, members have been a definition of seeing the growth of the hub.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you know about the success rates of the startups?

Jean Makki

Yeah, I think I have a clue. I feel like there's a 78% success rate based on retention of companies that we've seen remain, not just in the hub, but in operation even when they exit out of the hub.

Ophélie Martinot

Okay. **How do you measure the economic impact you have on the local economy system?** So the creation of employment, new startups being created, etc.

Jean Makki

So how do you measure the economic impact the Hub has on the local ecosystem? Again, I still feel like I would measure that by our ability to scale startups. But in terms of meeting our supply value chain, so scaling the startup as a supplier value chain that we all support into. . . Sorry, it's a bit blurry.

Ophélie Martinot

Yeah, it's a difficult question, we can also go back to it. **Are there any plans or future initiatives to further enhance the impact of the hub?**

Jean Makki

I think we really want to figure out our niche expertise and build the capacity around that. Because that means that we can build more solid programs and also have local capacity to implement those. Once you do have an expert area, then you also have access to specific funding to execute that niche area, instead of doing anything and everything. I think as long as we are down to a circular economy, it's now about building more products around that, it could be like an accelerator fund. Simple spaces that are more niche.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you think the awareness around circular economy is there also outside the hub?

Jean Makki

Oh no, I think it's a new thing. At least in the last two years, I have seen a lot of things popping up. It's also really broad. The circular economy is quite broad. I do see ourselves as privileged to find a part of it that we can claim and perfect to then be relevant to the ecosystem. When they see us and if you're thinking about circular tech, then this is the place to go, this is what they can do for you. We would then provide a lot of offerings in that regard. It's definitely a new space that doesn't have enough expertise and is also very gray. People still do not know how exactly they fit into that conversation.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you have any unique challenges that you face due to this location?

Jean Makki

Yes. We are in the industrial area, so the heat, the infrastructure itself, because technically, this is not meant for human consumption, it's meant for storage. Just the structural challenges around that. Also room for expansion is a bit limited. We're not quite a city center remote. There's no public transportation on this particular road. Then the rental cost is quite steep. But also pollution, because we're an industrial area, it can be a little bit hazardous like things in the environment.

Ophélie Martinot

And about Uganda in general, what do you think are your challenges?

Jean Makki

First the idea of startups. So we are seen as an entrepreneur support organization. Now our target audience would be entrepreneurs. The type of support that exists in Uganda for entrepreneurship is very grant-heavy. It takes a lot of effort to have entrepreneurs, who can adjust their perspective to pay for products, to pay for services from an organization. As an incubator, there's no government support. The other thing is around talent, affording the right talent that you can then use to build good programs, it's quite expensive. To run a good accelerator, you need to have key experts in whatever field you are building. Now, because the grants available do not quite have the money to make you get a high CFO from a big audit firm, then you're going to use a very junior person. So the quality of support and training you are giving the startups is also not that good. There's no support for early-stage startups. And I think most hubs that get funding are working with startups that are very early stage, meaning they are students. Or something like Kampabits gets funding. But when you are supporting more growing mature businesses, then that's not very interesting. Cultural challenges also include misogyny and patriarchy. Sometimes, to some meetings I need to bring a

man to be listened to, I have to bring Isaac for example.

Ophélie Martinot

I know StartLab in Brussels has collaborations with the universities in Brussels, does this also happen in Kampala?

Jean Makki

They're starting to form collaborations with universities. Again, the collaborations don't seem rooted in something more sustainable. It's very one-off and one-sided. I had for example a collaboration with a university in Copenhagen. But what that collaboration was, it's students coming here and getting information about the ecosystem. Or a collaboration with MIT, with engineers here and engineers there, working on something on R&D and things like that. So that's still not there. Innovation and universities are a big thing, especially in European countries. While a lot of founders here are people who have been in corporate work, and now are moving to then discover something new. It's not so much around university students. And so it's hard to establish those collaborations. Because if you look at the type of founders we have, they left university a while ago, they did some work, and now they're starting their own company.

Ophélie Martinot

And in terms of expertise support, if they would have a class on circular economy, could you imagine to be working with one of the professors?

Jean Makki

Yes. Because that's been a part of things I look forward to, who could we partner with for knowledge exchange and things like that.

Ophélie Martinot

So the primary revenue streams for the hub, rental, and the events. Okay. The major costs, I also think, I know, all of these. The financial challenge is that you're for now fully on your own and you have no external funds?

Jean Makki

Yes.

Ophélie Martinot

The governance model, how would you describe it? I've seen that there's a good distribution of

decision-making power.

Jean Makki

We do not have like an organigram, but we also like to make sure that the leads of departments have autonomy over the things that they're in charge of and that there is a free-flow exchange of ideas despite your role. There's some ownership and then department leads, having autonomy, and then supported by a managing director who works with a board on a needs-to-be basis.

Ophélie Martinot

In terms of environmental sustainability, the actions taken, it's about the circular economy. So in that regard, **do you support or encourage the startups that are already here to work more on their environmental impacts?**

Jean Makki

Very indirectly, what we do feel like we are is an inspiration to then attract change. And that means we'll have practices or community principles that we hold our clients to. In that way, it inspires them to create that for their own companies. You know, we'll start with our trash sorting, or you know, saying no, turn off the light, and if you do this, this is good for this and so on. And bits by bits inspire them.

Ophélie Martinot

So how do you think you balance achieving financial goals and social and environmental impacts the hub has? Do you think you have to give one up for the other sometimes or like prioritize one of them?

Jean Makki

Yes, well, to be environmentally friendly and all those practices, it is quite costly. I feel like while we're trying to manage finances, we're finding a healthy balance of creative solutions around the practices that we want to build and finding collaborations with people who can subsidize. So for example, greening, we can't afford the cost of plants. So we encourage clients to buy their own plants and we maintain those or to find a cheaper way to I don't know, like to do branding. So I think it's been a journey of not letting one be less than the other. But finding, what are the solutions that we can make around these things without compromising it too much.

Ophélie Martinot

But both aspects are always taken into account when making a strategic decision?

Jean Makki

Yes. They are.

Ophélie Martinot

That's it, I think. Please add on, **if you have anything to add**, everything is valuable to me.

Jean Makki

I think like I said to the team yesterday, the misunderstanding of innovation. So when you say innovation in the Ugandan ecosystem, it quickly goes to IT. And for the longest time, and also why it was important for us to pivot a little bit, we didn't seem interesting, because we did not flaunt the IT part. That also speaks to government bias, because they support tech. They don't understand tech-enabled, for example. We're trying to do work around that to help the ecosystem realize that innovating is not just when you build an application, it's when you make jackfruit become something else (Fiber Foods). It's when you make art in a different way. In that case, we are trying to be like a platform for showcasing different forms and liberating the different forms of innovation beyond it being a web application and an app because that's what the startup ecosystem in Uganda seems to know and appreciate.

Jean Makki

And I think when you asked about collaboration with universities, a lot of the challenges and the missing part that I still find with innovation here, is that there's not so much work put into research and development because that costs money. Most founders feel like they don't have the luxury for this, they need to quickly build a product that goes to the market. A lot of our training here is to build, go to the market, sell, and make money, which takes away the value of investing in research and development. But I think that also something that needs to be worked on, for founders to appreciate the face of research and development. But that can only happen if there are funds that speak to research and development. They would facilitate those interactions between investors better, founders will be patient with themselves because there are funds that are allowing them to try and error before product sell products sell.

Jean Makki

I think one of the things that I am most proud of is that we are the only hub in Uganda, that is making sense of co-working as a business model that can actually break even.

Ophélie Martinot

Okay, because all the others have external funds?

Jean Makki

All the other hubs are run on grant facilitation. So first, they do not build a continuous community. It's like you are going to approve them for six months, you have these 10 companies, your training, you're working with them, and then they're out. While, here, we have the luxury of doing both. You have a community that actually stays and sees each other grow. And you have a new community that you can bring in for activities and programs. And that builds a bit of like grounded companies. Because there's something about, like seeing another company grow that is inspiring as well. It doesn't leave one off, we have been here in a program together for six months. It's it's a bit more than that.

Ophélie Martinot

To continue that, is there also a follow-up on the companies that leave to hub or do you also see them coming back for other services that the hub has to offer?

Jean Makki

Yes, I think the follow-up it's not a documented process as I said because we've run and built relationships, by default we seem like we easily keep in touch and naturally check-in. I saw this opportunity I still feel like it fits you, can I send it your way, the same with them feeling like they can come back and subscribe to services. We've been able to use most of those for you know like mentorship opportunities.

Ophélie Martinot

Thank you for your time. Do you think about anything that you would like to stay confidential or are you okay with everything being published?

Jean Makki

Yes, I am okay with everything being published. Good luck. Thank you.

A.5 Appendix 5: Semi-structured interview guide for entrepreneurs

Date:

Interviewer:

Interview mode: In-person/ video call

Introduction:

- Presentation of ourselves, the thesis, and our goals, as well as the research question
- Briefly introduce the purpose of the interview and how the information will be used.
- Ask about confidentiality and ask for consent to record the interview for analysis purposes

Background

- Introduce yourself, tell me a little about your work and your company, and what you do?
- How long have you been at the hub?

Impact

- Does your company have a social/environmental impact? If yes, could you specify how?

Collaboration and partnership inside the hub

- Do you collaborate with companies inside the hub? Which companies? Could you describe those collaborations? How did it start? What challenges did the collaborations face, what were the outcomes of the collaborations?
- How do you share knowledge and best practices with other companies inside the hub?

Hub support

- How do you feel like the hub has supported your companies? What is the hub's impact on your company?
- In what way has the hub support changed over the years?
- Do you think of any ways you could benefit even more from the hub?

Context

- What do you think are factors that are specific to your country that influence your way of doing business?

Conclusion

- Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
- Offer an opportunity for them to ask questions or add anything else they feel is important.
- Explain the next steps in the process and how the information will be used.

A.6 Appendix 6: Interview with StarLAB's entrepreneur Guillaume Massard - Meet My Job

Date: 05/04/2024

Interviewer: Charlotte Caprasse

Interview mode: In-person

Charlotte Caprasse

Ma première question est : depuis quand es-tu au Startlab ? Peux-tu décrire les plus grands changements depuis ton arrivée ?

Guillaume Massard

Avant, les locaux étaient à l'université, dans des salles de classe. On a changé d'emplacement il y a un an. C'est devenu beaucoup plus professionnel. L'équipe du StartLab a grossi. Dernièrement, les programmes ont changé. Avant, il y avait les phases 1, 2, 3 et 4, et maintenant ils ont changé les noms et modifié les phases.

Charlotte Caprasse

Concrètement, est-ce que le programme a changé ?

Guillaume Massard

Oui, il a été amélioré. Comme une startup, ils s'améliorent et évoluent.

Charlotte Caprasse

Actuellement, tu te retrouves dans la dernière phase. À quoi as-tu encore accès ?

Guillaume Massard

J'ai accès au bureau, à l'écosystème et à des cours deux fois par mois. Honnêtement, les cours ne m'aident plus du tout.

Charlotte Caprasse

Pourquoi est-ce que ça ne t'aide plus ?

Guillaume Massard

Car la majorité des projets qui sont dans cette phase ne sont pas au même niveau que nous. Donc, ce ne sont pas les mêmes challenges que nous avons. Le dernier cours que j'ai eu était sur les ventes, il était très intéressant mais j'avais déjà vu une partie. Souvent, ça te bloque trop de temps.

Charlotte Caprasse

Devraient-ils faire des changements à ce niveau-là ? Si oui, comment ?

Guillaume Massard

Oui, je pense. Ils devraient faire plus à la carte, ceux qui veulent viennent. Je pense qu'à partir du moment où il y a très peu de projets qui réussissent, il faut plus travailler dans l'autre sens. Le projet devrait parler de ses problèmes et eux, proactivement, pourraient créer une solution plus individuelle, pour en faire des boîtes qui fonctionnent.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quand tu dis qu'il n'y en a pas beaucoup qui réussissent, quel est le taux de réussite au StartLab selon toi ?

Guillaume Massard

Selon mes critères de réussite, il n'y en a pas beaucoup qui ont des employés. Il y en a très peu qui savent se payer. On dit souvent que 9 boîtes sur 10 ne passent pas le cap des 3 ans. Pour moi, la réussite, c'est aussi en fonction de l'énergie que tu mets dedans. Je ne suis pas sûr que tous les gens qui viennent au StartLab se mettent en full time et se donnent les moyens. Il y en a peu qui se mettent des horaires de travail. Pour moi, c'est aussi une réussite de se planter si tu l'as vraiment testé, car même si financièrement ce n'est pas viable, tu auras tellement grandi en apprenant plein de choses.

Charlotte Caprasse

Ceci est plus un problème lié aux startups qu'au Startlab ?

Guillaume Massard

Je pense que c'est lié et que tout dépend de la mission de l'incubateur. Si ta mission est que ceux qui rentrent puissent créer du revenu, il faudrait une organisation plus militaire. Si tu ne viens pas à tes formations en premières phases, tu es viré.

Charlotte Caprasse

Trouves-tu qu'il y a un manque de suivi ?

Guillaume Massard

De mon point de vue, oui. Moi, j'ai senti ça comme une chance donc je ne ratais pas les formations. Mais c'est ma vision, j'aime faire les choses à fond. Ils doivent revoir quel est l'objectif du Startlab.

Est-ce que c'est d'aider les moins de 30 ans qui se posent des questions sur l'entrepreneuriat à le découvrir et grâce au Startlab se dire oui ou non je monte une boîte. Ou est-ce de créer de l'emploi et des success stories ? Ce sont deux choses différentes.

Si leur objectif est le premier, alors ce qu'ils font aujourd'hui, c'est bien. Par contre, si c'est le deuxième, ils peuvent améliorer certaines choses. Le problème, ce sont les subsides. On leur donne des subsides en fonction du nombre de projets, donc c'est la quantité et non la qualité. J'ai moi-même

aidé à faire des entretiens, je suis tombé sur des projets qui n'étaient pas de qualité ou les gens y avaient travaillé quelques heures.

Charlotte Caprasse

Y a-t-il des activités axées sur l'engagement communautaire ou le bien-être ?

Guillaume Massard

Oui, tu peux discuter au Lab même, il y a aussi des groupes WhatsApp par phases. Le staff est toujours là pour aider. Au début, quand je suis arrivé, il y avait des discussions tous les mois avec quelques projets, on parlait de notre ressenti et de l'avancée de notre projet. Ceci était en phase une et je ne sais pas s'ils le font toujours aujourd'hui. En phase 4, tu as des cours et on parle sur des thématiques mais pas spécialement sur le développement personnel.

À côté, le StartLab organise des événements tels que des soirées raclette à Noël, ou encore une soirée jeux de société. Il y a aussi des initiatives d'entrepreneurs, c'est un mix des deux. Avant, en phase 3 et 4, il y avait un weekend avec tous les projets. Aujourd'hui, il y a des kick-offs, donc ce sont des apéros entre phases.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quel est le plus gros point positif du Startlab pour faciliter la collaboration ?

Guillaume Massard

Les bureaux. Si tu viens, tu partages et tu crées un lien avec les autres startups. Après, ils organisent aussi des événements comme je l'ai dit. Le réseau du StartLab crée un lien et c'est plus facile d'échanger avec ces entrepreneurs.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment trouves-tu l'insertion/intégration des nouveaux ?

Guillaume Massard

Je pense qu'il y a beaucoup à faire. Il faut créer un partage. Il faut que quand tu arrives, tu signes dans ta convention que pendant 6 mois ou autre, tu dois aider une personne. Tu dois lui expliquer le Startlab, l'accueillir dans les bureaux et être disponible pour des questions. Il faudrait qu'il y ait un système de parrain/marraine. Il faudrait aussi que les projets en phase 4 puissent parler à des alumni. Ça doit être un partage, un coach c'est bien mais avoir quelqu'un qui a partagé la même chose que toi un an avant, c'est génial de pouvoir discuter. Aujourd'hui, si les nouveaux ne veulent pas s'intégrer, ils ne s'intègrent pas et c'est difficile. Tu arrives, tu ne connais personne et les autres se connaissent déjà et ont leurs habitudes, et ça ne donne pas envie de revenir travailler au bureau.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment décrirais-tu l'impact de l'environnement sur MMJ ?

Guillaume Massard

On dit qu'on est la somme des 3 personnes qu'on côtoie le plus. Si tu es entouré de personnes qui sont très actives, indirectement ça te tire vers le haut, tu vas prendre de ça. Je pense que l'écosystème de travail est important.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment as-tu vécu le fait de lancer une boîte en tant que Français en Belgique ?

Guillaume Massard

Tout ce qui est administratif est très différent de la France. Dans le business aussi, il y a plein de choses que je n'ai pas anticipées. Par exemple, je ne parle pas flamand, ça joue. Tout ce qui est charges sociales et salariales, c'est très différent. J'ai eu un problème avec mon premier employé par exemple.

Charlotte Caprasse

Est-ce que le StartLab t'a soutenu dans ces démarches ?

Guillaume Massard

Oui, ils m'ont mis en contact avec quelqu'un mais pas dans les détails. C'est plus mon board qui m'a aidé. Le Startlab aurait pu plus m'aider, par exemple en mettant un avocat sur l'affaire ou quelqu'un responsable juridique des employés et me mettre en contact. Car j'ai dû payer des conseillers et mes investisseurs pour me dire ce que je devais faire. J'étais perdu au niveau légal et administratif,

je ne connaissais pas les démarches. J'aurais bien aimé être plus soutenu par le Startlab.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment décris-tu l'impact que tu as sur le Startlab ?

Guillaume Massard

Je pense qu'ils sont fiers de dire que Meet My Job sort du StartLab. Je pense aussi que le fait de venir tous les jours a un impact sur les projets qui sont là, par exemple sur les plus jeunes. Il y en a souvent qui viennent demander des conseils, car je suis aussi passé par là il n'y a pas si longtemps. Un autre exemple est que Give Actions travaille pour nous et on leur donne du cash.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et que penses-tu de l'impact de MMJ au sens large ?

Guillaume Massard

Je ne dirais pas que je rends les gens heureux au travail avec MMJ mais en tout cas on essaye de créer une communauté d'acteurs à impact et donc si on continue à se développer, plus notre impact sera important et on arrivera à créer cet écosystème. Je pense que notre impact est quand même assez important, on a 30 000 visiteurs mensuels, et plus de 150 boîtes créent des équipes pour agir plus positivement sur la planète et/ou sur la société. Je pense que ce sont beaucoup de choses indirectes mais nous sommes là grâce au Startlab, grâce à nous des gens trouvent des jobs, eux mettent leur énergie au sein d'une organisation qui a un impact social/environnemental.

Charlotte Caprasse

Merci beaucoup pour tes réponses.

Guillaume Massard

Avec plaisir et bonne chance pour la suite.

A.7 Appendix 7: Interview with StarLAB's entrepreneur Maxime Van der Meerschen - Give Actions

Date: 11/04/2024

Interviewer: Charlotte Caprasse

Interview mode: In-person

Charlotte Caprasse

La première question, c'est juste pour introduire ton projet. Comment est-ce que toi, tu définis ce que vous faites ? Depuis quand êtes-vous au lab ?

Nous avons une situation un peu particulière dans le sens où on a rejoint en 2018, mais pas pour le même projet. Le projet à la base, c'était une application qui permettait de soutenir des associations gratuitement grâce à la pub. Sur l'appli, tu choisisais par exemple de planter des arbres, et plutôt que de payer, tu aurais des pubs. Cette pub générait de l'argent et permettait de faire un don gratuit. Le but était de donner un peu de son temps pour soutenir une association financièrement. On a travaillé là-dessus pendant 2-3 ans et on a eu 60 000 utilisateurs.

On a switché de business parce qu'on avait des difficultés à se positionner comme une agence marketing pour des marques engagées. Depuis le début, les annonceurs qui mettaient la pub étaient des marques engagées qu'on sélectionnait. Maintenant, on les aide à faire de la pub sur d'autres médias, sur des grands médias comme JC Decaux, RTBF, web-radio ou des médias digitaux classiques. Il y a aussi une partie un peu plus de communication responsable, anti greenwashing, pour aider des marques à ce que leur pub soit compatible avec la transition écologique. On travaille aujourd'hui avec la Croix-Rouge, WWF, et on les aide à faire de la publicité sur différents médias.

Charlotte Caprasse

Qu'en est-il de l'impact ? Tu as mentionné que vous avez un impact double, peux-tu développer ?

Nous avons un impact à deux niveaux, via nos services. On sélectionne les gens qu'on aide sur leur impact positif. Deuxièmement, l'impact est plus sur le secteur en lui-même. Au début, notre impact était aussi via de l'aide associative, ce qui aujourd'hui n'est plus le cas.

Charlotte Caprasse

Est-ce quelque chose que vous voulez refaire dans le futur ?

C'était très chouette mais l'intégrer dans le modèle publicitaire c'était trop compliqué. Depuis le début, nous, on essaie de trouver des innovations dans le secteur publicitaire pour essayer d'avoir une publicité qui est meilleure pour la société. On a essayé de le faire en permettant de soutenir des associations mais il y avait trop de difficultés en termes de business model. On a switché sur un modèle un peu plus classique d'agence, en essayant de sensibiliser et de former les différents acteurs, les agences et les gros annonceurs ou autres. Ceci reste toujours autour de l'impact.

Le switch qu'on a fait fonctionne bien mais ce n'est pas exactement ce qui nous passionne le plus. Il nous manque un peu ce côté-là aujourd'hui : innovation, IT, etc. Aujourd'hui, on réfléchit justement à différents pôles, de nouveaux projets d'innovation et que ça représente à long terme la majeure partie de notre business. Par exemple, on est en train de développer un outil anti green-washing moins cher.

Charlotte Caprasse

Vous avez quand même déjà un beau parcours. Tu disais que vous êtes au Startlab depuis 2018. Est-ce que tu as vu des changements dans la manière dont ils accompagnent les start-ups ?

Au début, tu avais un coworking et une ou deux formations auxquelles on pouvait assister, c'était tout. Maintenant, il y a des parcours pour ceux qui débutent. Le StartLab aide à accélérer la vente et puis maintenant tu as aussi accès à des experts. En fait, ils ont un peu tout organisé et formalisé au travers de différents axes. Il y a les phases pour l'accompagnement, le coaching, l'accès aux experts et des événements de networking. Il y a donc eu une évolution énorme. C'est pour ça que notre cas est un peu spécial, parce que nous, aujourd'hui, on est Alumni, officiellement on n'est même plus dans le StartLab.

Charlotte Caprasse

Vous n'avez donc plus de coaching ?

Comme nous avons changé de direction, on s'est retrouvé dans la dernière phase en 2021. C'était quand même vachement intéressant. Puis on a eu un coach qu'on voit encore de temps en temps quand on a besoin. Ceci n'est pas obligatoire mais nous, on s'entend bien et donc une fois de temps en temps, on va faire un lunch avec lui et on discute business. Ceci nous a quand même permis d'ouvrir plein de portes.

Grâce au StartLab, on a un réseau intéressant, ce qui est l'avantage d'être dans un incubateur. Par exemple, les midis, tout le monde échange et partage ses connaissances. Bien sûr que ce n'est pas le cercle qui va créer ton réseau tout seul mais ça peut clairement aider.

Charlotte Caprasse

Concernant les activités du type engagement et bien-être, est-ce que tu trouves que c'est quelque chose qui manque ? Y a-t-il une demande ?

Un stagiaire du StartLAB qui était fan de sport avait essayé de lancer des petites activités sportives tous ensemble. C'est vrai que j'en ai de très bons souvenirs. On était près du campus de l'ULB et on était allés au bois de la Cambre. On avait joué au foot tous ensemble, on avait fait de la slackline. Une fois, on a fait un Molkky. Aujourd'hui, on boit un verre de temps en temps. C'est vrai, je trouve qu'il pourrait y avoir un ou deux trucs en plus. C'est sûr que ça demande un peu d'organisation et de temps. Après, il ne faut pas en abuser, ils font déjà pas mal d'événements. Par exemple, une session escalade pourrait être chouette parce que c'est aussi dans ces moments-là que tu crées des relations et des liens avec d'autres entrepreneurs. C'est pas toujours facile à faire juste sur le temps de midi.

Charlotte Caprasse

Vous faites partie des anciens, comment est-ce que tu trouves l'intégration des nouveaux ? Quel est ton avis là-dessus ?

Je trouve que c'est justement l'erreur qu'ils avaient faite en 2021 : ils ont demandé aux anciens de gentiment bouger. C'est à ce moment-là qu'on est partis avec d'autres start-ups qui fonctionnaient relativement bien et qui étaient plus avancées. Ils se sont rendu compte qu'il manquait ce côté où les nouveaux arrivent et voient les avancées qui les inspirent et qui leur donnent envie de progresser. Je pense que ça, c'est vraiment la base d'un incubateur. Tu dois avoir des gens un peu plus avancés dans leur business et des gens un peu moins pour qu'il y ait cet effet d'émulation collective. Car tout le monde passe par les débuts qui sont difficiles et c'est stimulant de voir des start-ups qui sont là depuis deux ans, qui ont un salaire et qui font un chiffre d'affaires.

C'est important d'avoir ça. Après, je pense que les nouveaux doivent être un peu plus présents parce qu'au final, c'est quand même souvent les mêmes qui sont là. Il y en a beaucoup aussi maintenant qui font ces projets sur le côté et ils ont un job. C'est pas toujours facile d'être là tous les jours, tu ne vas pas tout arrêter juste pour lancer un projet qui va peut-être marcher. Tu fais d'abord des tests et puis s'il y a un truc qui marche, là peut-être tu te dis : "OK, je lâche tout et j'arrête en mi-temps."

Charlotte Caprasse

Tu trouves que le Startlab devrait essayer de changer quelque chose pour améliorer cet aspect ?

Ils font déjà des événements entre les nouveaux, mais ça reste entre les nouveaux. Après, la première étape, c'est d'abord de connaître les gens de ton niveau, avec qui tu partages la nouveauté

de lancer ton business. Au fur et à mesure, je pense qu'ils pourraient, quand tu arrives à la phase 2, peut-être à ce moment-là, ils ont prouvé qu'ils étaient motivés, il faudrait les intégrer pour que tout le monde se tire vers le haut.

Charlotte Caprasse

J'ai remarqué qu'ici c'est souvent les mêmes qui viennent, et des start-ups déjà plus développées.

Nous, on ne voit pas non plus tout ce qui se passe dans les formations, etc. Le soir, tu as des formations et les phases 1 et 2, souvent c'est de 18 à 21h ou même le samedi. Après, si tu veux avancer sur ton projet, il n'y a pas le choix, il faut quand même aussi un peu bosser, il n'y a pas de secret, il faut y aller tous les jours.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment est-ce que tu décrirais l'impact que Give Actions a sur l'environnement du Startlab, et ça peut être l'environnement au sens large ?

Quand tu dis environnement, je pense que Startlab, on est souvent là, donc ça montre un peu qu'il y a de la vie, qu'il y a du dynamisme, etc. Le StartLAB nous a beaucoup apporté, on a accès à tous les bureaux et les formations, tout ça gratuitement. Donc, je les aide dans les coachings des start-ups dans les premières phases. Ce n'est pas énorme, c'est ce qu'on peut un peu faire à notre échelle, partager notre expérience. On fait aussi partie du réseau "Entreprendre", c'est un réseau d'entrepreneurs, donc on va à quelques soirées, quelques événements.

Charlotte Caprasse

Est-ce que tu sens que vous avez un impact ?

On essaye un peu de montrer la voie d'une publicité plus compatible avec la transition, donc je pense qu'à ce niveau-là, on inspire quand même pas mal d'acteurs traditionnels, on les fait un peu bouger. Par exemple, la RMB, c'est la régie publicitaire qui gère la pub à la RTBF, ils ont mis en place différentes actions. Je ne vais pas dire que c'est grâce à nous, mais ils se sont inspirés de notre discussion. Ça a participé à l'éveil des consciences et à montrer qu'il faut avancer. Donc, je pense que dans le secteur publicitaire belge, surtout francophone, on montre un peu le chemin et ça fait réfléchir.

Via les posts que je fais sur LinkedIn, ça sensibilise plein d'acteurs qui disent : « Ah oui, c'est ça, c'est vrai que j'y ai pensé, j'ai vu ce que vous avez fait. » Donc, ça a un impact... Pas

spécialement mesurable. Le challenge, c'est qu'on apporte de la valeur générale, mais on n'arrive pas toujours à la capturer non plus, de manière financière. Nous, on aime bien faire ça aussi, on aime se dire qu'on fait un truc un peu plus grand que juste de l'argent. Ça plante des graines dans la tête de pas mal de personnes, quoi. Et je pense que ça fait partie de la réflexion, justement, et du processus de changement de conscience. D'abord, il faut challenger un peu les personnes.

Charlotte Caprasse

Maintenant, le contraire, comment est-ce que la Belgique, avec toutes ses lois, comment le fait de travailler ici vous a aidé ? Par exemple, comment les facteurs sociaux ou les facteurs culturels vous ont-ils influencés ?

Je n'ai pas l'impression qu'il y ait eu grand-chose, car j'ai toujours vécu à Bruxelles. Peut-être aussi dans un pays, une ville qui est un peu plus sensibilisée aux enjeux environnementaux. Après, hormis cette sensibilité qui commence, en effet, à se développer de plus en plus, c'est vrai qu'on voit quand même que ça bouge. Hormis ça, il n'y a pas grand-chose, mais bon.

Charlotte Caprasse

Avez-vous ressenti des freins, niveau législation ou autre ?

Non, pas spécialement. C'est peut-être plus dans l'autre sens, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de freins actuels qui devraient exister dans le secteur publicitaire. Il faudrait que ce soit un peu plus encadré. Donc, au final, nous, il y a une partie de notre boulot qui ne devrait même pas nous incomber, ce serait aux politiques. Par exemple, il ne devrait plus y avoir de publicité pour l'aviation ou pour les énergies fossiles. J'essaie de montrer à certaines agences ou autres qu'ils peuvent s'engager et refuser de travailler avec certains secteurs comme ça.

Peut-être que c'est plus dans l'autre sens, au final, c'est l'absence de législation pour encadrer. S'il y avait eu ces législations, on aurait eu moins de visibilité en mode : voilà ce qu'il faut faire, parce que ce serait déjà existant. Donc peut-être que ce n'est même pas un frein pour notre développement, peut-être pas.

Charlotte Caprasse

Pour conclure, si tu as un conseil à donner au Startlab, quel point devrait-il améliorer, selon toi ?

Dans le passé, je dirais que je pense que leur plus grosse erreur, comme je disais, mais ils l'ont

remarqué, c'est de mettre dehors les plus avancés. Là maintenant, ça va mieux, mais quand on est revenus, il n'y avait vraiment pas grand monde.

De toute façon, à un moment, ces structures-là, si elles grandissent, elles vont partir d'elles-mêmes. À mon niveau, ils pourraient peut-être essayer d'organiser le StarClub Sport ou le StarClub Jeux de société. Organiser une fois par mois une petite soirée. Ce n'est pas spécialement le Start-LAB qui doit l'organiser, mais qu'ils demandent à quelqu'un qui veut bien prendre le lead là-dessus. Si eux-mêmes ne savent pas le gérer, je trouve que ça pourrait peut-être être bien. Et puis, tu crées un groupe WhatsApp ou autre. Je trouve que ça pourrait peut-être être bien de créer encore un peu plus de liens. Je me demande même si, quand c'est organisé par le Start Lab, ça marche peut-être moins bien que si c'est organisé justement par un entrepreneur. Parce que les gens verraient moins ça comme quelque chose lié au travail. Nous, parfois, si on a un groupe avec les gens qui sont là souvent, on propose d'aller boire un verre et puis on va faire ça. Le Start Lab n'a rien à voir, mais c'est via le Start Lab, tu vois.

Charlotte Caprasse

C'était clair, en tout cas. Merci beaucoup.

A.8 Appendix 8: Interview with StarLAB's entrepreneur Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay - Klareco

Date: 11/04/2024

Interviewer: Charlotte Caprasse

Interview mode: In-person

Charlotte Caprasse

Ma première question, c'est juste, est-ce que tu peux décrire un peu ton business en quelques mots et depuis combien de temps tu es au Start Lab ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Nous, on est au Start Lab depuis janvier l'année passée, donc une grosse année. Notre business, c'est d'aider les entreprises à réduire leur consommation énergétique, surtout la consommation énergétique de leurs bâtiments. Donc, on fait du service, des audits. En fait, on rentre dans les entreprises par la porte réglementaire, donc des PEB, des audits pour le permis d'environnement et pour tout ce qui est durabilité, etc. L'idée, c'est vraiment d'être des accompagnateurs sur le long terme mais avec de la récurrence, donc qui vient tous les mois. Pour un produit de monitoring, par exemple. Ça, c'est où on en est aujourd'hui.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et du coup, par rapport au Start Lab, donc, tu es là depuis un an, tu es dans quelle phase ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

La dernière. On a eu la chance, c'est quand même d'aller assez vite. Donc, on a commencé en 1. Puis le 2, on a sauté. Puis on a fait 3, 4. Fin juin, on aura fini l'accompagnement Start Lab.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et donc, ça veut dire que tu as encore ton coach que tu vois de temps en temps. Est-ce que vous suivez encore, par exemple, des formations ? Tu vas encore à des événements ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Coach, on avait d'abord reçu 1 où il n'y avait pas vraiment eu les clics. Puis après, j'ai demandé de changer avec Nicolas. Il m'a dit OK, donc ça, c'est mon nouveau coach. Donc, ça, c'est trop chouette. Il y a des workshops, je dirais une fois par mois. J'essaie d'y aller à chaque fois. Après, les événements en plus, ça, j'avoue que je n'y vais pas trop. Parce que c'est souvent les mêmes types d'événements qui reviennent. Une fois que tu as été, je pense que tu connais un peu la chanson. Pour moi, la grande force des événements dans tout ce qui est entrepreneuriat, c'est d'une part le contenu, mais d'autre part le networking. Oui. Et le networking du StartLAB, on commence à le connaître. Il y a beaucoup d'autres événements d'entrepreneuriat en dehors du StarClub, c'est plus enrichissant. Tu fais vraiment des rencontres d'autres personnes. Et ça, c'est ça que moi, j'aime bien.

Charlotte Caprasse

J'ai parcouru aussi un peu tes réponses. Tu parlais de ce que vous faites. Et tu as parlé de l'impact et tu as coché l'impact environnemental et tu as écrit "Climate Change, resource depletion". Est-ce que tu sais un peu développer ta réponse ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

En fait, c'est vrai qu'on est très, très souvent challengés sur cette réponse d'impact. Parce que d'abord, est-ce que l'impact fait vraiment partie de ton core business ? C'est ce qui est le numéro un. Et deux, comment tu quantifies ton impact ? Nous, on se rend compte que c'est une conséquence de notre core business au-delà de notre core business vraiment tel quel. En fait, nous, dans notre core business, la valeur essentielle qu'on défend, c'est l'efficacité. À partir du moment où tu as des process efficaces, où tu utilises uniquement la quantité d'énergie dont tu as besoin pour faire un certain travail et que tu l'utilises uniquement lorsque c'est nécessaire, quand tu as la quantité et puis

quand est-ce que tu dois l'utiliser. En fait, si cela est optimisé, du coup, tu consommes moins, du coup, ton empreinte carbone diminue. Et tu vas devoir utiliser moins de matières premières. Parce que tout ce que j'explique pour l'énergie, c'est aussi pour l'eau.

Au début, on était dans la gestion durable de l'eau. L'eau coûte pas grand-chose donc aujourd'hui, c'est très compliqué d'avoir beaucoup de clients là-dedans. Donc, on s'est dit que le bâtiment durable, c'est eau et énergie. Car c'est la même trajectoire, c'est juste deux sources différentes. Quand je dis, par exemple, ressource depletion, tu as les ressources de gaz, par exemple, mais aussi les ressources d'eau.

Utiliser ces ressources de façon efficace pour arrêter d'en gaspiller d'une part est la première mesure d'impact. La deuxième, qui est aussi dans l'efficacité, c'est d'utiliser les bonnes techniques. Par exemple, au lieu d'avoir ta chaudière à mazout, est-ce que ce serait mieux d'avoir des panneaux solaires ? Tu as la quantité d'énergie et la source d'énergie.

On veut vraiment avoir un impact positif sur notre environnement. Mais c'est vrai qu'en cours de route, tu es souvent challengée, on te pose souvent la question : Pourquoi tu le fais ? Selon moi, tu as de fait l'impact que tu as sur ton environnement. Mais c'est souvent aussi une histoire personnelle parce que tu as beaucoup de façons d'avoir de l'impact autour de toi. Et pourquoi tu as décidé de te lancer dans l'entrepreneuriat et de lancer ta propre boîte ? Parce que c'est un chemin qui est quand même très énergivore. Et si tu le fais, c'est souvent, je pense, parce que les gens ont besoin de se prouver quelque chose à eux-mêmes ou aux autres.

Et donc, dans l'impact, c'est aussi de faire la balance entre les deux et d'être honnête par rapport aux autres. C'est pour défendre tes valeurs. Pour moi, c'est souvent personnel et de prouver que tu arrives à le faire. Que tu as ta voix qui peut porter et que toi aussi, tu peux faire la différence et que parfois, il y a un peu ce truc de marre de se conformer à un système qui ne me convient pas. Que moi, je peux faire la différence. Vu que tu as une infinité de possibilités, parfois, ça donne le vertige.

Charlotte Caprasse

Tu parlais aussi de tes challenges et que pour toi, le plus grand challenge, c'est le "Fast Time Management". Comment ça t'affecte dans ton business de tous les jours ? Comment tu ressens ce challenge ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

De nouveau, je compare avec ce que je connaissais d'avant quand j'étais employée, j'étais ingénieur dans la gestion durable de l'eau. Je devais gérer tous les projets liés à ça, mais ça tournait toujours autour des mêmes pôles de compétences.

Quand tu veux lancer un projet, tu as une feuille blanche, il n'y a rien. Et puis, tu vas construire des éléments qui vont t'amener à avoir des clients, qui vont t'amener à avoir de l'argent et qui, en une fois, vont faire que tu existes. Alors qu'il y a deux mois, tu n'existais pas. Par ta propre volonté, ta propre idée. Tu avais vraiment un pouvoir de création qui est assez hallucinant.

Il y avait un coaching qui disait de voir une entreprise comme une table et la table, elle est posée sur plusieurs piliers. Et en fait, il faut que la table reste horizontale. Donc, tous les piliers doivent s'élever plus ou moins à la même vitesse, parce qu'en fait, si par exemple, disons, t'es hyper bon en tout ce qui est finance, gestion de personnes, la technicité de ton projet, par exemple en logistique, t'es nul et ta table, elle tombe. En fait, en une fois, tu te retrouves avec une casquette où tu dois aussi bien faire de la ressource humaine que de la compta, des slides, que de devoir vendre ton produit, que d'en fait aussi développer ton produit et tout plus ou moins à la même vitesse. Et donc, je pense que de mettre ses priorités, de se mettre des blocs dans ton agenda où t'es très focus. Je pense que le problème, quand tu as l'ambition de faire un chouette projet et qu'il y a de l'ampleur, mais qu'il y a deux personnes qui ont, disons, dix heures dans leur journée, tu es restreint. C'est ça, pour moi, qui est peut-être le plus grand dilemme parce que quand tu as beau avoir les plus belles, les plus grandes et les plus nobles idées, en fait, il n'y a plus qu'à le faire dans le quotidien. Et je me rends très fort compte qu'en fait, c'est la consistance et la répétition du quotidien qui fait que tu vas atteindre tous tes objectifs. Donc, c'est de nouveau des choix, un équilibre, comment tu fais.

Charlotte Caprasse

Oui, donc c'est beaucoup d'organisation aussi, en fait.

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Organisation et planification. Planification et des choix, en fait, finalement.

Charlotte Caprasse

Quelles sont tes priorités ? Où commences-tu ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Je pense que c'est un peu le danger de l'entrepreneur qui a cette personnalité, qui veut tout faire en même temps. Mais après quelques mois, tu te rends compte que tu as beau avoir cette flamme et je

pense que c'est pour ça qu'un des métiers où il y a le plus de burn-out, justement, le feu s'autobrûle aussi. Donc, c'est de trouver l'équilibre.

Charlotte Caprasse

Maintenant, on va plus parler du Start Lab. Et du coup, tu m'as dit que tu étais dans la dernière phase. Comment est-ce que le Start Lab t'a aidée ? Qu'est-ce que ça t'a apporté ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Alors, le plus grand point positif, je trouve que c'est la qualité des coachs. Parfois, je trouve que c'est hallucinant à quel point on est entourés par des mentors ou des coachs tellement qualitatifs et qu'il y a tellement peu de taux de présence. Comme si le fait que c'est gratuit, les gens ne se rendent pas compte de la qualité de ce qu'on leur offre. Enfin, c'est des gens qui, à l'extérieur du Start Lab, coûtent, je ne sais pas moi, 500 euros l'heure, tu vois, une formation. Je trouve ça parfois dommage. Et même si, oui, il y a des formations qui sont peut-être moins intéressantes pour toi, je trouve que c'est la moindre des choses de porter du respect, en fait, à la personne.

Le deuxième point qui est important, c'est d'être entouré de personnes qui vivent la même expérience que toi. L'entrepreneuriat, c'est quand même des ups et des downs. Et c'est vrai que là, je suis dans une période de ma vie où j'ai beaucoup de copains qui commencent à avoir des enfants. Quand ils m'expliquent leurs enfants, je comprends, mais je ne comprends pas. Je suis là, ah oui, tu ne fais pas tes nuits, ça doit être embêtant, mais je n'imagine rien. Parce que je ne le vis pas. Et c'est la même chose dans l'entrepreneuriat. Quand je vais boire un verre avec mes copains et que je leur explique cela, waouh, bravo, non mais ça, je m'en fous. Il n'y a pas de répondant de là à pouvoir discuter. Ça fait du bien de partager et de pouvoir construire ensemble parce qu'il y a du répondant, parce qu'on sent que ça fait écho. Ce que tu apportes sur la table fait écho à l'autre personne et on peut construire et du coup sortir, enrichir d'une discussion avec des solutions. Dès qu'on a un midi ici ou qu'entre deux calls, tu parles à quelqu'un, à chaque fois, j'ai l'impression que mes petites œillères s'ouvrent un peu plus et j'ai une vue plus large sur la façon d'aborder les solutions. Et j'ai l'impression qu'un entrepreneur aguerri, c'est quelqu'un qui a vraiment cette capacité de regarder 360. Souvent, je remarque la plus grande limite à ta boîte ou à l'avancement de ta boîte, c'est les limites que tu mets à toi-même. Je pense que le fait de réseau et d'avoir des boîtes hyper différentes, c'est hyper enrichissant.

Charlotte Caprasse

Mais du coup, c'est aussi grâce au bureau que tout ça se fait ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Oui, c'est le bureau. C'est vrai que, par exemple, là, début de semaine, j'ai travaillé chez moi et je ne travaille pas aussi bien chez moi. Parce qu'ici, tu as quand même cette mentalité d'entrepreneur qui est on y va, on fonce, et on ne se pose pas de questions et quand je suis chez moi, je me dis est-ce que je serais un peu plus ci, un peu plus ça. Ici, c'est stimulant aussi de voir les autres et de partager avec quelqu'un. Le troisième point, il n'y a rien à faire, mais c'est d'avoir des locaux gratuits. Du coup, qui rejoint le deuxième point aussi.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et maintenant, l'envers du décor, qu'est-ce que tu trouves un point d'amélioration du Start Lab ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Moi, parfois, ce qui n'est pas très clair au StartLab et qui me fait poser des questions, c'est que, de base, c'est un incubateur pour des gens qui sont encore à l'université ou qui ont des projets très jeunes. Donc, j'ai l'impression que le Start Lab est construit pour ça. Dans les premières phases, tu te trouves avec des projets hallucinants, ce n'est pas très stimulant parce qu'en fait, tu as des workshops où on t'apprend bien à baliser la compta, mais tu as l'impression que c'est comme si on t'apprenait à faire 2 plus 2 égale 4. Finalement, quand tu vois au quotidien qui est au StartLab, ce ne sont justement pas ces étudiants. Ce sont les gens, jeunes travailleurs, je dirais, entre 25 et 30 ans. Et donc, en fait, pour qui sont conçus les programmes ? Tu vois ? Au début, tu commences avec tous les gens au même niveau. Et donc, tu te trouves avec beaucoup d'étudiants ou moi, qui aime beaucoup partager et interroger avec les autres, j'avais littéralement rien à dire. Ça paraît peut-être un peu arrogant ce que je dis.

Charlotte Caprasse

Parce qu'il y avait un trop gros décalage ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Oui, il y a un trop gros gap. Il y a une différence entre je rejoins le StartLab parce que j'ai quitté mon boulot et je veux gagner ma vie dans les 3 mois parce qu'en fait, je n'ai plus de boulot, et entre les étudiants. L'énergie ou l'input que tu es prêt à mettre dans ton projet n'est pas le même. Tu trouves moins ta place parce que j'ai l'impression qu'il y a des incubateurs très pros et en fait, et je pense peut-être qu'alors nous, à tort, on était trop longtemps dans le StartLab parce que ça serait vraiment pour le début de phase de projet et peut-être qu'on reste un peu trop longtemps.

Le deuxième point est d'augmenter le taux de présence pour être plus exigeant. Quand tu es dans un groupe où tu as 30 % de taux de présence, tu te dis, en fait, si les autres ne viennent pas, moi, je ne parle pas non plus, il y aura un gros manque de gens, etc. Je comprends que de le faire payant, c'est une barrière, mais au moins, les gens s'investissent plus. Un autre point, c'est ce qui est bureau. Il faudrait faire des salles qui sont dites à l'avance, ici, on peut parler, là, on ne peut pas parler.

Charlotte Caprasse

Que trouves-tu de l'engagement communautaire du StartLAB ? Y a-t-il des initiatives pour le bien-être des entrepreneurs ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Ils font beaucoup d'événements ou bien ils te tiennent au courant d'autres événements, d'autres incubateurs, tu vois. Donc, il y a une petite communauté d'entrepreneurs qui tourne autour du Start Lab Brussels. Après, ils essayent quand même de faire des événements avec d'autres incubateurs. C'est cool parce que je trouve qu'il y a quand même beaucoup d'opportunités de rencontrer des nouvelles personnes. Je pense que si tu veux vraiment te créer un réseau, tu as la capacité via le StartLab.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment est-ce que tu trouves qu'ils prennent soin de leurs entrepreneurs, du bien-être, par exemple ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Peut-être des événements ou des mises en commun pour nous permettre, justement, d'améliorer ou d'augmenter ces discussions. Mais je pense que ça dépend hyper fort du caractère. Je pense que pour les personnes un peu plus timides, ça doit être cool d'avoir, justement, un moment où on peut se dire, où tu peux échanger à des personnes que tu n'aurais peut-être pas osé aborder comme ça. J'avoue que moi, vu que je parle à tout le monde comme ça, ça me semblerait peut-être un peu superflu parce qu'en fait, je préfère faire les choses par niveau.

Pour moi, ce qui est très important dans le monde entrepreneurial, c'est s'inspirer et d'avoir des personnes autour de moi où je me dis, dans 5 ans, je veux être comme lui. Et au Starlab, je n'ai pas ça. Enfin, j'ai l'impression que j'ai plein de personnes que j'admire, certes, je pense que c'est différent, mais on est plus ou moins au même niveau. Et parfois, ça me manque un peu cet échange-là.

Charlotte Caprasse

Donc peut-être plus échanger avec des alumni ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Alumni ou des événements un peu plus high-level que levée de fonds, comment est-ce que je peux commencer ma levée de fonds avec des gens qui ont déjà fait 3 levées de fonds et qui ont déjà eu 20 millions. Je sais que ça pourrait m'apporter énormément, mais de nouveau, ça ramène à pour qui est-ce que tu fais ? Je pense qu'on est plusieurs boîtes qui pensent peut-être justement à trouver des bureaux autre part, ça, ça nous apporterait pas mal, je pense. Mais après, à nous de trouver ça autre part aussi.

Ce qui est sûr, c'est que le StartLAB est un bon premier tremplin. Un point qui m'a fort frappée, c'est que ceux qui t'accompagnent en phase 1 et 2, ils te prennent vraiment par la main. Limite, un peu too much, rends-nous ton devoir pour cette date-là, est-ce que t'as bien recontacté ton coach, etc. Je pense que pour les gens, justement, qui commencent et qui n'ont pas du tout l'idée, c'est trop bien. Car dans l'accompagnement, ils sont forts. Tu vois, avant chaque événement, il y a un rappel. C'est important, ça.

Charlotte Caprasse

Comment est-ce que tu trouves l'intégration des nouveaux ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

En fait, le truc, c'est que nous, on connaît les nouveaux qui viennent la journée, mais si c'est des workshops entre nouveaux, ben nous, on ne les voit pas.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et tu trouves que ça manque, ou pas spécialement ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

En fait avec des nouveaux qui ne sont pas très ambitieux, qui font juste ça comme passe-temps, et que toi t'en as déjà vu dix, ça t'apporte moins égoïstement de parler avec eux. Parfois, il y a des nouveaux, top, méga ambitieux, alors là on se pose des questions sur LinkedIn. Mais de nouveau, ça dépend du type de profil. C'est pour ça que c'est difficile de faire des choses.

J'ai remarqué qu'il y a quand même pas beaucoup de vraiment débutants, ici. Parce que les débutants, ils ont cours à l'université, etc. Et en fait, ce que je remarque, c'est qu'il y a deux types de clients du Startlab. Tu as les gens qui utilisent vraiment comme bureau et comme quotidien, et puis tu as les gens qui utilisent juste les workshops. Et ça, c'est une énorme différence. Heureusement

que tout le monde n'utilise pas les bureaux, parce que sinon, ce serait compliqué à gérer.

Et je pense que juste avec les workshops, c'est déjà top. Dans tout ce qui est cette démarche d'inspiration, j'ai ce besoin d'être inspirée. C'est vrai qu'ici, ça fait quand même un peu étudiant, si je peux me permettre, je ne verrais pas un businessman de 40 ans travailler ici. Il n'y a rien à faire, ton environnement joue sur toi. Quand tu vas dans ces coworkings avec des businessmen de 40 ans, tu te comportes comme un businessman de 40 ans. Et donc, en fait, t'as plus confiance en toi et tu vas plus oser step-up chez les clients. Donc, les clients vont plus te faire confiance. Il y a tout un cercle vertueux qui se met en place.

Après, il faut savoir comment on définit une startup. C'est, j'ai une idée. Est-ce que le marché est prêt ? Et est-ce que je réponds à un besoin ? Si tu sais oui, alors tu passes à grandir, donc scale-up. Et là, pour évoluer, il faut être dans un incubateur ou un accélérateur, qui correspond à tes besoins et qui va te monter jusqu'au but que tu veux atteindre. Le StartLAB, en tant que premier chaînon, premier tremplin dans cette chaîne, là, ils font super bien leur boulot. Et ils ont quand même un certain impact, car ils te permettent de poser les bonnes questions pour changer ton business. Tu remets ton idée constamment en question. Au début, c'est bien parce que le faire trois ans plus tard, c'est plus compliqué.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et le contraire, là, tu parles du coup de l'impact du Startlab. Mais toi, qu'est-ce que tu penses que Klareco a comme impact sur l'environnement du Startlab ? Est-ce que tu penses que vous avez un impact sur l'environnement ? Et si oui, lequel ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Peut-être là, les derniers mois, un peu moins, mais avant, on était vraiment là tous les jours. Et donc, c'est de créer cette relation avec des entrepreneurs. C'est comme si tu tissais un réseau, un peu comme une toile araignée, et chaque petit fil fait que la toile araignée tient ensemble. C'est ce qui fait que c'est un écosystème riche. Chacun apporte quelque chose de sa façon. Quand tu vois que quelqu'un ne va pas bien, de donner un beau câlin, de faire un sourire, etc. C'est ces petits trucs, mais qui font, enfin, en tout cas, pour moi, que le quotidien vaut la peine d'être vécu, c'est vraiment l'histoire, c'est dans le partage que la magie opère.

Charlotte Caprasse

Et si on regarde un peu plus large, est-ce que tu penses que vous avez quand même un impact sur le monde entrepreneurial ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Le plus dur, je pense dans l'entrepreneuriat, c'est de se lancer. Parce que tu dis, tous ceux, pour moi, qui étaient entrepreneurs avant, ils pèsent dans le game. Et donc, de me dire, moi, la petite Ysaline, quelle est ma plus-value ? Pourquoi est-ce que j'ai lancé un truc ? Enfin, je suis personne, entre guillemets. Et je pense que le fait de montrer que la petite Ysaline, qui croyait qu'elle était personne, elle a osé.

Elle s'est dit, j'en ai marre de mon taf, je quitte et je me lance. Après un an, on gagne de l'argent. Après deux ans, on gagne encore plus d'argent. Et que finalement, la baraque a l'air de tenir, et que le cap a l'air d'être bon. Tu dépasses tes propres espérances, mais celles des autres aussi. Et je pense qu'à ce niveau-là, c'est une source d'inspiration. Parce qu'en fait, les gens se disent, je ne pensais pas que j'étais capable. Pourtant, elle a l'air d'y arriver et elle a l'air plus épanouie qu'avant. En fait, peut-être que moi aussi, je peux y arriver. Et donc, je pense qu'à ma petite échelle, ça, pour les gens, c'est inspirant.

Parfois, je vois des gens, ils sont là, qu'est-ce que je fais ? Je vis mon quotidien, en fait. Moi, j'ai l'impression de faire ce que j'ai à faire. Et peut-être que je suis plus exigeante dans ce que j'ai à faire. Peut-être dans ma tête plus élevée que ce que quelqu'un d'autre pense qu'il a à faire. Donc, je peux paraître impressionnante sous cette optique-là. Mais moi, dans mon optique, je suis mon chemin. Enfin, j'espère, du mieux que je peux, en tout cas. Et donc, je pense que oui, ça, ça peut inspirer d'autres. De montrer que tu peux vraiment réinventer ton quotidien. Tout le monde peut le faire, mais de partir par ta page blanche et d'y arriver, quand t'as la page blanche, c'est ça qui fait le plus peur. Une fois que tu as mis le premier bloc, tu continues à empiler les blocs, en fait. Et voilà, tu deviens de plus en plus résilient.

Charlotte Caprasse

C'est très clair, en tout cas. Et après, en fait, c'est ma dernière question. **Du coup, si on regarde plutôt à grande échelle, donc, la Belgique, comment est-ce que cet environnement a facilité ou a engendré, justement, peut-être des défis ?**

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Là où la Belgique, il y a des points négatifs et positifs. J'ai commencé par un positif. C'est qu'il n'y a rien à faire. C'est un petit monde, ce qui est négatif et positif, mais tout le monde se connaît. Et donc, en fait, il n'y a rien à faire mais une fois que tu rentres dans la sphère... On n'a rien de base. Je ne connais personne. Et... Parce que... Mes deux parents sont employés. Je n'ai pas

vraiment d'entrepreneur dans mon quotidien. Et il n'y a rien à faire. Tu te crées un truc. Il y en a quelqu'un qui connaît quelqu'un, qui connaît quelqu'un, qui connaît quelqu'un. Et ça te fait un arbre de ramification. Et je n'aurais jamais cru que ça allait être aussi vite, que les gens allaient être aussi généreux, que tu puisses aussi vite être en contact avec des grosses boîtes. Vraiment, là, il y a des portes qui sont ouvertes où je n'ai pas très bien compris comment. Et ça, je pense que c'est propre à la Belgique. Parce qu'on est moins à oser.

En Belgique, j'ai l'impression, on a tendance constamment à se rabaisser. Je dis qu'on a toujours cette culture de l'humilité. Et c'est bien d'être humble. Mais en fait, tu vois, par exemple, tous ceux qui parlent sur LinkedIn, tous ceux qui font un peu les malins ou qui se permettent de sortir du lot, vont vite être critiqués. Ils se prennent pour qui ? Et je suis la première à le faire. Parce que ça m'énerve. Parce que moi, j'ai envie d'y arriver. J'ai envie de me le permettre. Et pour l'instant, je ne me le permets pas. Donc, ça m'énerve. Mais par contre, bravo ! Ils ont osé.

Et après, je pense qu'il y a toujours le tone of voice qui fait que tu te positionnes de façon plus ou moins arrogante. Mais ça, c'est l'histoire de chacun. Mais par contre, ils font quelque chose. Et les gens qui critiquent, c'est que les gens n'osent pas le faire. Point barre. Parce qu'en fait, si ça t'embête, juste ne regarde pas. En Belgique, on n'ose pas stand out. Et donc, dans l'entrepreneuriat, si tu sais vivre heureux, vivre caché, tu ne peux pas percer. Et donc, je me rends compte que chez beaucoup d'entrepreneurs, ou en tout cas, tout le monde, à un moment, je pense, passe par là, par cette espèce de frottement ou contradiction qui s'opère en toi. Entre ce que tu dois faire pour atteindre les objectifs de ta boîte versus ton éducation. Et ça, c'est, je pense, quelque chose de belge. Et les coachs disent : il faut faire du bruit. Poste tous les jours sur LinkedIn.

Tout ce qui était législatif et administratif. Pour chaque loi, t'as trois lois différentes. Donc, tu dois passer par les trois lois. Tu dois passer les trois formations qui, dans le contenu, c'est exactement la même chose. Mais tu dois quand même passer trois fois et avoir trois trucs. Toutes les lois sont aussi différentes. Donc, disons, par exemple, c'est pour les subsides à Bruxelles. Tu reçois 3 000 €. En Flandre, c'est 30 %. En Wallonie, c'est 75 %. Mais maintenant, je le sais. Donc, voilà, je peux te le dire comme ça. Mais avant d'avoir su ça, c'était des mois de recherche. C'est vraiment pas clair, ce tissu réglementaire. Donc, c'est un peu chiant.

Charlotte Caprasse

Est-ce que, là-dessus, tu trouves que le StartLab vous guide assez ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Non, parce que nous, c'est des recommandations propres à mon secteur, tu vois. On est en construction. Donc, c'est vraiment un secteur assez spécifique. Mais tu vois, d'avoir des coachs, par exemple, qui ont des expériences en construction, ça, ça aurait pu être cool. C'est vrai que là, c'était pas le cas. Je pense qu'on peut toujours être mieux entourés, tu dois faire des networkings toutes les semaines. Quand tu vas à des networkings, tu dois pas juste regarder. Non, tu dois aller parler aux gens, tu dois oser et sortir de ta zone de confort. On est hyper accompagnés. Je pense vraiment parce que déjà, il y a plein de conférences, plein de trucs, plein d'investisseurs. Et il s'agit d'oser et de taper aux bonnes portes et de pas trop se disperser, d'aller au point tout de suite. Mais donc, je pense que non, en Belgique, et maintenant, tout ce qui est subsides, aides et tout, ils sont top, quoi.

Par contre, notre siège social est en Flandre. Et en Flandre, ils ont beaucoup moins d'aides pour les entrepreneurs. Donc là, on va bouger à Bruxelles, normalement. Et en fait, nous, on s'est dit, la Flandre a un tissu économique plus riche. Ils sont quand même très ambitieux. Allons là. En fait, on se rend compte que, de fil en aiguille, vu que c'est moi qui suis en charge plutôt de l'expansion du réseau, il y a une série plus d'analyses derrière. Mon réseau, il est à Bruxelles. Donc, en fait, tous les contacts que je crée, la plupart, en tout cas, sont à Bruxelles. Il y a beaucoup de subsides à Bruxelles.

Charlotte Caprasse

Merci beaucoup pour ton temps. Je pense que je n'ai plus de questions. Est-ce que toi, tu as des questions pour moi ?

Ysaline Thillaye du Boullay

Non.

A.9 Appendix 9: Interview with CDH's entrepreneur Emmanuel Semutenga - Kampabits

Date: 22/03/2024

Interviewer: Ophélie Martinot

Interview mode: In-person

Ophélie Martinot

Could you start by saying **your name and your role in the company?**

Emmanuel Semutenga

I am called Emmanuel Semutenga. Yes, and at Kampabits I'm the project manager.

Ophélie Martinot

So you mentioned in your survey that the hub supports you in internship and employment opportunities. What do you mean by that?

Emmanuel Semutenga

I mean, that after we have taken our students through the six months' training, they really need a platform to be exposed to the practical ways of doing things. Yeah. Because it's one thing teaching them but it's another thing practicing. Yeah. So as to that, the hub, through its companies, they will always engage them on a three months internship.

Ophélie Martinot

So with a company inside the hub? And it could be any company?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes. In any. Yeah. So that they can get the hands-on experience needed. And if possible, be retained. We have the largest placements with a company called Health Entrepreneurs. It just left the hub. It now has its own warehouse. But they have taken up over 10 students of ours. And for the past six years, yeah. So that is a great achievement for us. And they have always been open to taking more. We also have one in Urithi Studios right now, again, doing an internship. Actually, for him, it is more than three months so far. It's still going well. So that is the ecosystem we have with the design hub, to kind of like, help us first of all, they help with permanent placements or internships.

Ophélie Martinot

And do you collaborate with the companies in other ways?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes, we do collaborate with them in other ways. Because, first of all, there are very many women-led companies in the design hub. And usually Fridays, we don't teach any tech-related stuff. It's all about the future skills. We usually host the women-owned companies to talk to our students, to actually show them that it is possible to run a business as a woman, especially the girls, because, you know, there is a steep curve, to the entry of girls into technology. So this really helps us to motivate more girls to join the field. And I'm happy to tell you that actually, when now with regards to Kampabits, actually. It's the coding, which is a bit of the hard things to teach is actually led by a girl. She leads the training team that does the coding. She's called Justine. Yeah, which shows that the hub has really, really, really helped us to motivate these youth because usually the settlements they come from, usually they have an inferiority complex. So being in this spaces and actually owning these spaces. The hub also has sessions by the way, sometimes.

Ophélie Martinot

With the students?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Not necessarily. Even when it has events inside the hub. Everyone in the hub is invited to participate. So it's not like you need to maybe pay something. So such scenarios again, we will get a chance to have our students get into such spaces, meet dignitaries, meet influencers, ... So I believe in a way. One way or the other, we kind of like benefit. And being the only school we get a lot of opportunities to learn a lot from both the outsiders that come to showcase what they do and also from the insiders, from the other entrepreneurs in the ecosystem.

Ophélie Martinot

Thank you. **So you've been at the hub since the start ?**

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes. I was at the hub since the start, long, long ago.

Ophélie Martinot

Do you feel like the hub's support has changed over the years?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yeah, in a way. It has improved. In some aspects, because with the perspective of a school, we are a tech school and being a tech school there are some things that are non-negotiable. Right now. Things to do with fast and reliable internet right. In the beginning, internet wasn't that stable. But as the internet penetration has improved in the country, the hub has also actually improved the speeds of the internet in the building. So now, internet is a great enabler. So that means we get to teach the kids how to use the internet in various ways. I think the internet is one of the great equalizers, with these students, if you give them a firm background in doing a lot of research, they could easily teach themselves a lot of things. Yeah, I've seen that helping a lot. And even we have scenarios whereby even alumni, when they have projects, they come they use our school computers to do some of the projects to earn a living. And it's largely because the internet connection is really quite good. So if someone tells the client that "Oh, I will deliver a website, in such and such a timeframe", they can easily bet on the fact that there is somewhere they can go, there is a good internet connection to develop and deliver a product. But in other ways, in the hub, there are new faces and also, of course, the old faces that left. But I think the mere fact that there is a form of socialization in the

hub, we learn from some companies that have thrived, but you also learn from the companies that failed. Because there are some companies that came, and things didn't work out, due to one reason or the other. Yeah. So as I said, we learn how to do things right and we also learn what not to do from this space.

Ophélie Martinot

And on a more community engagement type of activities. Because since I've been here, there's not been any. So do you think it went a bit down?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yeah, yeah, it went a bit down.

Ophélie Martinot

Like community lunch, Coffee Corner conversations, networking Fridays, ... ?

Emmanuel Semutenga

For community lunch. Okay. I think, post-COVID things changed a little bit. Because some people decided to work from home, there was a little bit of a shift in the paradigm of work. And also post-COVID, some people left and others joined. Some that joined, I think we're not maybe initiated well into the culture. It's quite possible. Yeah. Maybe it's a gap the Hub could improve. Maybe we could have this culture initiation on a rolling basis, for people to know that hey, okay, when you get in here, you have to get in and not put a hat on your head and hide away.

Ophélie Martinot

Yes because the new ones, you see them less collaborating with others?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Exactly. But it's, I think it's partly, that's my opinion. It's partly due to the initiation. Right. Yeah. Due to the initiation, whereby, at least in the beginning, we knew who everybody was. And in a way, it even helps us to, kind of like, form these alleged alliances. But, that is an area for improvement. But it's something that used to be automatic previously. But post-COVID a lot changed because a lot of companies that maybe couldn't break even, they decided to leave, some decided that maybe remote work was good. Yeah. But I think that is my opinion.

Ophélie Martinot

And what do you think are factors that are specific to Uganda, that influence your way of doing

business, like it can be governmental support, are any social factor or cultural factor?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Of course, the rules and regulations, especially with regards to taxation is not really streamlined, especially for young companies. So that means we end up doing a lot of, should I say underground work. Or we kind of like get stuck in the gig economy. Because maybe the entry of young businesses, sometimes the demands from the government are quite many. Like, if you have to register a business, you have to register it as a company, then you have to get a TIN number, then you have to get a certificate from the capital city authority. So before even you start making money, you could have spent around, should I say \$1,000, which is quite much for now for someone who is trying to start up. I will give an example of a student of ours, that has just finished graduating in the six months training and he would love to be self employed. Chances out of 10, they don't have a computer. But they need one, right? Yeah, maybe what we can do for them, we can have them stay for maybe a period of around three, four months, as we await the next cohort. But after that, they're on their own right. So they have to make sure they get maybe around \$500 or \$200 to get a machine. Yeah and actually the first time I saw a good machine at \$200 is when Close The Gap, brought those machines. But you realize that this person will need \$200, at least at the startup capital. So it may not be a lot, but it's quite a sum. So you can't convince me that the same person will go to the government to legalize this business, right? The government wants a \$1000 to allow you to do business. So they end up staying in the gig economy. And sometimes with a gig economy, you don't have the chance to get corporate clients, because a corporate client will want your TIN number because they are trying to pay tax. They will want a lot of things from you. So I think that is one of the bottlenecks. But in a sense, there's also a lot of opportunity. Because, again, in Uganda the economy is a bit open, in a sense that the government tries to support innovations, right, in one way or the other. Right? We have hackathons all around the place, where our students have benefited a lot. But again, those opportunities in most cases, they're not right in front of your face. So the publicity about those opportunities, it's quite closed. Now like the Circular Design Hub, it has a portal, they try to, if you check the WhatsApp, they try to share some opportunities that are coming up, maybe there is that event coming up, where the community could benefit here. So in a way, it may look like a small thing, but it kind of like avails information that is not available to the public domain. Or maybe, like, okay, there is a website where I can go to know what is trending in Uganda, and there are very few. So the opportunities are there, but some of them, they stay at the ministry level. They don't get to trickle down to the common person who would actually benefit from them. So that is kind of like, should I say, a miscommunication gap, flow of information is not automatic, like it should be for the beneficiaries to benefit. Yeah, but I must say there are very many opportunities.

Ophélie Martinot

Would you say Uganda is growing a lot?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes, it's growing a lot. And it's largely because of the internet migration. Yeah. There are a lot of things being done right now that were not being done a few years back and also the COVID itself, it came with a lot of advantages. Yeah. A lot of people started realizing that actually, they could do business online here, here there. Yeah. But like I said, mostly it's the flow of information. That is also one of the main bottlenecks.

Ophélie Martinot

Thank you. That was very helpful. Any other comments? Things you would like to add?

Emmanuel Semutenga

About Alliance Francaise, they teach French at the hub. As they are teaching French, there is a lot of people coming in, some people come with their kids. They need their kids to be occupied, so they could contract us to teach their kids how to code in their library as the parents are learning. And that is an example of a project that got to know us by coming to the Hub.

Ophelie Martinot

So Alliance Francaise got to know Kampabits by coming to the hub?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes, and the fact that we are near the events space, is good, because people peep in, they look inside, they see the logos and that is how the conversation starts.

Ophelie Martinot

And did you also get funding through the hub?

Emmanuel Semutenga

Yes, the hub played a great role in us getting funds. It really helped, because the funders they want to know that you actually exists. Because most funders, they don't have a physical presence, so they send someone here, for example from Canada, to come and to do an assessment. And the good thing is at the hub we are ready for them, and they see the ecosystem and they are like okay this is a good thing. We got that funder from Canada actually one year in after the hubs opening. The hub

opened in 2017 and we got that donor in 2018 and we still have them now. But the hub played a very big role, because they had to come down here and make sure we actually exist. I really think we benefited a lot from the hub.

A.10 Appendix 10: Interview with CDH's entrepreneur Annet Kobusingye and Ann Mary Atim - The Brand Factory

Date: 22/03/2024

Interviewer: Ophélie Martinot

Interview mode: In-person

Ophélie Martinot

Let's just start with **your name and the role you have inside Brand Factory?**

Annet Kobusingye

I am called Kobusingye Annet. In Brand Factory I work as an administrator and in finance.

Ophélie Martinot

Could you repeat what you're saying **about the hub's impact and how they support you as a business?**

Annet Kobusingye

First of all, they give us that opportunity of free networking with other people and through that network we get business, we have a wide community that really support us, you can never be there and you get stuck. At least you have like help from very many people around you, you can see, you have companies with tech expertise and very many other things. For example if you're looking for HR assistance you have people around you, you can go and really get that knowledge from them get the skill from them. Sometimes you are just there at lunch, remember, you're from the same community, your at lunch with them just like hey by the way you work on this and do this, and so you create friendships and before you know you are actually exploiting their services.

Ophélie Martinot

So like Spark talent, for example. So that's a company you're working with?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah, we have Spark Talent we worked with them, we used to manage their social media. We could work with any company, everything, because we are marketers. Even another HR firm, Paths

Unfiltered, we used to work with them. Honestly, with the kind of boss we have, we have actually worked with 90% of the design hub people. The potential people that I can really highlight is the Eye Opener. In the time I've been in my position at Brand factory, we have worked with them, we have gotten businesses with them and we are still working with them. And we shall continue working with them. So it is came as like a networking thing, like that relationship that has been built and is still growing.

Ophélie Martinot

Is there another marketing company inside the hub, like competition?

Annet Kobusingye

We had. Maybe Fine media now, but we had Metro that was there but they shifted.

Ophélie Martinot

Okay and did you sometimes share best practices of marketing with each other?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah, we've got a client that was new on board. They needed strategy but then I think we were still young. We didn't know, we didn't have people on board that would come up with a strategy thing and what. But we had the other people, that were there, that have been in the field for such a long time and they had people that were good in that area. So we make use of them.

Ophélie Martinot

So that's from Metro?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah.

Ophélie Martinot

And you've been here since the start of the Circular Design Hub?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah.

Ophélie Martinot

Okay, do you think the hub's support has changed over the years? Like do you feel there was

more support from the hub before, less now or did it stay the same?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah, it changed. They used to give us that open networking thing. It's no longer there, maybe people didn't appreciate it but it's no longer there. We also had a specific day that we go and we all have community lunch and people would go there in the event space, all of us companies will go there and make sure that you don't sit with the people that you have been working with in the same office. You sit where you see new faces so that you can really get to mix up, you get to network.

Ophélie Martinot

And you liked those things? You would benefit from them?

Annet Kobusingye

Yeah, it was nice you would talk to the people that you don't know but they are here, they exist. You see somebody in here, in the hub, but you don't know maybe they're doing the same thing you're doing but you don't know. Maybe they would use your service but they don't know you. In my case I think it would be nice to do more of those things.

Ophelie Martinot

What about you Ann, can you say your name and the role you have inside your company? Do you want to add something.

Ann Mary Atim

My name is Ann Mary Atim and I am a copywriter at the Brand Factory. I agree with Annet for all the things she just said.

Ophelie Martinot

Would you say your business faces challenges specific to Uganda?

Ann Mary Atim

I guess one of the challenges is that owning a business as a woman can be difficult, especially in the industry we are in, so the marketing industry. It is kind of male-dominated but a lot of people think otherwise. Actually in Uganda a lot of everything is male-dominated, so obviously it is going to be hard as a female to penetrate any space. We don't always take you seriously as a woman and yet for example our boss is a woman. Another thing, is the value of currency, which is very low, which means you have to work twice as hard to get half of what you want to receive in profits. Or we

outsource our services to expats and people outside of Uganda. But that can also cause some type of braindrain, because imagine you are doing business with only people from outside of Uganda, that means that eventually you are going to start thinking of moving out of the country. So one of the challenges is that our money has no value.

A.11 Appendix 11: Interview with CDH's entrepreneur Benitta Nabadda - Sparks Talents Solution

Date: 22/03/2023

Interviewer: Ophélie Martinot

Interview mode: In-person

Ophélie Martinot

Hi Benitta, could you start by telling me **your name and your role in the company?**

Benitta Nabadda

My name is Benitta and I work as a HR administrator, yes for Sparks Talent Solution, an HR agency.

Ophélie Martinot

I saw in the survey that you said you had collaborated with a lot of other companies inside the hub. **Could you describe some of those collaborations?**

Benitta Nabadda

We have collaborated by offering HR services to other companies in the hub, for now I believe it's 6. But we are hoping to reach more. For example for True Soil, we do recruitment for them, so that means we do like ads, go through resumes, and even their interviews up until finalizing the contract. We also worked with Kwanzi, also for recruitment and policy formulation and drafting. Then CDH is also employing me through Spark Talent, so I do everything of HR for CDH. Other companies we have worked with are ADAAM, Brand Factory, NUTIP. On the other way around these companies also help us, like Brand Factory helped with our marketing. Informally, we also get info from other companies on best practices exchanges. Another thing is just going around the hub, it's actually one of the KPI. So we go around, speak to people, share knowledge. We are getting to know people in the hub, getting to know how to work with them, sharing views on the world, the country, . . .

Ophélie Martinot

Can you also describe your answer about the hub support? **How would you describe the hub's**

support towards your company?

Benitta Nabadda

So we started as a startup at the hub and have grow inside the hub, we got our clients here. The hub also provided us with discounts on rent and visibility through the traffic inside the hub. For example, last week we had an interview in our office and other companies in the hub noticed it and expressed their interest, like oh you do interviews, good to know, ...

Ophélie Martinot

Do you think of **any ways you could benefit even more from the hub?**

Benitta Nabadda

Maybe with more engagement, some clients just sit in there place. You have to make them get out and meet the others. Or doing more things that can get people together, like right now they are supporting Ramadan, by putting the prayer area, but it could be more, like have things to eat in the evening. Or yeah anything that brings people together, sports session together, ...

Ophélie Martinot

In the survey you said you had a positive **social and environmental impact. Could you describe this more to me?**

Benitta Nabadda

The social impact we have from the trainings, by teaching people inside businesses to be better at their job or personal developments. We also offer some free trainings. Yeah, like some HR staff are already inside the business and offer trainings there. And for environmental impact is by the promotion on Circular Economy with our clients, for ex the glass project Ekilawuli that is now inside the hub.

Ophélie Martinot

Finally, **do you think of any specific challenges in Uganda for your company?**

Benitta Nabadda

Yes, HR technology is weak in the country, a lot of them are failing. We also get difficult clients, very difficult and financially the company is not able to grow, we have to take it slow. There's also not much awareness of our work, and HR, people are also still seeing us a startup and we are wanting to go for bigger companies, so we need to get more visibility.

A.12 Appendix 12: Company survey

Companies Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey for our thesis project.

We are seeking minimum one response per company currently engaged at the hub, aiming to gain insights into the hub's ecosystem (differences in maturity levels, duration of engagement, the diverse sectors represented), as well as the internal dynamics within the hub.

We are conducting a comparative analysis between Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLab Brussels.

The question guiding our research is: *"How do Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLab Brussels contribute to the economic development of their respective local ecosystems through entrepreneurship and innovation, and what specific factors account for the differences in their impact?"*

Your response is very valuable to us! **The survey should take approx. 10 minutes to complete.**

Thank you!
Ophélie Martinot & Charlotte Caprasse

** Indicates required question*

1. Email *

Company overview

2. What is your name and role inside the company? *

3. What is the name of your company? If not applicable please note it with "N/A" *

4. Which hub do you belong to? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ StartLab Brussels
☐ Circular Design Hub Kampala

5. In what year was your company founded? If not applicable please note it with "N/A". *

6. How many employees do you have in the company? *

7. In which sector does your company operate? *

8. Who are your primary target markets? *

9. Who are your stakeholders (=all actors involved in your activities) ? *

10. What are the products/services you offer? *

11. What is the current maturity level of your company? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Development: The birth of a business idea, involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solutions, and initial feasibility assessment.
- ☐ Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers
- ☐ Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenue, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.
- ☐ Expansion: Stable phase where growth stabilizes, emphasizing optimization of operations, maximizing profitability, and maintaining market position.
- ☐ Maturity: Phase marked by declining performance and market challenges, leading to restructuring, downsizing, or exiting the market.

12. When did your company started working at the Hub? *

13. Does your company have/aims to have a positive social impact? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. Does your company have/aims to have a positive impact on the environment? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

15. Please describe how you have an impact (social or environmental). What (societal) problem does your company tackle? What solution does your company offer? *

Collaboration and internal dynamics

16. Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes Skip to question 17
☐ No Skip to question 19

Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? YES

17. With how many companies have you collaborated? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ none
☐ 1 - 5
☐ 6 -10
☐ 10- 15
☐ 15 - 20
☐ 20 - 25
☐ 25 - 30
☐ 30 - 35
☐ More

18. Describe the nature of these collaborations. (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc) *

Collaboration and internal dynamics

19. How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or best practice exchanges with other hub members? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very often

20. What channels or platforms does the Hub provide for companies to connect and collaborate ? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Networking events
- ☐ Online forums
- ☐ Social Media Group (Whatsapp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc)
- ☐ Conversation tables
- ☐ Shared lunch/dinner
- ☐ Workshops and seminars
- ☐ Other: _____

21. How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., group dynamics, group activities, inclusion, general atmosphere, mental health initiatives, ideas proposed to the hub's staff, ...)

Hub support and impact

22. How did the Hub help you in any way? How has it contributed to your growth or success? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Provided mentorship and guidance
- ☐ Offered access to professional networks
- ☐ Facilitated funding opportunities
- ☐ Delivered training and development programs
- ☐ Supported through incubation or accelerator programs
- ☐ Enhanced visibility and branding
- ☐ Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology)
- ☐ Connected us with potential clients or partners
- ☐ Fostered a supportive community environment
- ☐ The Hub has not contributed to our growth or success
- ☐ Other: _____

23. Please describe your previous answer and tell us about any other ways in which you feel the hub has supported your company. *

24. How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Addressing local challenges
- ☐ Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events)
- ☐ Financial donations to local causes
- ☐ Spreading awareness on important issues
- ☐ Providing free or discounted services/products to the community
- ☐ Supporting local education (e.g., scholarships, school partnerships)
- ☐ Creating employment opportunities
- ☐ Sponsoring (e.g., local sports teams, cultural events)
- ☐ We do not currently contribute to the local community
- ☐ Other: _____

25. Please describe your previous response. *

Challenges and needs

26. What are the biggest challenges you currently face? *

27. Could you identify specific areas where your company requires additional support or resources? *

28. Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support its companies in achieving their goals? *

Context

29. Does your company receive any governmental support or incentives?

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies)
- ☐ Yes, we benefit from tax incentives or credits.
- ☐ Yes, we receive indirect support (e.g., access to resources, training programs)
- ☐ No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.
- ☐ I'm not sure / Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

30. What are the primary sources of funding for your company? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Own revenue/sales
- ☐ Bank loans
- ☐ Venture Capital
- ☐ Government grants
- ☐ Angel investors
- ☐ Crowdfunding
- ☐ Donations
- ☐ Alternative financing ((e.g., peer-to-peer lending)
- ☐ Friends and family
- ☐ Other: _____

31. Have you encountered any challenges in accessing financing for your business? If so, what barriers have you faced? *

32. Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges in your country/region affecting your business operations? *

33. Are there any cultural or social factors unique to your country/region that influence the way you conduct business? *

Other

34. Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and insights more in detail? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

35. Anything else, additional comments?

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Google Forms

A.13 Appendix 13: Staff survey

Hub staff insights survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey for our thesis project.

We are conducting a comparative analysis between Circular Design Hub Kampala and StartLab Brussels to investigate the direct economic contributions, such as job creation and startup success rates, but also the indirect impacts, including fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, attracting investment, and influencing local policies towards entrepreneurship. Furthermore, we aim to identify the unique challenges and advantages each hub and its startups face due to its geographic and economic context.

Your insights as staff members of the hub are crucial for us!

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey, this is of great help for us!

Ophélie Martinot and Charlotte Caprasse

* Indicates required question

1. What is your name? *

2. Which hub do you belong to? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ StartLab Brussel

☐ Circular Design Hub Kampala

3. What is your role inside the hub and what are your main responsibilities? *

4. How long have you been working at the hub? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☐ 6 years
- ☐ 7 years
- ☐ 8 years
- ☐ 9 years
- ☐ 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

5. In what way do you support the entrepreneurs of the hub on a day-to-day basis (this does not include mentorship programs, networking events or any other educational resources) ? *

6. How do you participate in community engagement at the hub? *

7. From a scale of 1 to 6, how much do you think the hub supports its entrepreneurs? (1 = Very Poor, 6 = Excellent) *

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	6
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. What are the strengths of the hub? What makes it unique? *

9. What are the weaknesses of the hub? *

10. What are the difficulties that the hub faces? *

11. What are the improvements that the hub could implement? *

12. What challenges do the entrepreneurs of the hub typically face, and how does the hub help them overcome these challenges? *

13. Which governance model best describes the model you have inside the hub ? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Centralized Leadership: The Hub Director(s) takes all strategic decisions independently.
- ☐ Executive Committee: Strategic decisions are made by the Hub Director together with the Heads of Departments.
- ☐ Democratic Governance: All members of the hub (or all employees) vote on strategic decisions.
- ☐ Departmental Autonomy: Each department within the hub makes its own strategic decisions independently, guided by overall hub goals.
- ☐ Collaborative Decision-Making: Strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff, members, and possibly external partners.
- ☐ Hybrid Model: Our hub uses a combination of the above models based on the situation or type of decision being made.
- ☐ Other: _____

14. Are you involved in strategic decision-making? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes *Skip to question 15*
- ☐ No *Skip to question 16*

Are you involved in strategic decision-making? YES

15. Describe how you are involved in the strategic decision-making.

Section sans titre

16. **Only for StartLab:** How does the hub measure the impact and success of its incubation programs?

Starterdate	Address e-mail	What is your name and role inside the company?	What is the name of your company? If not applicable please note it with "N/A"	Which hub do you belong to?	In what year was your company founded? If not applicable please note it with "N/A"	How many employees do you have in the company?	In which sector does your company operates?	Who are your primary target markets?	Who are your stakeholders (not actors involved in your activities)?	What are the products/services you offer?	What is the current maturity level of your company?	When did your company started working in the field?	Does your company have plans to have a positive social impact?	Does your company have plans to have a positive impact on the environment?	Please describe how you have an impact (social or environmental, social (business) problem does your company	Have you collaborated with other companies in the field? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services, etc.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, etc.)	How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or social practice exchanges with other hubs/sectors?	What elements or platforms does the field provide for companies to connect and collaborate?
05/04/2024 17:37:37	baudouch.martine@notmal.fr	Baudouin Martine, cofounder	Katup	StartLab Brussels	N/A		2 Marketing digital	Startups	The two cofounders	Katup is a SaaS that helps startups to promote their business on social media by creating content associated directly to their identity	Development: The birth of a business idea involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solutions, and initial feasibility assessment.	2020	No	No	No	Yes	1 - 5	Partnership	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversations tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	
05/04/2024 17:40:09	erwin.tenpersen@proton.com	Erwin Tenpersen Founder	Sustainability School	StartLab Brussels	2024		1 Sustainability education	SME's	SME, universities, investors, trainers	Digital and in person training	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	February 2024	No	Yes	Climate change awareness and knowledge building as first step to implementing change at company level	Yes	1 - 5	Exchange of ideas, informal sharing, resources such as guidelines, giving feedback	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Workshops and	
05/04/2024 17:40:28	Daveas@notmal.com	Asel CEO	QuidLiba	StartLab Brussels	2021		3 Diversity	Client avec défis sociale	Laboforme designer : designer products, designer, community manager	Ende : disposal / vendre pour les déchets	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2021	No	No	Pre-allocated profit on full price du cash talks	No			4 Networking events	
05/04/2024 17:45:21	maximef@proton.com	Maxime ref founder	N/A	StartLab Brussels	N/A		1 Digital web	Word of mouth	Creative agency, holding, webflow, figma	I'm a creative agency, offers all the services for web on the website tool	Development: The birth of a business idea involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solutions, and initial feasibility assessment.	1 years	Yes	No	1 offers more visibility, credibility, experience near to the client	No			Networking events, Workshops and seminars	
14/04/2024 13:22:58	merckelen.be@gmail.com	Manon van der Merckelen	Mercio Bio	StartLab Brussels	n/a		0 superfoods	natural sector	African producers	superfoods	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	February	Yes	Yes	zero waste local support of communities	No			4 Networking events	
15/04/2024 12:31:35	gautier@collecare.com	Founder	N/A	StartLab Brussels	2021		0 Cosmetics	E-commerce	Manufacture: logistic partner, marketing platform, marketing platform, ingredients supplier	Cosmetics in solid format	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	5 months ago	Yes	Yes	We aim to reduce plastic waste in the bathroom by developing innovative and qualitative products	No			Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	
16/04/2024 21:34:04	contact@thevaluedby.be	Rian marlene, president	Talno Family	StartLab Brussels	2023		Talent boosting, 3 recruitment	University students	Public activities, private companies, students, universities	Training, hackathons, conferences	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2023	Yes	Yes	1 book this is obvious Socially we aim to be an inclusive company with free of charge from the entrepreneur. Meaning that we offer a fully funded contract but (obviously when and how they would like to work. The objective was to get financing and social financing as much as possible. The company aims to be inclusive by respecting regional culture, etc. of the employees. The problem we solve are different in each sector of activity. Nevertheless, the focused problem we are solving is the one where consumers struggle to find qualitative products for their pets produced in Europe at least. Furthermore, for this we aim to offer for specific breed of dogs that claim from this as our main focus point. We aim to achieve several objectives: 1) To increase young people's participation in elections and enable them to make an independent voting. Choice: We estimate that we will be able to reach >200,000 young people during the June elections. 2) Reduce the number of fraudulent votes. 3) Reinforce citizens' trust in our elected representatives and institutions. 4) Increase accessibility to information on political programs and the workings of the political system.	No			Networking events, Workshops and seminars	
18/04/2024 23:31:29	adrian.flores@stardomea.com	Adrian Flores - Owner / Founder	Philobias	StartLab Brussels	2023 (2 / one included)		Retail and e-commerce	B2B	Competition, suppliers and clients	Premium products for dogs and cats with dedicated high-tech instructions to create an ecosystem. As of today only Petfood and accessories are available	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	February 2024	Yes	Yes	Our main focus point is to create a new breed of dogs that claim from this as our main focus point.	No			Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	
18/04/2024 13:21:28	thibaut@spacemix.be	Thibaut Spacemix, co-founder	Chix	StartLab Brussels	2018		0 Non profit - Education	Young voters in Belgium	Public entities (governments), media and political parties	Education social media content Digital platform to connect young people Programs to raise awareness and educate about Belgium's political system	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2018	Yes	No		Yes	1 - 5	Sharing knowledge/feedback, giving introductions	3 Networking events	

How do you contribute to the well-being of the other two members?	How did the hub help you in any way? How has it contributed to the growth or success of your company?	Please describe your previous mentor and tell us about any other ways in which you feel the hub has supported your company.	How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community?	Please describe your previous response.	What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Could you identify specific areas where your company expects additional support or resources?	Do you have any suggestions for how the hub could better support its companies in achieving their goals?	Does your company receive any governmental support or incentives?	What are the primary sources of funding for your company?	Have you encountered any challenges in accessing financing or grant resources? If so, what barriers have you faced?	Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges to your company's business operations?	Are there any cultural or social factors unique to your community that influence the way you conduct business?	Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and insights more in-depth?	Anything else, additional comments?
Being myself	Provided mentorship and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Supported through incubation or accelerator programs. Enhanced visibility and branding. Connected us with potential clients or partners.	Networking	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events).	/	Development of the product	No	No	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/sales	No	No	No	No	
Engaging during the workshops	Provided mentorship and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Supported through incubation or accelerator programs. Applied resources (e.g., office space, technology). Fostered a supportive community environment.		We do not currently contribute to the local community	We don't	Access to client contacts	Development of online platform, finding activities	Anyone who is ready for a coach or mentor should be able to apply for one. Main language includes now very french	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/sales	Stupid Belgian admin rules	No	No	No	
I'm in the Networking	Facilitated funding opportunities. Supplied resources (e.g., office space, technology).		We do not currently contribute to the local community		Développer le bto et avoir plus de retours	Communication	Just coach at the feedback des coaches	Yes, we receive indirect support (e.g., access to resources, training programs).	Friends and family	On avance plus a pas avec notre coach de starter	Se professionner sur le marché	Pas forcément, apart des clients blanches	Yes	No
I share my knowledge on the web	Delivered training and development programs. Supported through incubation or accelerator programs. Connected us with potential clients or partners.	Help to consult with other people	We do not currently contribute to the local community	I do nothing for the moment	Client acquisition & sell	For the wind and the way to take	Give a coach at the beginning	I'm not sure I prefer not to say	Own revenues/sales	Not really	Not really	No	No	
Sharing information	Provided mentorship and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Facilitated funding opportunities. Delivered training and development programs. Supported through incubation or accelerator programs. Applied resources (e.g., office space, technology). Fostered a supportive community environment.	workshops	Supporting local education (e.g., scholarship, school partnerships)	contribution to zero waste school projects	mentality	natural sector	No	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/sales	no	politics	yes	No	
I come physically to the lab	The shared office was very helpful. As well as the incubation, when we share with the other members some good tips.		Spreading awareness on important issues. Sponsorship (e.g., local sports teams, cultural events).	We sponsor a festival localised here. And we try to share awareness about decreasing plastic waste.	Sales growth and product development	Finance, digital marketing	Digital marketing workshop with a small budget (DM)	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/sales	Not from now	No	No	No	Good luck for the phase 1
I challenge everyone to step back	Provided mentorship and guidance. Supplied resources (e.g., office space, technology).	Very good coach	Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events). Providing free services/products to the community. Supporting local education (e.g., scholarship, school partnerships). Creating employment opportunities.	Keeping the audience, collaboration, opportunity with private companies	Marketing, event management		Yes, we receive indirect financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies).	Government grants, Donations	First year it was ok	Not sure	No	Yes	Yes	
I always try to get to know the project better and share any ideas that could help the project grow. It is also active by meeting with other two members's plans	Provided mentorship and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Supported through incubation or accelerator programs. Enhanced visibility and branding. Supplied resources (e.g., office space, technology). Fostered a supportive community environment.		I have one major impact on the community for myself and my knowledge, but the project has potential.	We are not big enough and receive enough to be able to inform the here above mentions	Lack of human Resources to accelerate the progression and other tasks	Administration	Ask monthly updates from the staff/coaches	Yes, we receive indirect support (e.g., access to resources, training programs).	Own revenues/sales, Real estate, Friends and family	Various funding - too soon for that	Very closed being isolated from consumers	No	Yes	Good luck hope my answers have been useful.
I'm not involved in the hub anymore so I can't tell sorry	Did get some entrepreneurial friends from the startups that an assigned "coach" for our project. Used the built-in facilities for team meetings, having the startup report our content on their social media & newsletter was helpful.		Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events). Providing free services/products to the community. Supporting local education (e.g., scholarship, school partnerships). Creating employment opportunities.	Transitioning from a shared lab organization to a more professional business model or at least a sustainable source of funding.	Admin, public grant	More events about very concrete topics, more internal networking	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies).	Government grants, Crowdfunding	The amount of support we need to submit is significant, overwhelming and negative	Public grants are never allocated for "non-profit" start-ups. They only apply on a "growth-to-profit" basis, which makes it hard to sustain our non-profit financially.	Our 3 national languages limit our social impact	No	No	

Stimulus	Address e-mail	What is your name and role inside the company?	What is the name of your company? If not applicable please note it with %%	Which help do you bring to?	In what year was your company founded? If not applicable please note it with %%	How many employees do you have in the company?	In which sector does your company operate?	Who are your primary target markets?	Who are your customers (and whom mentioned in your activities)?	What are the products/services you offer?	What is the current reality/need for your product?	When did your company start working in the field?	Does your company have plans to have a positive social impact?	Does your company have plans to have a positive impact on the environment?	Please describe how you have an impact (social, economic, environmental, political) problem - does your company?	Have you collaborated with other companies in the field? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing ideas).	How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or exchange with other companies?	What elements or platforms does the field provide for companies to connect and cooperate?
19042024 14:54:58	dvreeding@gmail.com	Dirk, Co-Founder	Ward	StartLab Brussels	2020	9	Mark Tech	Business & Tech & Labels	Private	Social sharing app based on maps, discovery and fun for fun sharing. In the next, discover an what you like & share your discovery to your friends and the world	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2020	Yes	Yes	We don't have any issues with other companies in the field? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services.	No			Networking events, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	4
19042024 15:00:30	brennehl@gmail.com	CEO	Brennehl Medical	StartLab Brussels	2024	3	Health Tech	Private practices in dentistry	?	Info and imaging, report public, patient education	Development: The both of a business idea involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solution, and initial feasibility assessment	2022	Yes	No	Issue management for HCP, shared decision making, enhancing quality of care, improving representation of health care	Yes	1 - 5	partnerships	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	3
21-04-2024 20:14:41	delachangyambou@gmail.com	Founder and ruler of the company	Globely	StartLab Brussels	2018	Juste me	Design, decoration	Decorative home furniture	Cardboard producers, used producers, furniture, shops and event	Selling a life light in wood and cardboard	Expansion: Stable phase where growth continues, emphasizing optimization of operations, maintaining market opportunities, conceptualizing solution, and initial feasibility assessment	2018	No	Yes	The cardboard is not as profitable. So the lamp?	Yes	20 - 25	Sharing advice, ideas, company that could help some business, willing to challenge other people	Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	5
22-04-2024 14:40:12	omararaghi@gmail.com	Omar, CEO	Omarika	StartLab Brussels	2023	1	Marketing	SMEs	non	Webdesign, SEO, Ads, SMM	Development: The both of a business idea involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solution, and initial feasibility assessment	2023	Yes	Yes	Support NGOs	No			Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	3
23-04-2024 19:30:25	ben.masseu1234@gmail.com	Ben Masseu, co-founder	Phogo	StartLab Brussels	2023	2	Electro-mobility	Electric vehicle market	charging station owners, electric vehicle owners, charging station manufacturers	A collaborative platform to which drivers/charging station owners can communicate to look into a charge their car	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	February 2024	Yes	Yes	Gave responsibility to the clients which own the charging stations and ask them to share with their neighbors in a sustainable way	Yes	1 - 5	Issue exchange, challenge on the	Conversation tables, Workshops and seminars	2
24-04-2024 10:07:14	alekxamagan@gmail.com	Founder - Executive	Lappa bike	StartLab Brussels	2023	2 co-founders - 0 employees	Mobility	Children bikes	Manufacturers, bike stores - "learning partners" - customers (parental/child/Grandparent) - users (kids)	Subscription for kids to exchange as you grow station	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2023	Yes	Yes	- Make quality more affordable - Offer a great bike experience to kids (with the aim of ensuring that a good cycling experience has an impact on whether they continue to ride later on) - Create a circular solution where product (these bikes) are collected from each user to be larger than the first	Yes	1 - 5	Knowledge and informal exchange	Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	2
25-04-2024 15:12:58	maxime@discovernet.be	Maxime Martens - Customer @DiscoverNet	DiscoverNet	StartLab Brussels	2021	0	Travel	Belgium & France	Local Guides - Local Accommodations - Local service providers, customers	Outdoor guided travels	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2020	No	Yes	We offer low carbon travel to travel directly through our customer in their own cars through meeting points through community meeting in Zandvoort through Kappa project	Yes	1 - 5	All of these mentioned above	Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	5
15-05-2024 12:53:37	thibault.arnet@gmail.com	ceo	TUBE Brussels	StartLab Brussels	2023	0	PUBLICATION AND INTERNET	Companies	4 administrators	articles about food projects and concepts in Brussels - Supply of Brussels crafts products	Only working with customer located in Brussels - trying to be as short circuit as possible	october 2023	No	Yes		No			Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Workshops and seminars	2
12-05-2024 19:52:15	guthrie.toranzo@gmail.com	Founder	Nant	StartLab Brussels	2020	2	Consulting	All markets	My customer and the customers	Digital consulting services	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2021	Yes	Yes	The managers of the food paid for companies to have an impactful value proposition	No			Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	5
12-05-2024 22:47:24	leggaskashe@hotmail.com	Tengry - CEO	Vicimemo	StartLab Brussels	2024	3	MedTech	Elderly	The 3 founders	Value recording device for Alzheimer patients	Start-up: Launch and initial growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	September 2023	Yes	Yes	Giving tech autonomy to Alzheimer's patients and reducing mental burden of caregivers and relatives	No			Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	2

How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub founders?	How did the hub help you in any way? How has it contributed to your growth or activities?	Please describe your previous experience and tell us about any other hub you have supported your current hub?	How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community?	Please describe your previous experience.	What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Could you identify specific areas where your company expects additional support or resources?	Do you have any experience in helping other hubs or founders in achieving their goals?	Does your company receive any governmental support or incentives?	What are the primary sources of funding for your company?	Have you encountered any challenges in securing financing or raising capital for your business?	Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges to your business model?	Are there any cultural or social factors unique to your community that influence the way you conduct business?	Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and insights more in depth?	Anything else, additional comments?
		From my personal experience the one thing I took from the incubator was the new methodology + understanding the importance of putting our client first. But in general there are a lot of tools that I didn't know because the hub is a general hub not focused on tech for instance. All of them are building edge tech like AI. Distribution etc. The fact that I didn't get a guidance for that was a negative experience. I'm learning in the beginning, but I feel to learn how to use that knowledge and apply it in my sphere of work.												
								</						

Respondent	Address e-mail	What is your name and role inside the company?	What is the name of your company? If not applicable please note it with "NA"	Which hub do you belong to?	In what year was your company founded? If not applicable please note it with "NA"	How many employees do you have in the company?	In which sector does your company operate?	Who are your primary target markets?	Who are your stakeholders (not whom bonded in your offer)?	What are the products/services you offer?	What is the current maturity level of your company?	When did your company started working in the hub?	Does your company have plans to have a positive impact on the environment impact?	Does your company have plans to have a positive impact on the environment impact?	Please describe how you have an impact (social, economic, environmental, etc.) on the hub? This should be a short answer.	Have you collaborated with other companies in the hub? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, etc.).	How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or exchange of ideas with other companies?	What channels or platforms does the hub provide for companies to connect and collaborate?
13/05/2024 09:57:53	lila.mughal@mirapulse.com	Lila Mughal CEO	Mirapulse	Start-Up Brussels	NA	2	Meditech	Women with severe pelvic pain	Empower, health insurance, government, research, hospital, research, university, hospital, incubator, Accelerator, meditech hub.	Start-up: Launch and make growth phase, focusing on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers		2023	Yes	No	Severe period pain and Chronic pelvic pain	Yes	0 -10	Advice and informal exchange of ideas		Networking events, Score Ready Group (WhatsApp, Facebook Livechat, etc.) Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops 0 and business

[illegible]

A.15 Appendix 15: CDH Company Survey Responses

Respondent	Address e-mail	What is your name and role in the company?	What is the name of your company? If not applicable, please note it with "NA"	Which hub do you belong to?	In what year was your company founded? If not applicable, please note it with "NA"	How many employees do you have in the company?	In which sector does your company operate?	Who are your primary target markets?	Who are your stakeholders that actors involved in your industry?	What are the products/services you offer?	What is the current maturity level of your company?	When did your company started working at the Hub?	Does your company have to have a positive social impact?	Does your company have to have a positive impact on the environment?	Please describe how you have an impact (social or environmental). What products/services does your company offer?	Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? This includes official partnerships, setting knowledge-based practices, sharing knowledge-based practices, internal exchange of ideas, advice, etc.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations. This includes official partnerships, setting knowledge-based practices, sharing knowledge-based practices, internal exchange of ideas, advice, etc.
11/03/2024 16:56:52	emma@kampala.org	Emmanuel Samuhanga Project manager	Kampala	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2010	7	Education, ICT	Youth	Employers, donors, youth	ICT training modules	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2017	Yes	Yes	Social impact by training youth from informal settlements to obtain better employment opportunities. We tackle the problem of poor quality consulting reports in Uganda. For example we enter with low quality materials from others and avoid colorful content, graphs from the real studies. This adds value to the reader.	Yes	1 - 5	Internships, employment opportunities, service delivery
11/03/2024 10:17:27	koomeyyn@gmail	Koen, Bieke	Impact Lines	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2022	0	Agribusiness	NGOs and experts	coffee industry stakeholders	consulting advice	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2024	Yes	Yes	We have the problem of poor quality consulting reports in Uganda. For example we enter with low quality materials from others and avoid colorful content, graphs from the real studies. This adds value to the reader.	No		
14/03/2024 10:11:38	annemarys1@gmail	Ann Mary Akim, The a Copy Writer	The Brand Factory	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2017	13	Marketing	medium to large enterprises	I don't know	Digital marketing, website design	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2017	Yes	Yes	We have the problem of poor quality consulting reports in Uganda. For example we enter with low quality materials from others and avoid colorful content, graphs from the real studies. This adds value to the reader.	Yes		Official partnership
15/03/2024 13:32:49	reem@resiliencia.org	Miriam Pol - Country Representative	Resiliencia Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2023		Agriculture/Water management	SDGs	SDG/Other consultancies/farmer organizations/NGOs	services - advise water management and agronomy, conducting consultations	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2023	Yes	Yes	Resiliencia Uganda is a branch of Resiliencia that conducts research and projects in the field of formalized agriculture development and agri-extension services (training, AGU, etc. for DPE).	Yes	1 - 5	Sharing knowledge, informal exchange of ideas and transmitting on possible collaboration
17/03/2024 09:34:12	info@the.ug	Nashia Lusuma - founder	The Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2017	5	Arts and Entertainment	Children ages 7 - 20	Digital artists, corporate organizations, schools and NGOs	Story design and creation	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2017	Yes	Yes	The need to preserve indigenous knowledge through story that leads to practices that protect both natural values and the environment.	Yes	1 - 5	Official partnerships on product creation
17/03/2024 16:47:19	James@socialinnovation.academy.org	James Kanyiga Personal Development Trainer	Social Innovation Academy	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2014	10	Education	Regionalized youth with a focus on refugees	SDG-based Communities, Social Innovation & Support Organizations, Local Government, investors, donors, national institutions	entrepreneurship, confidence in design thinking, innovation & entrepreneurship	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2023	Yes	Yes	YOUTH empowerment in the problem we are tackling. Our solution is the SDG framework offering a purpose driven model offering training of self discovery, creative problem solving, industry leadership development.	No		
19/03/2024 16:14:23	cdahug@protonmail	Catherine Tsegaye Senior Program	100MEEKS Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2016	4	NGO Sector	Women living in Poverty	women community leaders/local partners, the local district	cash transfers	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2022	Yes	Yes	poverty alleviation	No		
19/03/2024 16:37:38	beraka@ecopreneurshub	Country Director	Sedge Hub/Seduba	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2014	7	ICT	Business Owners	CEOs	Software development, Digital marketing and Branding	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2023	Yes	Yes	We develop content marketing that our clients use to reach their customers and guide them with resources to succeed.	No		
25/03/2024 09:18:57	lungh@kicuko.com	Lungh Kicuko, Uganda programme leads	Eye Opener Works	Circular Design Hub Kampala	/	7	Various sectors, NGOs	Individuals, businesses, organizations	Both public and private	Monitoring and evaluation, skills and capacity building, curriculum development etc.	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2017	Yes	Yes	E.g. improved livelihoods through direct market opportunities in a national tourism sector. We have two community-based programs: "Kicuko" (Training of 2 plant nurseries) which we hope is a viable on-site community that can open to talk and take the lead in all things related to plant nurseries. "Kicuko" (Policy Resilience & Resilience) which we hope will create leaders that will champion the challenges and opportunities across their with technology.	Yes	1 - 5	Implementing partnerships, knowledge sharing, informal exchanges
25/03/2024 13:09:29	robertkanyiga@stc.net.ug	Robert - programs officer	Baaton Technologies	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2022	5	Tech	SME	partners	Managed Services, Cyber security, Data Protection and Cyber Awareness training	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2024	Yes	Yes		No		
25/03/2024 14:59:33	nyirayusubong@resiliencia.org	Ruthy (Programs Manager)	Resiliencia Uganda Trade and Investment Platform (RUTIP)	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2014	6	Services	Local/International	NA	Networking and Knowledge sharing	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2018	Yes	Yes	We have the problem of poor quality consulting reports in Uganda. For example we enter with low quality materials from others and avoid colorful content, graphs from the real studies. This adds value to the reader.	Yes	6 - 10	Sharing knowledge-based practices, informal exchange of ideas, advice
25/03/2024 17:47:30	beraka@kicuko.com	Beraka - Creative Director	K'neural Accounts Ltd	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2019	6	Housing & construction	Offices & commercial properties	Hardware stores/ furniture & decor suppliers/ construction workers	Interior design services, design concepts, sourcing & project supervision	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	July 2021	Yes	Yes	K'neural Accounts would like to support businesses by extending financial literacy to business owners or individuals aspiring to begin businesses.	Yes	1 - 5	Official partnerships, sharing partnerships, referrals
25/03/2024 19:38:30	nikon@innovageneration.net	Nelson Munungu, CTO	Spirits, Nova Generation Uganda Ltd	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2023	9	ICT	Businesses / Organizations in need of custom software solutions	Customers, software developers	Customs software solutions	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	February 2024	Yes	Yes	1. We are teaching girls with no basic education how to code through an internet placement. 2. We do not encourage printing in our offices, we are paperless.	No		
21/03/2024 14:41:35	sebastian053@gmail	GAU President	Gymnasium Association of Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2017	Volunteers	Sports	Sports	Schools/dubas, members	Sports	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.	2022	Yes	Yes	Sedimentary thinking, GAU has been able to offer the opportunity to participate in the gymnasium through programs once a week every Thursday training for free	No		

How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or find practical challenges with other hub members?	What channels or platforms does the Hub provide for members to connect and collaborate?	How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., Group learning, Group activities, Mentoring, general assistance, mental health initiatives, skills prepared to the hub's staff...)	How did the Hub help you in any way? Have you contributed to your growth or success?	Please describe your previous answer and tell us about any other ways in which you feel the Hub has supported your company.	How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community?	Please describe your previous response.	What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Could you identify specific areas where your company requires additional support or resources?	Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support the companies in achieving their goals?	Does your company receive any form of governmental support or incentives?	What are the primary sources of funding for your company?	Have you encountered any challenges in accessing financing? (e.g., bank loans, venture capital, etc.) If yes, what barriers have you faced?	Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges in your country that are affecting your business operations?	Are there any cultural or social factors in your country that influence the way you do business?	Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and suggest more in detail?	Anything else...
4	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	General atmosphere	Provided networking and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Facilitated funding opportunities. Delivered training and development programs. Enhanced visibility and branding. Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	Provided employment opportunities for the youth we teach, we also provided safe spaces for our youth	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events). Donating awareness on important issues. Providing free or discounted services/products to the community. Supporting local education (e.g., scholarships, school programs). Creating employment opportunities	We offer IT services to members and the surrounding community	Lack of funds to train more youth	Fundraising	Joint efforts to source for funds	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Donations	Creating premium training programmes	High costs of computer devices	Gender based violence	Yes	
2	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Online forums, Social Media Mentoring (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	by having chats over lunch at the shared tables.	The Hub has not contributed to our growth or success	Not sure if this Hub so can't really answer this yet	We do not currently contribute to the local community	Not yet	Overheating of my brain on sunny days at the Hub	FreeAccess to cool down?	Replace the iron stand roof with an intelligent material capable to buffer the temperature	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	no, we run a low capital business model	hyperactivity in the donor setting	/	Yes	
6	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	Being kind and respectful	Provided mentorship and guidance. Offered access to professional networks. Facilitated funding opportunities. Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	I have friends here	Creating employment opportunities	Opportunities for women	Suggested dust	We need more natural light	Open discussions	I'm not sure / Prefer not to say	Own revenues	Yes, Prior to year together with government	No	Yes	Yes	This was too long (20mins). I expect responses for all these questions
3	Shared lunch/dinner	Talk with people	Connected us with potential clients or partners	Connected with Engel Assetal that helped with registration of the branch	Creating employment opportunities	We are growing people who work there could become future colleagues. For now, not yet successful	Meeting people in the same field (regarding the Hub)	Meeting people in the same field	Events on agriculture?	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies)	Own revenues, Government grants	No	No	No	Yes	No, great luck!
3	Networking events	Proposed ideas	Offered access to professional networks. Facilitated funding opportunities. Connected us with potential clients or partners	N/A	Addressing local challenges. Spontaneously awareness on important issues. Creating employment opportunities	N/A	Funding	Management	Apprenticeship	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues, Alternative financing (in, e.g., peer-to-peer lending, Friends and family)	Yes	Yes, knowledge gap on finance	Cultural diversity	Yes	N/A
3	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner	Organizing networking events	Offered access to professional networks	A bit more needs to be done to boost collaboration in the hub because even the little I have benefited from was from participating in the "better call" an initiative which is not another company initiated in the hub	Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events)	We try to create spaces to enable more professional of skills and experience	Power going on and off frequently	Opportunities to network with more companies in the Hub	More community training events. The Hub should be capable in establishing networking. At the moment there is only the community group on WhatsApp which is not as effective at building "networks"	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies)	Donations	Getting our SMDA, entrepreneur registry registered	Avoid of competition and only make work among EDCs	Not thought of	Yes	No
2	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	N/A	Offered access to professional networks. Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	Good for networking	Financial donations to local causes. Creating employment opportunities	give cash transfers, savings and training to women in Uganda to boost the economy	No much heat in the hub	Network and partner with organizations to reach as many women as possible to get out poverty	N/A	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Crowdfunding, Donations	yes (limited funds to reach many women that need the money)	Approvals from the government	N/A	No	
1	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	group activities	The Hub has not contributed to our growth or success	Not yet met setting any business support as far. We still waiting to see how a hub can support any business	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events). Financial donations to local causes. Providing free or discounted services/products to the community. Creating employment opportunities	We support the local community in many ways	employment getting going one is a big challenge we are facing	Technical Expertise	Stable internet with fibre-optical; when checking on computers and get to know the challenge they might face in the office space like air conditioning...	I'm not sure / Prefer not to say	Own revenues	Bank Loan, interest was higher	none	none	Yes	
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Conversation tables	Check in with people by seeing how they are doing, what they are working on, etc.	Offered access to professional networks. Enhanced visibility and branding. Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	Provides a working space that allows for flexibility, also the best coffee	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events). Providing free or discounted services/products to the community. Creating employment opportunities	Especially through our NGO related work, we provide drive job creation	The heat and unstable internet	More reliable internet, installing a cooling system to reduce the heat	Provide reliable internet, input a cooling	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	N/A	N/A	Socio-economic factors, e.g. education levels	Yes	Good luck!!
2	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	Idea proposed to hub staff	Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology)	offer space	Spreading awareness on important issues	We partner with key stakeholders to bring on awareness on key issues	Be more specific	Awareness Event promotions	more Training programs	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	Limited Number of financing programs	Access to cost effective tools of the trade	none	Yes	
6	Networking events, Online forums, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner	general atmosphere	Offered access to professional networks. Enhanced visibility and branding. Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	Access to professional networks for NUTIP with up to 10-12 members among NUTIP affinity.	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events). Spreading awareness on important issues	They are helpful when comes to organizing events and activities	The Heat and general appearance of our new NUTIP office, job wasn't completed	Support in verifying and tracking our new NUTIP office, job wasn't completed	no	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Donations	no	no	no	Yes	looking forward to the short follow up interview on this
6	Networking events, Online forums, Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner	To groups - not very frequently but individuals very often. It is very efficient that way.	Offered access to professional networks. Supported resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Connected us with potential clients or partners. Fostered a supportive community environment	As summarized above.	Providing free or discounted services/products to the community	I offer free consultation for space planning to design hub management & business occupying the space	But either doesn't consider from network or would rather keep hub in its current working state.	Action to solve general hub problems affecting individual companies in the space.	shared suggestions in last year's survey. Please refer to that	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	None, I will share if I have a challenge in the future.	Not directly	Mostly micro aggressions from a typical patriarchal society	No	Please check on our previous survey submissions - we shared some things that may help change this hub.
2	Shared lunch/dinner	Respect their privacy and work environment	The Hub has not contributed to our growth or success	We are still new at the hub and we have not yet realized any impact from the hub.	Addressing local challenges. Community engagement (e.g., volunteering events). Providing free or discounted services/products to the community. Creating employment opportunities	Limited funding to be able to hire enough and high engineers to deliver faster.	1. Market penetration 2. Market penetration 3. Market penetration	Facilitate more networking events and a good demand for the hygiene of the hub, the tables are bad	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Angel investors	The funds are limited. They come with stringent measures.	lack of capital training aids and opportunities. Challenges accessing affordable and efficient mobile and internet services. Limited access to funding	No	Yes	Thanks much	
2	Networking events, Online forums, Conversation tables	Group activities	Offered access to professional networks. Fostered a supportive community environment	Created opportunities for connections	Spontaneous (e.g., local sports teams, cultural events)	We engage people in free community sports activities	Internet	Marketing	Leveraging opportunities	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies). Yes, we receive indirect support (e.g., access to resources, training programs)	Own revenues, Government grants, Donations	Rent challenges	Failure to have own source of funds	No	Yes	Good to participate

	Address e-mail	What is your name and how do you lead the company?	What is the role of your company? If not applicable please note it with "N/A"	Which hub do you belong to?	How long have you been with the hub?	How many employees do you have in the hub?	In which sector does your company operate?	What are your primary target markets?	What are your clients? Do you have an active list of your clients?	What are the products you produce?	What is the current status of your hub?	When did your company expect starting of the hub?	Does your company have a positive social impact?	Does your company have a positive impact on the environment?	Please describe how you have an impact (social, economic, environmental). What localised production practices, products, services, or other aspects of your company offer?	Have you collaborated with other companies in the hub? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing information, professional exchange of ideas, advice, etc.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations, e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing information, professional exchange of ideas, advice, etc.
22/03/2024 13:28:55	bertrandebd@gmail.com	Bertrand, HR administrator	Spark Next Solutions	Circular Design Hub Kampala	Jan 2019	6 HR	Business looking for HR services	Businesses, NGOs, etc.	Twintings, HR Department, Project management, Recruitment, Outsourcing, Performance management	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing turnover, market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building	2019	Yes	Yes	Social impact from the trainings, teaching people trade businesses to better off their job or personal income to start an already existing business and offer training (them), Promotion on Circular Economy with our clients (we do the great project business)	Yes	6-10	Offering HR services to other companies in the hub, for view it but training is kept free. For example for Tria S&P we do recruitment for them, we can reach out to them trusting the contact, Rwanda also recruitment and profit business and starting. C&M is employing me and starting. C&M is employing me through open talent, as for the marketing of HR in C&M (as a discount price). Other companies: A&M&B, Best Factory, M&P (as the other way around firms companies who help us, we shared facility with our marketing.	
22/03/2024 15:48:09	graham@grahamhugbo.com	Nyahum Graham, Country Manager	Cayenne Africa Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2014	25	Media and advertising	Anyone or everyone who needs advertising	Rafin, TV, Outdoor agencies	Billsboards, street poles, advertisement, experience, advertising	2023	Yes	Yes	We try to help businesses push revenue through various areas of media by being able to work with the clients	Yes	1-5	Looking for assistance in various areas of media that we may need assistance in, the graphic design	
22/03/2024 16:45:53	estheruganda@acohila.com@gmail.com eliza.muganyizi@gmail.com	Chik, Executive Director	ACOHIL (Anti Drug and Alcohol Abuse Movement)	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2012	3 Non Profit	helping people with counseling	Ministry of Health (govt), netherlands, oxford, donor agencies	Counseling, group therapy, consultations	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing turnover, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building	June 2023	Yes	Yes	We are supporting people who are young in the community that struggle with addiction and mental health problems.	Yes	1-5	/	
24/03/2024 18:42:45	magana@elshah.com	Isaac Magana, Partner	Shahel Legal Associates	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2008	24 Legal	Medium to	Our clients	Legal	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing turnover, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building	Jan 2022	Yes	Yes	Our ESG INCLUDES partnerships with entities to secure environmental, social, and ethical contracts and benefits	Yes	1-5	Official partnerships, internal exchange of ideas, advice	
25/03/2024 12:37:48	sema@shahelshah.com	Sema Semakula - Training and Toxicology Manager	Fiber Foods	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2019	7	Agriculture / Food processing	Companies in Western Europe that makes part of their products that have meat in it with poultry	Pork suppliers, processing facilities, restaurants, NGOs, meat processors, and brand building	Dehydrated jerkfish	2019	Yes	Yes	Social: stable additional social income for women / smallholder farmers. Environmental: replacing meat with poultry reduces CO2 in food footprint	Yes	1-5	Locally designing bearing materials (biodegradable) potential partnership to add more value to export market (European market)	
25/03/2024 16:21:06	immoenkenstein@gmail.com	ERIC - GENERAL MANAGER	EUTYN	Circular Design Hub Kampala	N/A	Free	Energy transport, Design & development	Community	Mary	Research, software, transport & energy	2023	Yes	Yes	(Brand visibility, Great climate attractiveness model). Lack of awareness information dissemination / awareness building. Lack of customer engagement, active vehicle and community charging facility	Yes	1-5	Informal exchange of ideas	
25/03/2024 17:58:20	mayamukhi@gmail.com	Product Specialist	Uniforum Pathways - UphR Health	Circular Design Hub Kampala	/	8 Health and HR	Companies and hospitals	M&M, M&L, Labour...	Information tools, media, and marketing	Start-up Launch and scaling on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	October 2020	Yes	Yes	We create value for our clients by leveraging the power of our expertise through the execution of projects, ranging from short one day tasks to extensive multi-year initiatives	Yes	1-5	sharing knowledge and best practices	
26/03/2024 09:35:57	benard@uniforum.co	Benard Benard, Product Manager	Uniforum Studies Enterprise Ltd	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2021	9 Educational / Social	Anyone organizations willing to improve community	NGOs, NGOs, Embassies, etc.	Information tools, media, and marketing	Start-up Launch and scaling on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2021	Yes	Yes	Currently we are working projects on sustainability in agriculture	Yes	1-5	Selling services	
26/03/2024 18:41:42	willemangus@gmail.com	Willem Angus, Dennis (Sales and sales coffee)	Wild Coffee Bar	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2017	20+	Hospitality	/	/	Roasted coffee and brewed coffee, Food, Drinks	2019	Yes	Yes	To make sure the value of coffee remains at origin (fair price for farmers)	Yes	More	Selling products and services	
27/03/2024 09 14:48 00PM	anthonyjames.ayende.kirchob@gmail.com	Anthony James, Ayende, kirchob	Gafny Inc	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2021	6 Construction	Individuals (residential)	Clients, companies, employees	Consultants	Start-up Launch and scaling on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2021	Yes	Yes	We are innovating around (designing with sustainable, construction material such as timber and material produced such as recycled concrete)	Yes	1-5	Official partnerships, and provision of services	
27/03/2024 15:07:58	amendes@theobuilders.com	Amendes Andriana - Research and Development Officer	Coobindas	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2023	10 Construction	Working class	/	Houses and bricks	Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing turnover, customer base, and market presence through scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building	2023	Yes	Yes	Climate action, poverty, We provide environmental friendly bricks that are cheap.	No			
27/03/2024 15:12:42	immy@yep-esatel.com	Kalis Immaculata, administrator	Esatel Asset Uganda	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2016	10 Consultancy	Locals and expatriates	N/A		Start-up Launch and scaling on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	2017	Yes	Yes	Advice where applicable	Yes	1-5	Official partnerships, sharing knowledge	
27/03/2024 16:11:22 0PM	aleman25@gmail.com	Country Representative	IRRI Uganda Ltd	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2023	5 HR Consultancy	Startups, NGO and Startups/Consulting Companies that need infrastructure and training	CEO, CFO, HRM	Recruitment, Staff Recruitment, Training HR, Consulting, HR	Start-up Launch and scaling on business plan development, securing funding, establishing operations, and acquiring early customers	April 2023	Yes	Yes	Skills impartation and development	Yes	1-5	"Official" partnerships, selling products/services	

How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or feed practice challenges with other hub members?	What channels or platforms does the platform use for knowledge sharing and practice challenges with other hub members?	How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., group learning, group activities, resources, general encouragement, mental health resources, ideas proposed to the hub's staff, ...)	How did the Hub help you in any way? How has it contributed to your growth or success?	Please describe your previous answer and tell us about any other ways in which you feel the Hub has supported your company.	How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community?	Please describe your previous response.	What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Could you identify specific areas where your company receives additional support or resources?	Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support the companies in achieving their goals?	Does your company receive any form of governmental support or incentives?	What are the primary sources of funding for your company?	How you encountered any challenges in achieving/financing your business? If so, what barriers have you faced?	Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges in your country that are affecting your business operations?	Are there any cultural or social factors unique to your country that influence the way you conduct business?	Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and insights more in detail?	Anything else.	Additional comments?
5	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Surveys/forms	more info on best practice exchange. One of the staff in the amount, asked to people, where knowledge is. Greeting how people in the hub, getting to have to work with them, coming more on the world, the country, ...	Offered access to professional networks, Supported through incubator or accelerator programs, Enhanced visibility and branding, Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology), Connected us with potential clients or partners, Fostered a supportive community environment	Started as a startup at the hub and now grow ready to hub, got our clients here, discounts on rent, visibility through talks, inside the hub, we were had had for in our office, after companies in the hub visited us and requested for internet like do you do? but good to know, ...	Spreading awareness on important issues, Creating employment opportunities	spreading awareness on health issues, country related issues, environment, ... on our website	Difficult clients (very difficult, financially not able to pay, took time to take it slow)	Spread awareness of our work, people seeing us a startup and getting more visibility	More engagement, some clients just did it in their office, have them get out and meet the other, a thing that our staff people together, inspiring themselves more, the team bringing in the morning, inspiring again	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank, Friends and family	No	HR technology is weak in the country, a lot of them are failing	Lack of trust because I am young	Yes		
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Workshops and seminars	Always available to talk and assist when possible	Delivered training and development programs, Supported through incubation or accelerator programs, Enhanced visibility and branding, Connected us with potential clients or partners	Open to use with extra facilities	Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events), Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community	When clients need discounts and particular advice we are available to assist	Finance, clients	client links	see available member services if up to standard for various events	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	Regimentarily for loans - too many, time factors (when too long)	taxes are quite high	no	Yes		
4	Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	Mental health and addiction treatment initiatives	Provided mentorship and guidance, Offered access to professional networks, Supported through incubation or accelerator programs, Enhanced visibility and branding, Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology), Connected us with potential clients or partners, Fostered a supportive community environment	to providing substantial rent and continuous development from the start	Addressing local challenges, Spreading awareness on important issues, Creating employment opportunities	We provide grant therapy sessions for people suffering from substance abuse problems	Funding	Funding	Exposure on the website	I'm not sure / Prefer not to say	Donations, Friends and family	Yes, we needed to have better access to donor agencies	the alcohol industry	No	Yes	It's a great place for business incubator	
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars, All the above	All the above	Offered access to professional networks	The hub has an separate clientele that we can tap into	Addressing local challenges, Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events), Financial donations to local causes, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Surgeons are a natural connection to the community, belonging to a hub	Creating a paperless office	Project partnerships	Develop projects with existing companies	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	No	No	No	Yes	None	
2	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner	I used to but not as much anymore as the activities have reduced	Delivered training and development programs, Enhanced visibility and branding	Organizing events together and spreading at their channels	Spreading awareness on important issues, Creating employment opportunities	Event on sustainability and as a growing company, we are aware of developed product	Stabilizing our product, quality, getting clients to control our ready developed product	Funding opportunities, developing new value chains, offering companies services in developing value chain	Having catch up with the companies, since it is a while?	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies)	Venture Capital, Government grants, Angel investors	Not really	Yes, the current troubles in the Red Sea causes high sea transportation costs for our business	We work in 3 different countries but other than being more challenges of having not buying the idea of making young hubs we do not encounter serious influences	Yes	None	
4	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	Assessing/Questionnaires, Green climate enable Research dissemination	I will ask to confirm	Still doing research	Addressing local challenges, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	From the products and services we provide	Funding and Grants	Funding and Grants	Still doing Research	Still doing research	Friends and family	Still doing Research	Still doing research	Still doing Research	Yes	Follow up interview with Payment	
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)	Meet when consulted	Offered access to professional networks	No other	Creating employment opportunities	We do HR consultancy (employment) therefore we talk people (employment) and new value from business employment opportunities for the community.	- The hub helps too much on doing things - Power outages, unstable power	Connections to potential clients and partners	Creating more platforms for professional networks	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	Small businesses are not eligible for business loans	Yes, the public has not yet expanded the reliance companies of our services	No	Yes	Power outages need maximum attention at the moment	
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	We offer an inclusive and open environment to all members at the hub. Personally we have organized days to play games around mental health, financial literacy, disability and inclusion and general fun.	Enhanced visibility and branding	An interview was aired on urban Tv about Circular Design Hub in which Little Studio also features.	Addressing local challenges, Creating employment opportunities	Part of the scope of our services include production of packaging, all this empty over 20 years and 17 have to do these projects	Financial constraints, as we operate on meager resources	Client engagements, grants	- Stable electricity, increase number of social events at the hub, - Contact Little to see social behavior campaigns	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	Our business model is more like service delivery. The profits margins are very low, we need a more profit driven business approach.	- Loss in community awareness by organizations - Government interventions, less funding from respective partners - Taxes	Our business is geared towards social change initiatives and cultural unity efforts or influence on business conduct.	Yes	Thanks so much for the friendly working environment!	
3	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	/	Offered access to professional networks, Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology), Connected us with potential clients or partners, Fostered a supportive community environment, Offered access to professional networks, Enhanced visibility and branding, Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology), Connected us with potential clients or partners, Fostered a supportive community environment, Given us business	Offered a working space for selling our products, connected us with clients	Addressing local challenges, Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events), Financial donations to local causes, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Participated in services for events	price	Human resources, funding	/	I'm not sure / Prefer not to say	Own revenues/bank	/	/	/	No		
4	Networking events, Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	- We organize community events, such as music nights, etc., - We provide community services to the hub and community members	/	/	Addressing local challenges, Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events), Financial donations to local causes, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Accountancy challenges	Financial support (innovation)	/	- Crafting more co-cultural activities, - Bringing back more community events, - Creating more meaningful events for grants, co-working, office spaces, etc.	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	We just started recently looking for members for our new innovation	The highest challenge is that they are less qualified technical and project professionals in the field.	No not really	Yes	Hope the information I have provided helps your/ God bless)	
1	Networking events, Online forum, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	/	Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology)	Office space, testing lab space	Addressing local challenges, Financial donations to local causes, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Research scholarship to Malawi University Students	None	None	/	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank, Government grants	No	Taxes	No	No	None	
4	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Conversation tables, Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	Idea proposed to the hub's staff	Provided mentorship and guidance, Offered access to professional networks, Facilitated funding opportunities, Delivered training and development programs, Connected us with potential clients or partners, Fostered a supportive community environment	/	Addressing local challenges, Financial donations to local causes, Spreading awareness on important issues, Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Internet is unstable, on and off electricity	N/A	More training and networking events	/	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	/	/	/	No		
4	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.), Shared lunch/dinner, Workshops and seminars	Human capital development	Connected us with potential clients or partners	Walkers and workshops	Addressing local challenges, Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, events), Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Limited connections and for the hub, same as everyone, this is very hard for networking doing events, there are no connections to the number of people in the hub	Organize more events at the hub for networking with external people as well, create frequent workshops and seminars	Organize more events at the hub for networking with external people as well, create frequent workshops and seminars	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues/bank	Limited financial base	High level of taxation, high competition, There is a lot of companies in the hub with similar products	No	Yes			

Respondent	Address e-mail	What is your name and role inside the company?	What is the name of your company? If not applicable, please refer to with "XSL"	Which hub do you belong to?	In what year was your company founded? If not applicable, please refer to with "XSL"	How many employees do you have in the company?	In which sector does your company operate?	Who are your primary target markets?	Who are your stakeholders (not actors involved in your activities)?	What are the products/services you offer?	What is the current maturity level of your company?	When did your company started working at the Hub?	Does your company have plans to have a positive social impact?	Does your company have plans to have a positive impact on the environment?	Please describe how you have an impact (social or environmental). What (do) do you do to achieve this? What actions does your company offer?	Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? This includes official partnerships, setting projects, etc. How do you exchange of ideas, advice, etc.	With how many companies have you collaborated?	Describe the nature of these collaborations. This includes official partnerships, setting projects, etc. How do you exchange of ideas, advice, etc.	
04/04/2024 09:40:30	anthony@june.tech.net	Anthony Baulieu, Country Manager	June Technologies	Circular Design Hub Kampala	1997	400	Financial Software	Banking, Insurance, Telecom	Hardware providers, Other Software companies	Financial Software	Maturity Phase marked by growing performance and market challenges, leading to restructuring, downsizing or selling the market.		2017	Yes	Yes	Social: Annual donations to Orphan orphanages. Marketing younger entrepreneurs. Environmental: Advice to go paperless.	No		
04/04/2024 14:52:22	maka@relevant.ia	Cx founder and partner	Relevant ventures	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2023	11	Consulting	NGOs	NGOs, foundations, social enterprises,	Capacity building across to finance solutions - venture building	Development: The birth of a business idea, involving identifying market opportunities, conceptualizing solutions, and initial feasibility assessment. Growth: Rapid expansion phase characterized by increasing revenues, customer bases, and market presence. Revenue scaling operations, market expansion, and brand building.		2023	Yes	Yes	We offer entrepreneurial solutions for the blind spots of the market (building capacity and access to finance for social entrepreneurs).	Yes	1 - 5	Best practices, exchange of ideas
04/04/2024 15:10:47	luis@agro500@gmail.com	Patrick Luhwag, Associate, Plant & Operations Excellence	Agri Logistics	Circular Design Hub Kampala	2022	7 employees	Agricultural commodity Logistics	Farmer Producer Organizations, Aggregators	Agricultural commodity value chain players	Transport Logistics Services		March, 2024	Yes	Yes	Facilitating accessibility to value added marketing & inputs, for geographically isolated farmers	No			

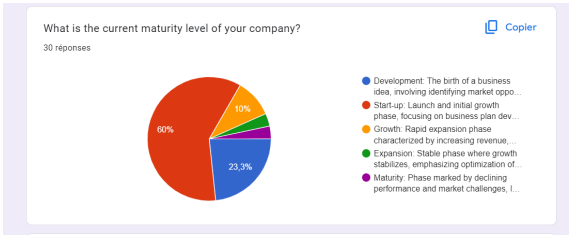
How frequently do you engage in knowledge sharing or feed back among your practice colleagues with other hub members?	What channels or platforms does the Hub provide for knowledge sharing or feed back among your practice colleagues with other hub members?	How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., group learning, group activities, resources, general encouragement, mentor health initiatives, ideas proposed to the hub's staff, ...)	How has the Hub helped you in any way? How has it contributed to your growth or success?	Please describe your previous answer and tell us about any other ways in which you feel the Hub has supported your company.	How does your company contribute to the well-being of the local community?	Please describe your previous responses.	What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Could you identify specific areas where your company requires additional support or resources?	Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support its companies in achieving their goals?	Does your company receive any governmental support or incentives?	What are the primary sources of funding for your company?	Have you encountered any challenges in accessing financing for your business? If so, what barriers have you faced?	Are there any industry or sector-specific challenges in your country or region affecting your business operations?	Are there any cultural or social factors unique to your country or region that influence the way you conduct business?	Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview to discuss your experiences and suggest ways to build?	Anything else.
2	Networking events, Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Conversation tables	Idea to hub's management, Promotion of the hub	Fostered a supportive community environment	Nothing to add	We do not currently contribute to the local community	Nothing to add	Unable to bridge the gap between potential local clients' budgets and our pricing, disconnections around East Africa	More openings to being disconnections	-	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	No	No	No	No	
3	Social Media Group (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) Street lunch/dinner	We organize the quarterly sector talk event where all hub members are invited	Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology). Fostered a supportive community environment	-networks	Addressing local challenges, Creating employment opportunities	We work within communities but sometimes lack resources for refugee-led businesses	- building a financially self-sustainable business	- rethinking events / connections / introductions	- knowing what each company does / needs / connecting to specific partners / opportunities	Yes, we receive direct financial support (e.g., grants, subsidies)	Own revenues	We focus on generating revenue instead of relying on grants	Building partnerships / networks to NGOs	- I takes time develop trust / partnerships with long term clients	Yes	
1	Workshops and seminars	Not yet so far since we are new in the place	Supplied resources or infrastructure (e.g., office space, technology)	It has provided internet which has enabled us to work completely on different social media platforms	Community engagement (e.g., volunteering, sharing), Providing free or discounted services/products to the community, Creating employment opportunities	Facilitate accessibility to markets	N/A	N/A	N/A	No, we do not receive any form of governmental support or incentives.	Own revenues	No	Not sure	Not sure	No	Not really

A.16 Appendix 16: StartLAB Staff Survey Responses

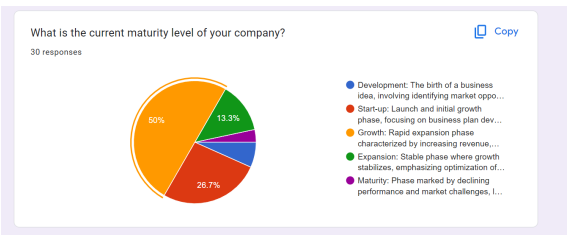
	What is your name?	Which hub do you belong to?	What is your role inside the hub and what are your main responsibilities?	How long have you been working at the hub?	In what way do you support the entrepreneurs of the hub on a day-to-day basis (this does not include mentoring programs, networking events or any other educational resources)?	How do you participate in community engagement at the hub?	From a scale of 1 to 6, how much do you think the hub supports its entrepreneurs? (1 = Very Poor, 6 = Excellent)	What are the strengths of the hub? What makes it unique?	What are the weaknesses of the hub?	What are the difficulties that the hub faces?	What are the improvements that the hub could implement?	What challenges do the entrepreneurs of the hub typically face, and how does the hub help them overcome these challenges?	Which governance model best describes the model you have inside the hub?	Are you involved in strategic decision-making?	Describe how you are involved in the strategic decision-making	Only for StartLab: How does the hub measure the impact and success of its incubation programs?
11/04/2024 18:42:11	Elisavore van der Loos	StartLab Brussel	Program manager in charge of the incubation program for the last phase	1 year	daily coaching	organizing of events, daily presence at the hub and follow-up on their projects		5 the very close community	engagement of the whole community on the same level (different levels of progress between the start-ups)	engagement of the incubates	enhancing the quality of the program through highly qualified trainers	lack of financing: select them through the right person / institution	Hybrid Model: Our hub uses a combination of the above models based on the situation or type of decision being made.	No		number of companies created and still existing year after year
12/04/2024 07:57:51	Julie Janssens	StartLab Brussel	Responsible RH, compta & Admin	5 years	Suivi Workflow, personne de contact pour les questions administratives, gestion des Experts (Hubs)	Présence permanente		6 Max à disposition d'infrastructures, de coaches, de formations, d'experts dans tous les domaines, accompagnement personnalisé.	peu-être pas assez client-orienté, les différences étapes de phases d'accompagnement	subsidies (reportings), programmes NLR, etc. - FR	plus de sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté	/	Collaborative Decision-Making: Strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff, members, and possibly external partners.	Yes	Discussions d'équipe sur la façon dont nous pouvons améliorer le LAB et ses services	questionnaires d'évaluation semestriels - nombre de projets aboutis (FR - de TUG crédits)
07/05/2024 14:12:20	Caroline	StartLab Brussel	Director of the StartLab Brussels, daily out of the activities, team management, partners & networking, vision and strategy together with the team, reporting on the activities to the RBC...	Less than 1 year	Our incubator provides comprehensive support to young entrepreneurs through several key pillars: Lean Startup Methodology Program: We offer a structured program based on the lean startup methodology. This includes workshop, training sessions, and resources to help entrepreneurs refining their ideas, validate their business models, and iterate on their products or services efficiently. Co-working Space: Our incubator provides a dynamic co-working space where entrepreneurs can work on their projects. This space is designed to foster collaboration, creativity, and networking opportunities. It also serves as a hub for entrepreneurs to meet potential clients, partners, and investors. Community Engagement: We have built a strong community of experts, coaches, alumni, and industry professionals who actively engage with our entrepreneurs. This network provides valuable mentorship, feedback, and support, helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and seize opportunities. Dedicated Coaching: Each entrepreneur is assigned a dedicated coach who provides personalized guidance and support. Coaches offer strategic advice, help entrepreneurs set goals, and assist in developing action plans to achieve success. In addition to these foundational pillars, our day-to-day support extends beyond mentorship programs and educational resources. Guidance and Expertise: Our program managers are available to address any specific questions or challenges entrepreneurs may encounter. They leverage their expertise and connections within our network to provide tailored solutions and resources. Events and Collaborations: We organize a wide range of events in collaboration with other incubators or external partners. These events focus on thematic areas relevant to our entrepreneurs' needs and challenges. For example, we host co-founder events to address communication and agreement issues among co-founders, offering insights and best practices. Training Opportunities: We facilitate access to financing options through events like financing nights. Collaborating with partners such as Hubo Brussels, the Angels, BNP Paribas, Movistar, and others, we educate entrepreneurs on different financing pathways available to them, empowering them to make informed decisions about funding their projects. Through these initiatives and ongoing support, we aim to empower entrepreneurs, foster their growth, and contribute to their long-term success.	As part of our community engagement efforts at the hub, we take several proactive measures to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and networking among entrepreneurs and industry experts. Community Events: We organize and host various community events throughout the year. These events range from networking meetups and social gatherings to educational workshops and panel discussions. By bringing together entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and industry professionals, we create opportunities for meaningful connections and idea exchange (pitch club, summer reunion, pitch xel, ...). Feedback and Input: We actively seek feedback and input from community members to understand their needs, preferences, and challenges. This feedback loop helps us tailor our community engagement efforts, develop relevant programs, and continuously improve the support we offer to entrepreneurs. We use a dedicated digital platform to communicate with the incubates and enhance their engagement within the community. They can find upcoming workshops, events organized by the lab and partners, funding opportunities, and scholarships. They can share their news, achievements, and participate in discussion forums to exchange ideas and ask questions.	5 1. Long-Term Incubation Program: Our incubation program spans from 3 months to three years, reflecting our belief that building a viable project takes time. This extended timeline allows entrepreneurs to develop and refine their ideas thoroughly. 2. High Survival Rate: With a remarkable 90% survival rate of projects that launch after 3 years, we demonstrate a track record of success in nurturing sustainable ventures. This speaks to the effectiveness of our support and guidance throughout the incubation journey. 3. Workspace: In addition to our incubation program, we provide access to a dedicated workspace where entrepreneurs can not only work but also network and collaborate with fellow entrepreneurs. This fosters a vibrant ecosystem of knowledge sharing and mutual support. 4. Expert Guidance: Our incubation program benefits from the expertise of our academic director, who brings extensive experience in entrepreneurship. They are also professors at reputable universities such as Solvay and VUB, ensuring a high standard of mentorship and educational content. 5. Our Community: Incubates joining us gain access to our extensive network of coaches, experts, and alumni. This community support is invaluable for entrepreneurs embarking on their journey, providing them with mentorship, guidance, and valuable connections that can significantly impact their success. This collaborative network amplifies the resources and opportunities available to our incubates, contributing to their growth and sustainability.	- Lack of seniority in the team due to a high turnover rate. - Financial dependence on subsidies from the Brussels Capital Region, limiting resources and development. - Risk of knowledge loss with staff turnover. - We are actively working on making our organization more cross-functional and fostering teamwork to address this challenge. - Limited Resources and Funding Dependence: We primarily operate with subsidies from the Brussels Capital Region, which limits our resources and hinders our development. Additionally, these subsidies are typically granted for a period of 2 years, making us dependent on political decisions. This can make it challenging to navigate and grow without full control over budgets.	Here are the weaknesses of the hub: - Regularly Young Start-ups with High Turnover: Our team lacks seniority due to a relatively young workforce and a significant turnover in recent years. This turnover has resulted in a loss of knowledge within the lab. We are actively working on making our organization more cross-functional and fostering teamwork to address this challenge. - Lack of knowledge in our organization. - We are actively working on making our organization more cross-functional and fostering teamwork to address this challenge. - Lack of money. - Lack of resources by offering them workshops, a close support during their entrepreneurial journey and a community they can exchange with. - date management is complicated - internal audit needed to address the situation	Executive Committee: Strategic decisions are made by the Hub Director together with the Heads of Departments. Collaborative Decision-Making: Strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff, members, and possibly external partners.	Yes	-	data track (selfies) + yearly call to our alumni to collect data on the number of employees, CA, ...			
08/05/2024 09:57:04	Marion	StartLab Brussel	Office Manager	Less than 1 year	I support the startlab entrepreneurs on a daily basis by efficiently managing facilities, ensuring they have essential supplies, creating a pleasant and functional workspace, and facilitating access to resources, allowing them to focus on their core activities.	I engage with the community by helping in the organization of events - making connections among members, promoting collaboration		6 Free mentorship (30hrs) and support tailored to each entrepreneur's needs, a vibrant community of young entrepreneurs, and access to a lively workspace and access to dedicated coaches and experts	Nothing ? maybe limited resources or funding	Our main goal is expanding our Flemish community	same as above	they face challenges such as access to funding, market competition. The StartLab assists them by providing mentorship, access to funding networks, tailored business development support, and networking opportunities	Democratic Governance: All members of the hub (or all of employees) vote on strategic decisions. Collaborative Decision-Making: Strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff, members, and possibly external partners.	No		business growth, revenue generation, job creation, successful product launches, and alumni success stories

Timestamp	What is your name?	Which hub do you belong to?	What is your role inside the hub and what are your main responsibilities?	How long have you been working at the hub?	In what way do you support the entrepreneurs of the hub on a day-to-day basis (this does not include mentoring programs, networking events or any other educational resources)?	How do you participate in community engagement at the hub?	From a scale of 1 to 6, how much do you think the hub supports its entrepreneurs? (1 = Very Poor, 6 = Excellent)	What are the strengths of the hub? What makes it unique?	What are the weaknesses of the hub?	What are the difficulties that the hub faces?	What are the improvements that the hub could implement?	What challenges do the hub typically face, and how does the hub help them overcome these challenges?	Which governance model best describes the model you have inside the hub?	Are you involved in strategic decision-making?	Describe how you are involved in the strategic decision-making.	Only for StartLab: How does the hub measure the impact and success of its incubation programs?
15/05/2024 11:51:08	Lea Buddingh	StartLab Brussel	Marketing, communication and event manager	1 year	I support them by hosting valuable events, putting them in the spotlight, discussing their business during lunch exchanges and co-labouring, creating educational content...	I am in charge of hosting the 1st and networking evenings we host at the lab for our entrepreneurs, so they can get together have a drink and share with other entrepreneurs, I also organise other events for a larger public with other incubators or organisations to put our entrepreneurs on the map and open their network even further give them access and insights on more specific industries or topics. When creating content for our social media I am regularly in contact with our entrepreneurs featuring them in our newsletter, sharing their advancements etc...	5	We are a StartLab family it's a very human and safe environment to be part of much variety in the types of business and the reality of businesses we support. There is also a need for stability in the structure of the program and making it clear to entrepreneurs that even though the program is free it's still important and respectful to show up and not take it for granted.	Wanting to select all types of projects, too much variety in the types of business and the reality of businesses we support. There is also a need for stability in the structure of the program and making it clear to entrepreneurs that even though the program is free it's still important and respectful to show up and not take it for granted.	Offering 2 programs in French and English/Dutch, again trying to help all entrepreneurs put so offering a English track for dutch speakers but not evening enough dutch or english projects and events to offer them the same type of support.	Take a strategic decision on who we want to support, what are the ambitions? Create a more clear action plan on 3y and translate this to a 1y plan and focus on a few projects each time not everything at once.	At an early stage of entrepreneurship sometimes challenge to take action, go meet and talk to their potential clients understand them, understand the market, problem and so on. There's why giving them the tools on how to do so and matching them with deadlines and deliverables is a great way on pushing them to act. Later on they face challenges when raising funds, hiring their first employee etc... That's why we offer workshop in the launch phase on these topics, or specific events. And in general entrepreneur can tend to feel lonely, put a lot of pressure on themselves, not being able to disconnect their projects and themselves seeing it as one. Again through training, coaching.	Collaborative Decision-making. Strategic decisions are made through consensus among all stakeholders, including hub staff members, and possibly external partners.	Yes	As a team we regularly brainstorm on the main aspects of the business program. I am able to voice my opinion and this is taken into account. Sometimes I also have the freedom to take the lead on certain areas and decisions.	Through a questionnaire answered by entrepreneurs, thanks to regular feedback sessions, number of projects who are still viable after 3 years, quality of our workshops

A.18 Appendix 18: Comparison StartLAB vs CDH



(a) StartLAB



(b) CDH

Figure 1: Maturity levels of the companies inside the hub

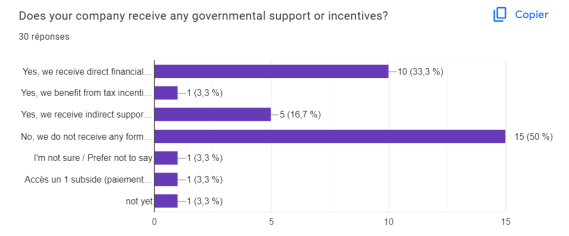
Enterprise Category	Count	Percentage
Micro Enterprise <10	30	100.0%
Small Enterprise <50	0	0.0%
Medium Enterprise <100	0	0.0%

(a) StartLAB

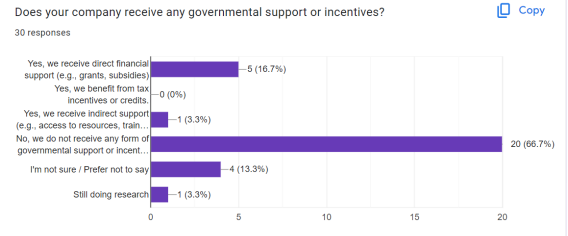
Enterprise Category	Count	Percentage
Micro Enterprise (0-4)	6	20.0%
Small Enterprise (5-49)	22	73.3%
Medium Enterprise (50-100)	2	6.7%

(b) CDH

Figure 2: Size of the companies inside the hub

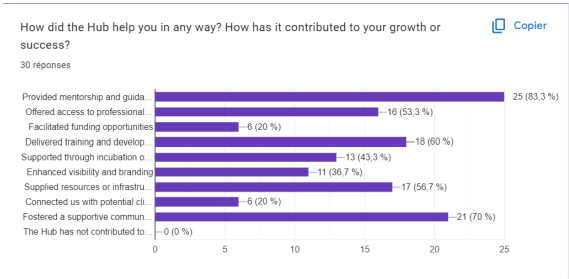


(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

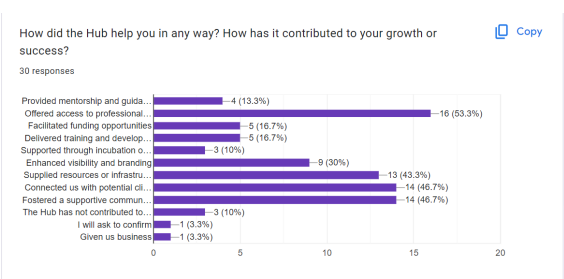


(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 3: Governmental Support



(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.



(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 4: Hub Support to its companies

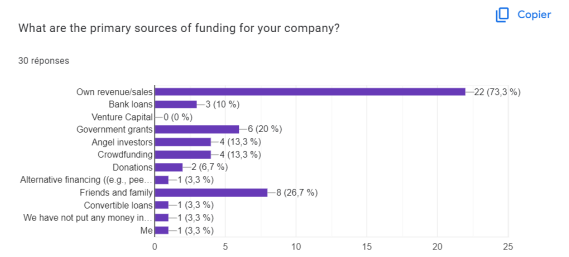
What are the biggest challenges you currently face?	Number of answers	%
Time management	2	6.7%
Funding; sponsorship	6	20.0%
Personal skills; self-confidence, mentality, work-life balance	3	10.0%
Scaling/growing	5	16.7%
Getting started; go to market	3	10.0%
Access to client; having more appointment; accelerate prospecting; growing audience	6	20.0%
Product development/launching + prototype	4	13.3%
Language barrier	1	3.3%
Human resources	1	3.3%
Partnership	1	3.3%
Sales	3	10.0%
Finding right supply chain	1	3.3%
Brand image	1	3.3%

(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

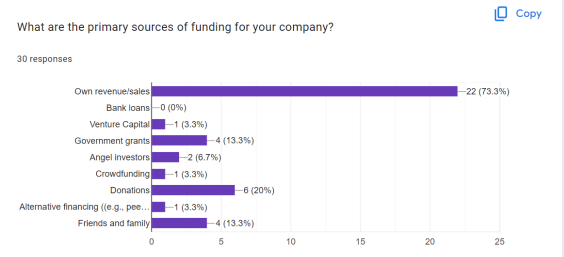
What are the biggest challenges you currently face ?	Count	Percentage
Infrastructure: heat, electricity and internet	10	33.3%
Financial constraints, funding	11	36.7%
Clients, market penetration	5	16.7%
Meeting people in the same field	1	3.3%
Management: accountancy, good employees	2	6.7%
Creating a paperless office	1	3.3%
None	1	3.3%

(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 5: Biggest challenges currently faced by companies inside the hub



(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

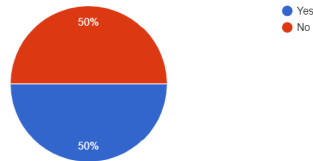


(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 6: Sources of funding of the companies inside the hub

Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc.

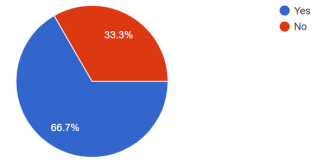
30 réponses



(a) StartLAB

Have you collaborated with other companies in the Hub? This includes official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc.

30 réponses



(b) CDH

Figure 7: Collaboration rate inside the hub

Describe the nature of these collaborations. (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc.)	Number of answers	%
Formal partnerships: official partnerships, selling products or services	7	46.67%
Informal collaborations: sharing knowledge, best practices exchange, advices, ideas	11	73.33%

(a) StartLAB (From the 15 companies that reported collaborating within the hub. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.)

Describe the nature of these collaborations. (e.g., official partnerships, selling products/services, sharing knowledge/best practices, informal exchange of ideas, advices, etc.)	Count	Percentage
Formal partnerships: official partnerships, selling products or services	13	65.0%
Informal collaborations: sharing knowledge, best practices exchange, advices, ideas	10	50.0%

(b) CDH (From the 20 companies that reported collaborating within the hub. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.)

Figure 8: Nature of collaboration inside the hub

Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support its companies in achieving their goals?	Number of answers	%
More coaching/support and more workshops	7	23.3%
More community engagement/more connection between startups	4	13.3%
More networking/ more events	2	6.7%
Finding funds	2	6.7%
More contact with potential clients	1	3.3%
More narrowed/focused community	2	6.7%
No suggestions	9	30.0%

(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Do you have any suggestions for how the Hub could better support its companies in achieving their goals?	Count	Percentage
Infrastructure: heat, internet, electricity	6	20.0%
More training, apprenticeship, workshops and seminars	5	16.7%
More community engagement	8	26.7%
More networking	7	23.3%
Finding funds	1	3.3%

(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 9: Suggestion for better hub support

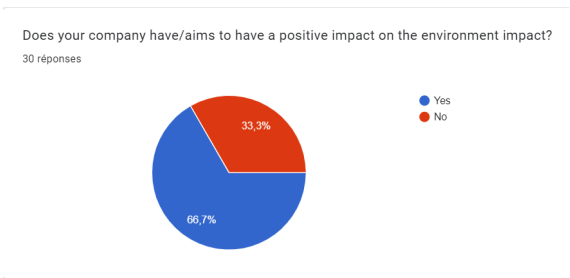
How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., group dynamics, group activities, inclusion, general atmosphere, mental health initiatives, ideas proposed to the hub's staff, ...)	Number of answers	%
General Atmosphere	4	13.3%
Presence	4	13.3%
Offering support : available to help, listening to others, discussions	8	26.7%
Participation in Activities and Events	9	30.0%
Sharing Knowledge and Information	4	13.3%
Respect and Open-mindedness	1	3.3%
Not Involved	6	20.0%

(a) StartLAB. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

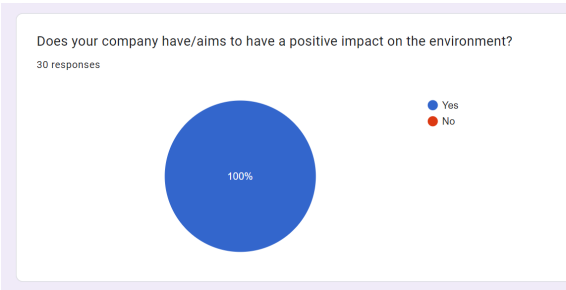
How do you contribute to the well-being of the other hub members? (e.g., group dynamics, group activities, inclusion, general atmosphere, mental health initiatives, ideas proposed to the hub's staff, ...)	Count	Percentage
General Atmosphere	6	20.0%
Presence	1	3.3%
Offering support : available to help, listening to others, discussions	9	30.0%
Participation in Activities and Events	3	10.0%
Sharing Knowledge and Information	2	6.7%
Respect and Open-mindedness	4	13.3%
Organizing events	4	13.3%
Not Involved	4	13.3%

(b) CDH. Note: The total number of responses can exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Figure 10: Contribution to the well-being of hub members

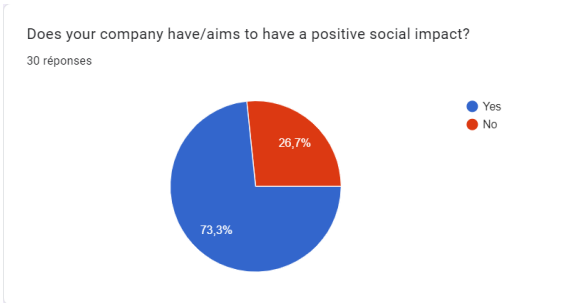


(a) StartLAB

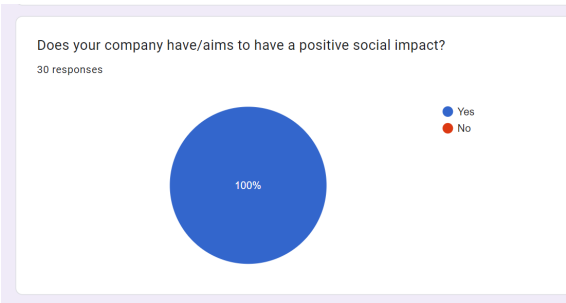


(b) CDH

Figure 11: Environmental impact of the companies inside the hub



(a) StartLAB



(b) CDH

Figure 12: Social impact of the companies inside the hub

A.19 Appendix 19: Evaluation Grid for Startups within Hubs

Evaluation Grid for Both Hubs

Criterion	Measurement Metric	Description
Management Evaluation		
Startup Lifecycle	Enter and exit dates, year founded	Track startup lifecycle metrics
Stage of Development	Indicate development stage: development, startup, growth, expansion or maturity	Measure the current stage of development of the startup
Industry Representation	Specify the industry in which your business operates	Give the name of the industry
Revenue Growth	% increase in revenue	Measure the increase in revenue over time
Customer Base Growth / Retention Rate	% increase in customer base	Track the growth in the number of customers
Number of Jobs Created	Full-time, part-time, freelancers	Count the number of jobs created, categorizing them clearly into full-time, part-time, and freelance positions.
Employee Equity Ownership	Ownership structure	Measure employee equity ownership in startups
Advisory Board	Existence and activity	Describe the activity of your advisory board
New Products/Services Launched	Number of product/services launched and sold	Track new product/service launches and sales
Adoption of New Technologies	Number of new technologies/processes adopted	Track adoption of new technologies or processes
Funding Secured	Total funding secured	Track the amount of funding secured and indicate the type
Type of Funding	Type and source of funding	Identify the type of funding and its source
Engagement with Hub Services		
Networking Activities	Number of events attended	Track both internal and external networking events, clearly specifying whether each event is internal or external.
Network Growth	Number of new/relevant industry contacts	Measure network growth (e.g., LinkedIn contacts)

Partnerships Formed	Number of new partnerships	Track internal and external partnerships, clearly indicating whether each partnership is internal or external.
Knowledge Sharing	Frequency (scale 1-6) ¹	Measure the frequency of knowledge-sharing activities
Community Engagement	Number of community initiatives attended	Track participation in community engagement initiatives
Quality of Mentorship	Rate quality of mentorship (scale 1-6) ²	Gather feedback on the quality of mentorship received
Skill Growth	Personal development (scale 1-6) ²	Measure personal development and skill growth
Environmental Evaluation		
Carbon Footprint	Total carbon emissions (tCO ₂ e)	Measure total carbon emissions (if possible)
Energy Consumption	Total energy consumed (kWh)	Track total energy consumption
Water Consumption	Total water used (m ³)	Track total water consumption
Renewable Energy Use	% of energy from renewable sources	Track use of renewable energy
Total Waste Generated	Total waste produced in tons	Measure total waste generated
Waste Management Practices	Waste sorting and segregation rate, recycling rate, number of waste reduction initiatives, compliance with waste regulations, and employee training	Track how waste is handled
SDG Focus	Alignment with specific SDGs	Identify SDGs relevant to their operations
Sustainability Goals	Targets set and progress made	Measure progress on sustainability goals
Environmental Certifications	Number of certifications obtained	Track environmental certifications
Biodiversity Impact	Impact on local biodiversity	Measure impact on biodiversity
Supplier Environmental and Social Performance	Evaluation of suppliers' performance	Track suppliers' commitment to environmental and social performance
Product Lifespan	Average product lifespan	Measure the average lifespan of products

¹1 being the lowest score and 6 the highest score

Employee Training on Sustainability	Number of training sessions and % of employees trained	Measure the extent of employee training on sustainability practices
Social Evaluation		
Diversity and Inclusion Practices	Diversity policies and practices implemented	Track diversity and inclusion practices
Gender Diversity	% of female employees	Measure gender diversity within the workforce
Employee Satisfaction	Satisfaction scores	Measure employee satisfaction
Health and Safety Measures	Number of measures implemented	Measure health and safety measures
Stakeholder Engagement	Frequency and quality of stakeholder engagement	Track stakeholder engagement
Investment in Social Projects	Amount invested or donated	Measure investment in social projects
Transparency	Scale rating (1-6) ² , public disclosure of key information, frequency of stakeholder updates	Measure the openness in sharing information about its operations, performance, and decision-making processes. This includes the availability of financial reports, business updates, adherence to reporting standards, and results of any conducted audits.

Specific Grid for StartLAB

Criterion	Measurement Metric	Description
Phase Reached	Current stage of the incubation process	Name and number of the phase
Meetings with Personal Coach	Number of meetings	Track meetings with personal coaches

²1 being the lowest score and 6 the highest score

Alignment with EU Taxonomy	EU's environmental objectives, which include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting resource efficiency, and protecting ecosystems	Measure alignment with EU taxonomy on environmental objectives
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Specific Grid for CDH

Criterion	Measurement Metric	Description
Tracking Package Upgrades	Specific tracking of package upgrades	Measure the frequency and type of package upgrades
Materials Reused	% of materials reused	Measure the percentage of materials reused within production
Circular Product Design	Number of products designed for circularity	Track products designed to be easily disassembled, recycled, or reused
Adoption of Circular Business Models	List the circular business models you have adopted (e.g. product-as-a-service, repair services, remanufacturing)	Describe the circular business models your startup has implemented
Supplier Commitment to Circular Practices	Number of local suppliers engaged	Track suppliers committed to circular practices

Abstract :

Innovation hubs are shaping the entrepreneurial landscapes in both developed and developing countries by fostering dynamic environments conducive to startup growth. This thesis investigates the role of two specific innovation hubs: StartLAB Brussels and Circular Design Hub (CDH) Kampala, and their contributions to local economic development through entrepreneurship and innovation. Despite the growing recognition of these hubs, there is limited understanding of the differences in their broader impacts within their unique contexts. Therefore, this research aims to explore how these hubs facilitate innovation, access to resources, networking, collaboration, and their socio-environmental impacts.

Utilizing a mixed-method approach, the study involves direct observations during internships, interviews, and surveys targeting both hub staff and entrepreneurs. The findings highlight the significant contributions of both hubs in promoting economic growth, providing essential support services, and fostering collaborative networks. However, notable differences were observed in their operational challenges and impacts due to the contrasting entrepreneurial environments in Belgium and Uganda, as well as their different positioning.

The results emphasize the importance of tailored support mechanisms to adapt to their distinct local contexts. Based on these findings, recommendations are provided for StartLAB and CDH to support entrepreneurship in their ecosystems. This study underscores the critical role of innovation hubs in addressing global entrepreneurial challenges. Finally, it calls for further research to explore how innovation hubs can effectively use digital platforms and gain a deeper understanding of their broader social and environmental impacts.

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