

Uberising luck

Africa is full of schemes to help entrepreneurs

They are hit and miss[Print edition | Business >](#)

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IN 1999 A Ugandan teacher decided to start her own school. Barbara Ofwono Buyondo had \$350 of savings. Bankers would not give a loan without collateral, especially to a young woman. With no money for tables, children wrote on their chairs, kneeling. Today her company, Victorious Education Services, is one of the leading schools in Uganda. Over 4,000 fee-paying pupils attend its five campuses, swept up by a fleet of branded buses and welcomed by primly uniformed teachers.

Decent jobs are so scarce in Africa that, like Ms Buyondo, many people create their own. Surveys by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor find that one in three working-age adults in sub-Saharan Africa either runs a new business or is trying to start one, compared with one in six Americans and one in 20 Germans. In Tanzania informal firms created four-fifths of new non-farm jobs between 2002 and 2012. Most such enterprises are also tiny. Schemes to help them emulate Ms Buyondo's success have a mixed record.