

When disaster strikes: how insurance saves you from starting over



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On a quiet Tuesday evening in Nateete, a small electronics shop was locked up for the night. The owner, Sarah, had spent years building her business. Every shilling mattered. Every radio, phone, and television in that shop represented her hard work. At 2:00 a.m., a short circuit sparked a fire in the neighbouring premises. By morning, the entire structure was gone. The traders who gathered in disbelief kept repeating the same painful words: "We will have to start again."

But Sarah didn't. Months earlier, she had taken a fire insurance policy. When she walked into her insurer's office the next day, her claim was registered immediately. Within weeks, she was compensated. Today, her shop still stands not because disaster didn't strike, but because insurance stepped in when, even her savings could not save the situation.

Stories like hers happen quietly every day. We often see the tragedy, but rarely hear about the recovery. The truth is simple: disaster is never planned, but protection can be. One accident, one hospital bill, one flood, or one theft can change lives forever. Without insurance, most families and businesses face only two options: borrow heavily or lose everything.

Last year alone, insurers in Uganda paid over UGX 800 billion in claims. That money rebuilt homes after fires, repaired cars destroyed in accidents, covered surgeries, paid school fees when breadwinners passed

away, and helped businesses replace stolen stock. That is not theory. That is real support in real lives.

Many people still imagine insurance as something distant, complicated, or expensive. Yet a family can get medical cover, funeral cover, or insure their shop for less than what they spend on fuel each month. Microinsurance has made it even easier: market vendors, taxi operators, farmers, boda riders, teachers, mechanics, and anyone and everyone can protect what they have.

The saddest stories are not about the disaster itself, but about the struggle that follows when there is no insurance. Farmers sell land to pay hospital bills. Families beg for help burying loved ones. Children leave school because fees can no longer be paid. All these situations are preventable. **The cost of rebuilding is always more painful than the cost of protection.**

Insurance does not stop bad things from happening. It simply makes sure you don't start from zero. It keeps your life moving when circumstances try to pull you backwards. It replaces the phone that was stolen. Repairs the car that was crashed. Pays the hospital bill that would have drained your savings. Supports your family when you are gone. No one plans for disaster. But everyone can plan not to be destroyed by it. So, as you work, save, invest, and build, remember this: progress is fragile until it is protected.

When disaster strikes, and it often does, will you lose everything, or will your insurance carry you through?