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DIGITAL
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COMMUNITY LEADERS FOR INTERNET ADVOCACY

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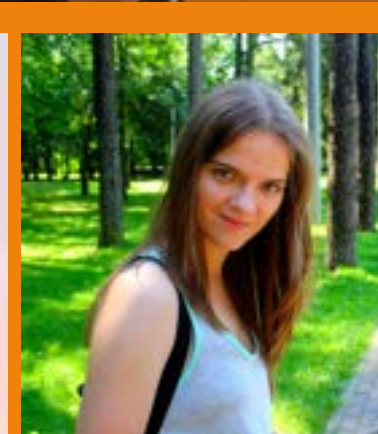
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Table of Contents

08

Aubin Zoh

*Child Online Protection in
Africa*

10

David Aragot

*Public Campaign against the
Law of Cyberspace*

12

Isaac Oloruntimilehin

*Policy Position of the Internet
Ecosystem in Nigeria*

14

Mauricia Abdol Tshilunda

*ElevateHer: Empowering
Women and Girls Online*

16

Taona Makolija

*Fighting Gender Bias in the
Healthcare System*

18

Victor Uahomo

*Zero Tolerance to Internet
Crime and Poor Accessibility*

Community Leaders for Internet Advocacy builds upon the work of Open Internet for Democracy Leaders by engaging in the principles of a democratic internet and adapting the Open Internet for Democracy Advocacy Playbook. The Community Leaders for Internet Advocacy are young leaders from underrepresented communities who are using the internet for advocacy and democratic participation.

Program Outcomes

- Provided 6 weeks of online training including training webinars on internet advocacy to 7 youth from 6 countries
- Matched 7 mentors to support the open leadership journey of our community leaders whose community-led projects address internet advocacy issues relating to Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Assembly and Association, Accessibility, Privacy and Data Protection, Personal Safety and Security, Inclusion, Network Equality, Standards, and Governance
- Curated 6 stories that spotlight local internet health issues from underrepresented communities



4

**4 weeks online
course learning
and 4 webinars**

3

**3 weeks online
buddy-system and
peer learning**

2

**2 weeks of 1-on-1
mentorship with
industry expert**

1

**1 final pitch deck of
community leaders
projects**

Program Summary

Community Leaders for Internet Advocacy builds upon the work of Open Internet for Democracy Leaders by engaging in the principles of a democratic internet and adapting the Open Internet for Democracy Advocacy Playbook.

The first phase of the program encompassed 4 weeks of online course learning on the Digital Grassroots Moodle platform. Every week participants explored a particular topic and competence area related to digital activism.

Each module was complemented by a 1-hour webinar where participants had an opportunity to exchange experiences, ideas, and discuss module topics with the project leads. Two webinars featured guest speakers:

01

Program Objectives

- Raise awareness on internet advocacy in local communities to enable grassroots communities to share their internet advocacy experiences by connecting youth community leaders to the Open Internet for Democracy Advocacy Playbook;
- Support open leadership for community-driven projects through mentorship with internet advocacy experts;
- Produce an Internet Advocacy Report with guidance from Open Internet for Democracy Initiative team.

02

Program Content

- Week 1: Democratic Principles for an Open Internet
- Week 2: Coalition Building for Internet Advocacy
- Week 3: Advocacy Approaches (part I)
- Week 4: Advocacy Approaches (part II)

03

Expert Guest Speakers

- Sarah Moulton, Open Internet for Democracy: Open Internet for Democracy Playbook
- Solana Larson, Mozilla Foundation: Internet Health Report

The second phase of the program focused on 2-week project implementation and mentorship. As part of the mentorship, participants were required to implement the Communications Strategy they developed in Week 4 of the program. Participants were also matched with one or two industry experts based on their specified areas of interest for mentorship. Through virtual meetings participants connected with the mentor to obtain desired support for their internet advocacy community project.

The culmination of the program was a pitch deck, where participants presented the projects they had been working on during the last 2 weeks of the program.

Child Online Protection in Africa



The project is open to partnerships for maximum impact across the continent. Financial and logistical support would also be welcomed as the project's team is planning physical awareness tours in schools, communities and parents' associations. The project's visuals can be shared to amplify awareness.



AUBIN ZOH, COTE D'IVOIRE

Expertise: Digital marketing. Project management. Web development (CMS). Blogging. Digital Rights.

Aubin is a youth leader passionate about Digital inclusion and rights. He is co-founder and Vice-President of LEAD+ AFRICA (www.leadplusafrica.org), a pan-African NGO that aims to be a springboard for the youth capacity building for their empowerment and involvement in the economic and social development of their community.

Aubin graduated in Computer science and is an emerging African Digital marketing Expert and Tech blogger. He wants to focus his advocacy on Child Online Protection in Africa. He is also a Internet Society 2018 Youth@IGF fellow, Yali RLC Accra Alumnus, Digital Grassroot Amabassador and Trainer, Vice-President of Youth IGF Cote d'Ivoire, member of Cote d'Ivoire Internet Society.



While the internet and social media play an increasingly important role in our society, the place of children in this "virtual" world is still very vague.

Because of the power of social media, it's not uncommon for young people to connect with people they've never met. Children face a wide range of risks when using the internet. These risks are sometimes threats to their security or privacy. Children need special protection when they are online and must learn to avoid dangers and make the best use of the internet.

The Child Online Protection program is an initiative of the NGO LEAD + AFRICA to enable African children to become responsible digital citizens under the assistance of their parents educated for this purpose.

The program's mission is to engage children in responsible use of the internet and to instill notions of digital citizens to parents to ensure the protection of their children online.



Public Campaign against the Law of Cyberspace



The "Law of Cyberspace" hasn't been discussed yet by Venezuela's National Assembly. Despite this, at RedesAyuda we've been filing public information requests to learn more about the bill. Meanwhile we've been documenting and denouncing the cases in which digital rights were attacked or criminalized by the Venezuelan regime in our annual public report "Confined Voices 2.0", available in Spanish and English at: <https://redesayuda.org/informe2020/>



DAVID ARAGORT, VENEZUELA

Expertise: Effective communication. Information Analysis Processing. Problem Solving.

David graduated from the Simón Bolívar University (USB). He is a Digital security trainer of journalists, human rights defenders, social activists and political leaders in Latin America, specifically countries with a repressive context such as Venezuela and Cuba, and other countries in the region such as Colombia and Brazil. David has more than 4 years of experience working in Digital Communications and 7 years of experience in Civil Society Organizations.

Watch David's project pitch deck: https://youtu.be/UI4rFi_SK7M



The Venezuelan regime is promoting a new bill through the illegitimate National Assembly called “Law of Cyberspace”, to regulate the activity of citizens on the Internet and create a regulatory framework to prosecute political dissidents for their posts on digital platforms like social media and more.

At the same time, it is worth noting that in the current context, the political factors that have historically helped civil society to organize to confront the regime do not have the support and trust of the citizens; and civil organizations such as NGOs do not have the strength or resources to do it alone. One of the possible solutions to this issue can come from citizen pressure to stop the bill, which has happened before. Thus, the joint public campaign has been created.

The ideal aim of the campaign would be to stop the advance and approval of this bill, while also creating awareness among citizens about the dangers that this implies for all Venezuelans and the negative impact it can have on freedom of speech and access to information, especially considering that digital platforms are the last bastion of freedom of speech in the country.

The advocacy plan is based on social media campaigns and different means of online engagement as well as incorporating cooperation with national and international NGOs, independent media outlets and journalists. An issue of importance in the framework of the campaign is the time factor. The best time to launch the campaign would be after the publication of the new draft of the bill that would make it possible to examine its content.

Policy Position of the Internet Ecosystem in Nigeria



One of the most prominent issues that Nigeria faces in the digital space is privacy matters and user access. In order to address the issue Isaac proposes to develop a policy position, which aims to provide a report of the current state of the internet ecosystem in Nigeria. This project would require the input of subject matter experts in internet policy and digital rights. The project is also open to partnerships in the form of funding and logistics for maximum impact.



ISAAC OLORUNTIMILEHIN, NIGERIA

Expertise: Community engagement. Project management. Data collection and analysis.

Isaac Oloruntimilehin is a member of the Wikimedia movement in Nigeria, and a Co-Founder of Free Knowledge Africa. He previously led the Wikimedia Club at the University of Ilorin. Isaac is also a member of the Creative Commons Global Network, Europeana Network Association and actively contributes to open source projects. He is an alumnus of the Millennium Fellowship (2019 class) and a Local Pathways fellow (2020 cohort) at United Nations SDSN Youth. He is an environmentalist and an advocate of the SDGs.

Watch Isaac's project pitch deck: <https://youtu.be/oldIU1vwhv0>



The policy position is set to provide a foundation for the relevant stakeholders who have an influence on the regulations and standards guiding the internet and digital space in the country. The project also implies the creation of recommendations that can be implemented in the short, medium and long term, coupled with the roles that other stakeholders can play in implementing these changes.

The key stakeholders to be involved in the process are the government, Nigeria Communications Commission, Internet service providers and members of the marginalised communities.

It is worth mentioning that one of the paramount objectives of the action plan is to educate the public on the addressed topic, as it will be futile to advocate on behalf of a community that does not fully understand the issue. It is therefore of utmost importance that the issues are properly explained to the communities to ensure there is a public awareness on the Internet-related matters and, eventually, effective citizens participation.

The advocacy approach includes such steps as creating a central website, conducting social media campaigns as well as engaging in offline media. Thus, the communication strategy would be hinged on using the various available means of communications such as social media, websites, email lists, flyers, newspapers and the radio.

ElevateHer: Empowering Women and Girls Online



The ElevateHER Network aims to provide meaningful access to the youth women and girls from the African continent to global fora. Support is needed for their internet connectivity. Individual mentorship in digital diplomacy, Internet Governance and their area of study. The organisation also welcomes administrative and media support to further the voice and impact of the ICT and Internet Governance programs.



MAURICIA ABDOL TSHILUNDA, SOUTH AFRICA

Expertise: Project management. Communication. Administration.

Mauricia is the CEO of Data Works Communications (DWC), a consultancy enterprise in the Education sector. She uses her background in Communication, Gender Studies and Psychology to develop life enhancing programs for marginalized communities through various ICT solutions. DWC is a proud Global Youth and EducationUSA advising centre supporting youth and young professionals to study and work in the United States of America. As a focused CSI initiative, DWC addresses the UN-SDG 5 namely gender equality by elevating the voices of African women and girl youths in technology through its subsidiary NPO, the ElevateHER Africa Network.

Watch Maurica's project pitch deck: <https://youtu.be/wyFFBo7Hx6Q>



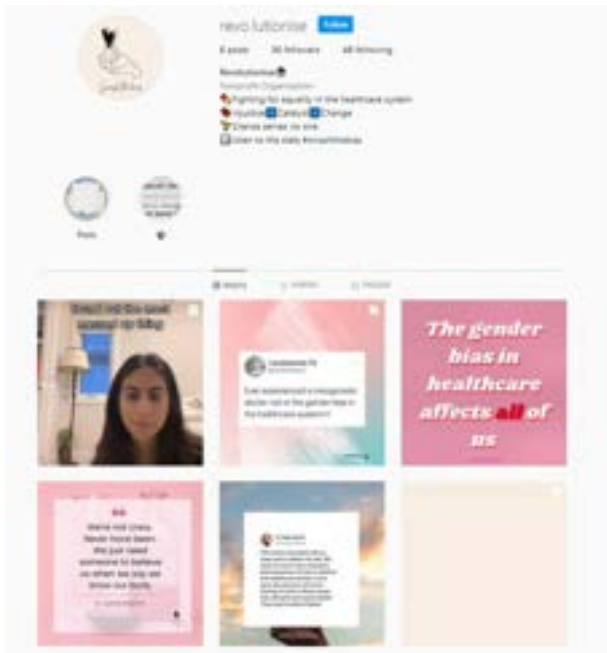
Over half of the total global female population is still not using the internet (52%) compared to 42% of all men (ITU, 2019) and the greatest numbers fitting within this gap are spread over the continents of Africa and Asia.

As part of the initiative ElevateHER Network, working to increase inclusion of women and girls in ICT, Mauricia has developed an outreach campaign on the digital female empowerment. It will serve the ElevateHER Network as an awareness building strategy with the intent and purpose of amplifying the voice of gender equality in the digital space advocates in Africa.

The campaign aims to raise awareness among the general public as well as key stakeholders – that can be involved in the campaign as active supporters and advocates for women's rights in Africa – on the importance of gender equality in the digital realm. Moreover, the action is also going to shed light on the economic and other implications for the community of the raised issue.

One of the key communication tactics of the campaign will be the creation of a video of community members sharing their views on the importance of women and girls having access to the internet, which will be shared across major social media sites and among Internet Governance Networks. The video will also serve as a spin off to launch a visual campaign centered on women and girls accessing ICT and also taking up their space in the digital economy as active contributors and valuable consumers.

Fighting Gender Bias in the Healthcare System Online



The project intends to revolutionise women's health to become something widely discussed and thoroughly researched breaking the existing bias around female health. The project would require more expertise on awareness raising so that the government and leaders could have more open conversations and put more focus on resources towards women's health with detailed strategies on making the healthcare system female friendly.



TAONA MAKOLIJA, MALAWI

Expertise: Digital literacy. Communication. Web development.

Taona is an 18 year old pragmatic revolutionary whose key interests are in travel, graphics, and solving the gender bias in the healthcare system. She advocates for gender equality issues through awareness raising. Taona is a Pearls Across Africa ambassador. She has also taken the 'Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls' YALI course and was also part of the Digital Exchange programme.

Watch Taona's project pitch deck: <https://youtu.be/zV7mnNorivg>



Malawi shows a clear need for more inclusion of women in clinical trials due to having a history of doing research on predominantly only males. There's also a lack of research being done on specifically diseases that affect women which tends to leave out important questions and unknown elements about women's bodies which leaves them suffering long term due to inadequacies.

Moreover, there is significant gender bias in the healthcare system reinforcing the idea that women and girls are hysterical and not taken seriously, which prolonged diagnosis leading to long term consequences. With all this Taona is going to educate more women and girls about the issue and what they can do about it while also raising more awareness to the government about their inadequacies since as an individual Taona strongly feels that the government can do more to address the matter.

Meanwhile, the advocacy plan will be based on a diverse set of actions, including the creation of a central website, an online and offline awareness-raising campaign as well as media engagement. One of the first steps of the action plan will be approaching relevant stakeholder groups – among them the national government, Ukani foundation, non-profit organization Rise 360 and Girl Up Malawi, Blantyre Chapter – and organizing discussions with them on the current policy state of women's health in Malawi.

Zero Tolerance to Internet Crime and Poor Accessibility



The project intends to run a fifteen to thirty minutes advocacy program on air utilizing different formats (interviews, learning sessions, etc.). Presently finance is one of biggest challenges for the team to be able to carry out the developed sensitization campaign from school, churches, and mosques, so this has reduced the project's effectiveness and hamper some of the desired areas where the project's team will want to reach out to with the campaign.



VICTOR UAHOMO, NIGERIA

Expertise: Team work. Leadership. Organisation.

Victor holds a diploma in nautical Science and is undertaking studies in Computer Operations and Internet Services. He works for God's Ambassadors Ministerial Network Worldwide, an NGO where he focuses on youth development advocacy in Idokpa community in Benin City, Nigeria.

He works with youths to teach them on the importance of internet services in the modern day world and how to use the computer for studies. This addresses the societal norms of youth who are afraid to use the internet and some parents believe the internet will corrupt them. Victor works to change this.

Watch Victor's project pitch deck: <https://youtu.be/FPYpOqDVsjU>



Among all the digital issues that Victor's community is facing, a significant level of online frauds and crimes is one of the major problems that need to be consistently addressed. It has to be said that the issue is particularly affecting young people that often lack access to the Internet as well as necessary knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully with the digital space. In the light of this, Victor has developed a project, which aims at creating awareness among youth on the proper use of the Internet to stop and minimise online frauds and crimes in the community as well as educate people on digital rights and opportunities.

The project is set to advocate for a proper and better use of the internet in the community for human capacity building and focuses on 3 major communication tactics. The first one is creating a website, which will serve as a database for update and also feedback from the community youths on the impact of the advocacy program. Furthermore, a social media campaign will be launched, which will be a pivot way to communicate and create awareness on the cause of the advocacy program. Finally, offline media engagement will be used.

This action is expected to meet at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of the community youth and, eventually, change the mindset of community members to make the government aware of the need for everyone to have access to the internet and ensure the safety of the digital experience.

Testimonials

"I learned a lot from my mentor. We discussed digital rights and how we can use internet to protect people and advocate for safe digital environment."

VICTOR UAHOMO



"I learned so much about internet governance and cybersecurity issues. the program has transformed my thinking. I have grown through this experience."

TAONA MAKOLIJA



"For me the best part of all was the practice, because it was the time when ideas had to be turned into action. The content was also amazing."

DAVID ARAGORT



I liked the pace of the program, which was well developed with a one week time allowance to complete tasks communicated to you well in advance."

**MAURICIA ABDOL
TSHILUNDA**



"I liked flexible nature of the program and the mentorship phase as I got an opportunity to explore my interests and discuss with my mentor different issues."

**ISAAC
OLORUNTIMILEHIN**



"I was happy to meet and interact with the impressive fellow leaders. I also liked quality of program resources and experts in the mentorship part."

AUBIN ZOH



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

TO INCREASE DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN GRASSROOTS COMMUNITIES

The following are some ways you can help. Please visit
www.digitalgrassroots.org
to see current opportunities to get involved and make a
difference in local communities.

So far, we have reached 128 young people in over 65 countries
with equal gender balance since 2018.

We can do more with your support.

Get in touch with us or connect us with someone who can
help:

comms@digitalgrassroots.org



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