KICTANet
The Power of Communities

Spotlight Report

Driving ICT Innovation, Protecting Digital Rights in Kenya

October- December 2023

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Introduction

KICTANet is a think tank that brings together various stakeholders to discuss and influence information and communication technology (ICT) policy and regulation in Kenya. The think tank catalyses positive change in the ICT sector through four main activities: policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and research.

The network provides mechanisms and a framework for continuing cooperation and collaboration in ICT matters among industry, technical community, academia, media, development partners, and government.

KICTANet's mission is to promote a robust, open, accessible, and rights-based enabling environment in the ICT sector through multistakeholderism. Its strategic objectives during 2022 - 2024 are practical multi-stakeholder participation, promoting an enabling environment, building capacities and empowered communities, and institutional strengthening. Our pillars are stakeholder engagement, capacity building, research, and policy advocacy.

In line with our strategic plan, KICTANet will continue to use its convening power through various mechanisms, tools, and multistakeholder approaches to promote an enabling environment in the ICT sector.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report covering October to December 2023, KICTANet showcases a dynamic period of advocacy and collaboration within the ICT sector. The organisation has been instrumental in championing digital inclusion and human rights, notably at the 18th Global Internet Governance Forum and through collaborations addressing concerns surrounding the MaishaNamba digital ID system.

Innovative initiatives have also marked this period, with KICTANet partnering with the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation in collaboration with the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Nairobi on cybersecurity and privacy initiatives. Engaging discussions on the potentials and challenges of AI in Kenya have been at the forefront, alongside dialogues on African media post-pandemic.

KICTANet has proactively promoted child protection through collaborative efforts and organising impactful events such as "Afro-Feminist Perspectives on Data Governance" and "Reimagining a Feminist Internet." KICTANet remains steadfast as a leading advocate for digital rights, driving progress and inclusivity in Kenya's ICT landscape.

In conclusion, KICTANet, from October to December 2023, underscored its unwavering commitment to advancing a robust and inclusive ICT sector. Through advocacy, partnerships, and impactful events, KICTANet remains a beacon for digital rights, paving the way for a more accessible, secure, and equitable digital future in Kenya and beyond. As we progress, KICTANet remains dedicated to championing digital rights and driving positive change in the ICT landscape.

Policy Advocacy

KICTANet Champions Digital Inclusion and Human Rights at the 18th Internet Governance Forum

KICTANet had a strong presence at the 18th Internet Governance Forum (IGF), held in Kyoto, Japan. The forum, whose theme was "*The Internet We Want: Empowering All People,*" served as a platform for KICTANet to advocate for its core values, including digital inclusion and human rights.

Championing Accessibility for All: KICTANet actively championed the inclusion and accessibility of persons with disabilities online. Recognising that [only 3% of the internet is accessible,](#) KICTANet Digital Accessibility program officer, Nicodemus Nyakundi passionately advocated for policies and best practices that ensure equitable ICT access for all persons with disabilities against the backdrop of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD). This aligns with KICTANet's ongoing initiative to promote digital accessibility and inclusivity, exemplified by the scorecard report on the *"[Accessibility of Government Websites for Persons with Disability (PWDs)](#)"*

Leveraging ROAM-X for Sustainable Development: KICTANet CEO Dr. Grace Githaiga participated in a compelling session emphasising the role of ROAM-X indicators in achieving the UN Secretary-General's roadmap for digital cooperation and the Global Digital Compact. Dr. Githaiga highlighted the UNESCO Internet Universality Indicators framework as a crucial tool for addressing global and national standard-setting gaps to fulfil Goals 4, 5, 10, 16, and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This framework aligns with [KICTANet's](#)

[ROAM-X approach](#), utilising research, advocacy, outreach, and mobilisation to advocate for internet policies that foster sustainable development.

Beyond advocacy, KICTANet actively participated in discussions around best practices in cybersecurity. The focus was on how existing norms can be made more meaningful for those directly impacted by cybersecurity incidents, bridging the gap between high-level policy and real-life experiences.

KICTANet's participation at the IGF demonstrates its unwavering commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable digital ecosystem.

Spearheading New Global Movement for Human-Centered Digital IDs:

folks who are not yet in the network. We are going to meet on Thursday afternoon at 3:30. I think digital ID

IGF 2023 Day 1 Workshop Room 9 Gathering and Sharing Session Digital ID and Human Rights C

KICTANet joined other member organisations of the global civil society community, the Digital ID and Human Rights Civil Society Community, whose focus is promoting digital ID systems that respect human rights and inclusion.

This community, [formally met](#) at the 18th Internet Governance Forum in October 2023, aims to push for transparent, accountable governance in digital ID implementation and advocate against human rights violations and systemic exclusion within existing programs. Further, the community promotes well-designed digital ID systems that cater to the needs of local communities and marginalised groups. Here is the link to the session: https://tinyurl.com/knbtn6m4

KICTANet and SlovakAid Team Up for a More Secure and Inclusive Digital Future

KICTANet [signed an agreement](#) with the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Slovak Embassy in Nairobi. The partnership aims to boost Kenya's cybersecurity and privacy landscape, focusing on crucial areas like data

protection, digital ID, and gender equality. The collaboration leverages the strengths of both parties. KICTANet's deep understanding of the Kenyan ICT environment combines Slovakia's proven expertise and best practices.

KICTANet thought leadership series - AI in Kenya: Balancing Potential and Pitfalls

On November 16th, 2023, KICTANet initiated a [crucial conversation](#): *the opportunities and challenges surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Kenya.* Stakeholders from government, businesses, civil society, and academia provided diverse perspectives on AI's potential for economic and social transformation, which demands careful consideration.

The government acknowledged the need for a national AI policy and regulatory framework, with key concerns being data privacy, ethical considerations, and potential harms. The government was committed to reforming the ICT sector and nurturing local innovation. Recommendations emphasised increased investment in AI education, research, and development. Additionally, ensuring diverse groups have a voice in the AI ecosystem is critical. The potential for AI to exacerbate existing inequalities underscores the need for responsible development that benefits all. [This conversation is just the beginning.](#)

African Media After the Pandemic: Navigating the Digital Landscape

KICTANet, in collaboration with UNESCO and GIZ, [participated in a panel discussion](#) at the African Union's Science, Technology, and Communication Commission (STC) in Addis Ababa. The focus was on the post-pandemic landscape of African media and its challenges and opportunities. KICTANet, with its expertise in digital advocacy, emphasised the importance of embracing digital platforms, utilising data insights and fostering collaboration with tech communities as key strategies for African media to navigate the

ever-evolving digital landscape and thrive in the post-pandemic era.

Concerns on Maisha Number Human Rights Impact

Kenyan civil society organisations (CSOs) joined forces on November 1st, 2023, to voice concerns about the proposed MaishaNamba digital ID system. During a public engagement session with the government, KICTANet presented a memo outlining potential human rights impacts, including privacy, data security, and freedom of expression.

The dialogue reflects ongoing efforts by CSOs to ensure transparency and accountability in Kenya's digital ID initiatives. The focus is to protect individual rights within the evolving digital landscape by collaborating with the government and raising key concerns.

As a strong advocate for digital rights, KICTANet remains actively involved in discussions and initiatives surrounding digital identification, contributing its expertise to promote these systems' responsible and human-centred development.

Championing ICT Innovation at The Kenya Fibre Data Summit 2023

KICTANet took a leading role at the 2023 Kenya Fibre Data Summit, underscoring its commitment to advancing ICT research and innovation in Kenya. Trustees Barack Otieno and Mwendwa Kivuva addressed key areas such as digital entrepreneurship, talent development, and collaboration. They highlighted the need for a conducive ecosystem and collaborative efforts to drive sustainable ICT growth. Their valuable insights shed light on opportunities and challenges within the sector, emphasising the importance of policy support. KICTANet actively advocates for policies that foster digital entrepreneurship, talent development, and collaboration, recognising their crucial role in propelling sustainable development and innovation in Kenya's ICT sector.

Advancing the Fight Against Technology-Facilitated Violence in Kenya

For a safer online world, we partnered with other organisations to [dialogue on the critical issue of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA)](#). This collaborative effort aimed to strengthen the fight against CSEA through various means.

One key focus was enhancing advocacy efforts. KICTANet, alongside partners like EqualityNow and Trace Kenya, empowers civil society organisations with the tools and knowledge they need to combat CSEA effectively. The dialogue emphasised the importance of using accurate terminology, such as "child sexual abuse materials" instead of "child pornography," to ensure clarity and respect.

The fight against online abuse extends beyond raising awareness; it needs the development of robust response mechanisms, measuring progress, and ensuring accessibility through multilingual resources. KICTANet's [translated modules on online gender-based violence](#) (OGBV) were highlighted as a beacon of inclusivity in this fight.

Crucially, the dialogue also addressed the often-challenging reality of legal implementation. Participants discussed the complexities of enforcing laws related to tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse in Kenya. This open discussion highlighted the need for continued collaboration between stakeholders, including civil society, law enforcement, and technology companies, to bridge these gaps and ensure effective legal frameworks that protect children in the digital world.

KICTANet Stands Up Against Online Gender-Based Violence During 16 Days of Activism 2023

We actively participated in the 2023 campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence," themed "Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls." We organised several events to raise awareness and advocate for a safer digital space for women and girls.

16 Days: #InvestToPreventKE | #16DaysOfActivism |#NoExcuse Campaign

The #InvestToPreventKE campaign 2023 aimed to rally citizens and the government of Kenya to take concrete steps in preventing violence against women and girls. Recognising the global epidemic of violence that affected 1 in 3 women, this campaign sought to highlight the urgent need for adequate resources, policies, and actions to stop this pervasive issue. By fostering awareness and demanding tangible investments in gender-based violence prevention, the campaign endeavoured to create a safer and more equitable society for all, where women and girls could thrive without the threat of violence looming over their lives.

Unmasking the Trolls: This webinar, held in collaboration with the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), presented research on online gender-based violence (OGBV) in Kenya. The event brought stakeholders together to discuss the findings, propose solutions, and work towards protecting digital rights for all.

Beyond the Screen: This webinar, co-hosted by APC, focused on the issue of online surveillance and its impact on women. Through presentations and discussions, attendees explored the various forms of surveillance, their chilling effects, and ways to empower women in the digital sphere.

Breaking the Silence: KICTANet hosted a Twitter Space event titled "Advocacy Against Online-Gender-Based Violence: Empowering Women Politicians and Influencers." This event gave women leaders and influencers a platform to share their experiences with online harassment and advocate for concrete actions to create a safer digital space.

By organising these events, KICTANet played a crucial role in raising awareness about online gender-based violence, empowering women and girls, and advocating for policy changes to create a more equitable and safe digital environment for all.

KICTANet remains a leading voice for digital rights and inclusion in Kenya and beyond.

- **Afro-Feminist Perspectives on Data Governance:** [This event](#) and our partners CIPESA and Internews webinar discussed how data collection can harm women and marginalised groups. Issues include online harassment, discrimination, and limited access to control their data. The speakers proposed **data justice** with principles like equity, access, and participation to ensure fair treatment in data collection and use.

- [**Reimagining a Feminist Internet**](#) **for Structurally Marginalized Women:** This discussion focused on building an inclusive and equitable Internet space that empowers women facing various forms of marginalisation. These events highlight our commitment to promoting digital rights and fostering a more inclusive online environment.

Digital Accessibility at KICTANet

In a whirlwind of digital discourse, KICTANet hosted a dynamic Twitter Space. Here, the digital realm became a stage for vibrant dialogue, centered on the transformative power of digital accessibility. Participants from diverse backgrounds converged virtually to dissect the very fabric of equality, weaving together insights on the intersection of technology and inclusivity. Amidst the flurry of tweets and exchanges, one resounding theme emerged: the pivotal role of accessible digital platforms in fostering a more equitable society. Delving deeper into the discussion, the spotlight shifted to the impactful strides made through equality fellowships within organizations. This spotlight illuminated how such fellowships serve as catalysts for change, driving innovation and breaking down barriers within the professional landscape.

Collaboration

Building Digital Resilience: Empowering Human Rights Defenders in East Africa

The Tatua Digital Resilience Centre, in partnership with KICTANet and Defenders Coalition, spearheaded a transformative three-day training on the 5th, 6th, and 7th December 2023. The training was for 120 human rights defenders hailing from all 47 counties of Kenya. This segment was integral to the 2023 Human Rights Defenders (HRD) Academy, a response to HRDs' identified needs from the previous year's General Assembly. Emphasising cyber hygiene practices, device authentication, social media threat identification, and secure digital transactions, the training aimed to equip participants with crucial tools to safeguard themselves from online vulnerabilities. Interactive sessions illuminated the challenges HRDs face, from cyberbullying to identity theft, fostering a robust discussion on protective measures and practical applications of digital security tools. KICTANet's pivotal role in this initiative underlines its commitment to empowering HRDs and fortifying their resilience in the face of evolving digital threats; a sentiment echoed in the post-session surveys, which expressed an apparent demand for continued and advanced technical training in this vital arena. Cyber hygiene campaign in October Cybersecurity month.

Building Digital Resilience for Social Justice Organizations in Tanzania

The Tatua Digital Resilience Centre, in partnership with KICTANet, hosted a one-day training in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, as part of the Forum for Internet Freedom in Africa (FIFA). The workshop aimed to equip board members and senior Social Justice Organizations (SJOs) leadership with skills to navigate the digital landscape. With 80 attendees from 44 organisations, the training emphasised the need for ongoing capacity building in policy development, technology, and cybersecurity. This initiative aligns with KICTANet's mission to promote digital rights and create an enabling environment in the ICT sector.

During the global October Cybersecurity Awareness Month (OCSAM), KICTANet conducted a Cyber Hygiene awareness campaign. The campaign aimed to promote cyber hygiene awareness among the

Kenyan public and covered topics such as online safety, security, resilience, privacy, and data protection. As part of the campaign, KICTANet disseminated several materials across social media platforms, including video skirts, video features, comic strips, pamphlets, fliers, and fact sheets.

Participation in the National Cybersecurity Conference

As part of OCSAM, the Communications Authority also conducted various activities to raise awareness among consumers and the industry on cyber security and safety. During the month, the Authority convened stakeholders on 31st October 2023 at Mercure Hotel under the theme of *"Building Tomorrow's Cybersecurity Workforce"*. KICTANet was represented at the national cybersecurity conference, and other stakeholders discussed various initiatives to build relevant and adequate cyber security capacity to enhance Kenya's national cyber readiness and resilience.

Participation in National KE-CIRT/CC Training

KICTANet participated in a 10-day training program to foster Incident Response, Crisis Management, and Digital Forensics skills.

KICTANet Pushes for Stronger Cybersecurity in Kenya

In preparation for the Sixth Substantive Session of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the security of and the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in 2021-2025, KICTANet presented a comprehensive [statement](#) during an informal dialogue with the Chair. The statement highlighted key proposals for enhancing ICT security, including advocating for multistakeholder approaches to cybersecurity capacity building, supporting adaptable policy frameworks, investing in capacity-building initiatives, promoting digital inclusion through community networks, emphasising research and development to address evolving cyber threats, fostering awareness and education on cyber hygiene, and calling for regular reviews and updates of the ICT security system. These proposals aim to ensure a coordinated, resilient, and inclusive approach to cybersecurity in Kenya and beyond, aligning with KICTANet's commitment to promoting responsible cyber behaviour, human rights, and privacy in the digital age.
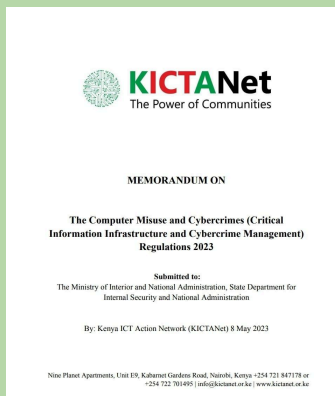
PUBLICATIONS

Reports

Unmasking The Trolls: Research on Online Gender-Based Violence in Kenya. This report explores Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) in Kenya, focusing on how it impacts marginalised groups. It uses surveys and focus groups to examine the nature and Prevalence; the harmful physical and emotional effects on victims, including mental health issues and social isolation; the reasons behind OGBV acts, ranging from personal vendettas to political aims and the existing laws and policies relevant to addressing OGBV online. The report finds that OGBV is a gendered issue with severe consequences for victims. It concludes with recommendations for stakeholders to combat OGBV and promote digital safety and rights.

Submissions

KICTANet Weighs In on Kenyan Cybercrime Regulations

KICTANet submitted a review of the Kenyan government's proposed "Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes" regulations in response to the call for input on The Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes (Critical Information Infrastructure and Cybercrime Management) Regulations 2023. The submission included a matrix presentation outlining concerns and proposals on relevant provisions of the regulations for review and consideration. This submission reflected KICTANet's commitment to effective multistakeholder participation, promoting an enabling environment, building capacities, empowering communities, and institutional strengthening during 2022 - 2024.