DIGITAL LITERACY AND SAFETY TRAINING FOR WOMEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Venue: Ngong Hills Hotel Nairobi

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Introduction

The digital literacy and safety training for university students is a Women@web program supported by Deutsche Welle Akademie(DW) in partnership with local organizations. The training is part of a wider East African program that include Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet), Africa, Association of Media Women in Africa (AMWIK) and Siasa place as Kenya partners. The partnership aims to promote the participation of women in online platforms.

In line with the overall objective of the program, this training sought to provide women university students with the information they need to safely and confidently navigate the digital spaces. Through digital responsibility lessons, students took practical steps to protect their privacy and safety online. By learning digital literacy skills including how to evaluate content for accuracy, perspective, and motive, students acknowledged the benefits of digital communities and resources.

The training took place over 3 days at Ngong Hills Hotel Nairobi, whereby the trainers used a variety of interactive methods of training such as lectures, presentations and participatory activities through group work.

A summary of the Thematic areas covered on the training are as follows:

1. **Day one discussions**: Entailed lectures and activities were about understanding Digital Literacy and understanding the importance of women being digital literate, introduction to Digital citizenship, using the various digital tools and platforms and finding your voice online by creating LinkedIn profiles, blogs, and podcasts.
2. **Day two discussions:** Included lectures and practicals focused on digital rights and how they are linked to our everyday activities, understanding the internet and how it works, Kenyan legal framework and its application on digital rights, how to get involved on issues online and managing digital footprints.
3. **Day three**: the participants went through practical activities on Digital security, how to be safe online through KICTANet's 3-step method: JIJUE- Digital self-assessment, JISAFISHE-Digital Clean-up, JIPANGE- forming good habits online.

The participants were selected from different universities within Nairobi and its surroundings namely:

I. Multimedia University of Kenya
II. University of Nairobi
III. Daystar University
IV. Jomo Kenyatta University
V. Dedan Kimathi University
VI. St Paul's University.

A total of 25 students participated.

Day 1

Opening Session

Liz Orembo - KICTANet

The training kicked off with a round of introductions by the participants and the trainers. Participants introduced themselves, their Universities, academic background. They also went ahead to explain why they thought the future of the internet was bright, and expressed their level of confidence using digital technology. Below are pie charts representing their thoughts:
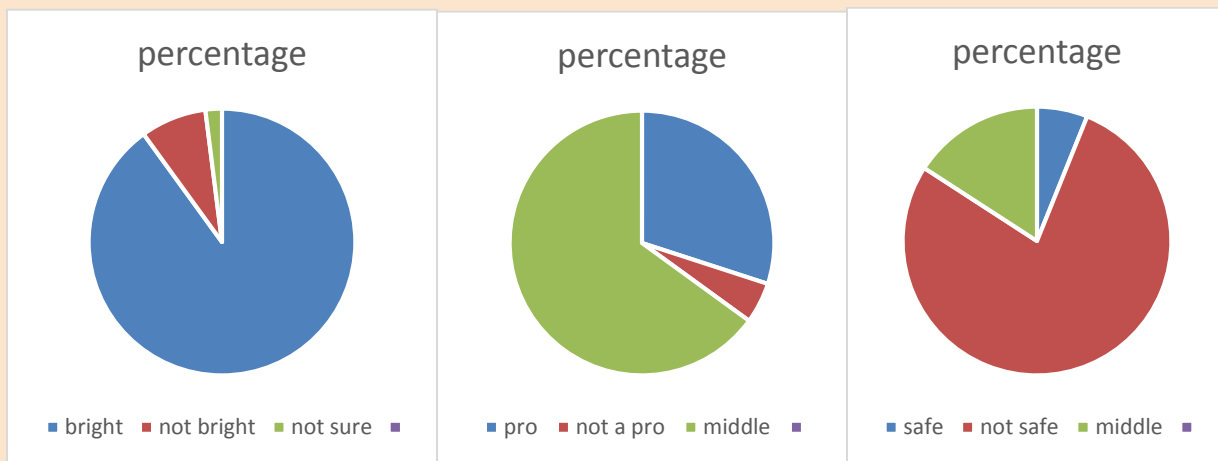
From the graphs, the percentage of individuals agreeing that the future of the internet is bright was higher. They went ahead and gave reasons like Artificial intelligence(AI) coming in and assisting the human being like robots and bots online. Those who had negative sentiments on the future of the internet feared the possibilities of people losing their jobs to AI.

The percentage for the young women confident in their digital skills was low as they mentioned the rapid growth of the internet and the need for their skills to be at pace with these developments. Others expressed that they were neither on the extremes of confidence levels, as being digitally competent depends on what sites or software they are working on.

On the questions of whether the participants felt confident navigating the Internet, the percentage of those who feel safe is lower compared to those of those who felt safe. The respondents express that they always have a notion that someone is watching what they do on the Internet. Others expressed that the information they put on the internet can never be safe.

Grace Githaiga, KICTAnet convenor, gave a brief introduction to KICTANet and the DW program. She started by recognizing the universities represented by the participants, and appreciated the students for, showing interest and getting involved in the program. She then introduced the training explaining to participants that Women@web program by DW Akademie in partnership with 4 local organizations KICTANet, Article 19, AMWIK and Siasa Place.

Grace took the participants through KICTANet organization's history and what the organization does on ICT policy reforms locally and beyond. She also described KICTANet works under 4 pillars: Research, Advocacy, Stakeholder Engagement, and Capacity Building, and informed the participants on the opportunities available for them under the 4 pillars. Grace left participants with a statement:" Think before posting".

Mwara welcomed the participants to the training, appreciated them for expressing interest and taking the time to participate in Digital issues as women as it is the future. She then took participants through the program that guided the activities within the 3-day training.

Introduction to Digital Citizenship

James Wamathai- BAKE
Mr. James introduced the Bloggers Association of Kenya and went ahead to inform the participants how to market themselves online and capture the space they feel comfortable with. He also insisted on the importance of one sharing information that they are comfortable with and of being authentic. He made the participants understand how various Digital Media platforms work such as a website(s), Facebook, WhatsApp,Instagram, Twitter, others and which one works better for their work and interests.

## Navigating the web using digital tools and platforms

Rayhab Gachango- Award-winning Lifestyle Blog Potentash
Rayhab began the session by taking the participants through a step by step guide on how to use different digital tools and platforms available to create and share content. The participants were introduced to blogging; how to start one, the tools available to start one like Wordpress, how to post, share and advertise the page. She was sure to make it clear that blogging was just not one form of expression that the participants can express themselves through photo blogging, visual blogging, podcasting and the like.
She also mentioned some tips that participants need to know before venturing into content creation learning your audience, creating content that offers solutions to problems, consulting experts provide convenient sharing options for people to share content by including twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, Soundcloud icons, using hashtags to create trends and ultimately being passionate.

Rayhab also helped the participants understand the various do's and don'ts (NETIQUETTE) to help them approach Digital Media (DM) in an informed and practical way to make the best use of DM in their online engagements.

Finally, she informed the participants that content matters because it tells a story, inspires, motivates and drives decision making. She shared the success wheel bellow:
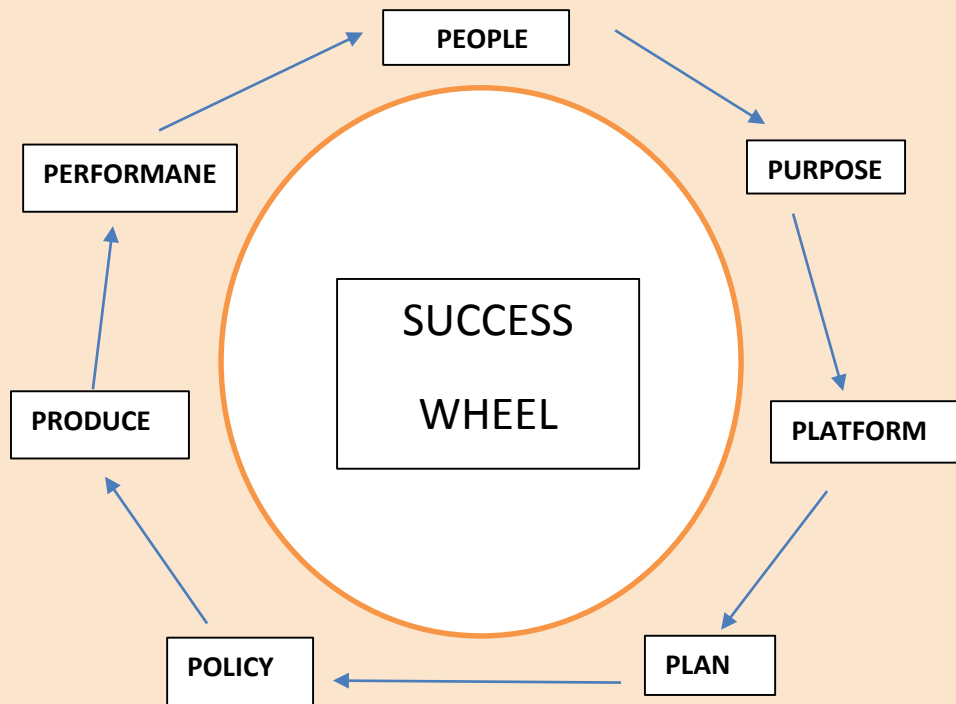
What is Digital literacy and why is it important for women to be digital literate

Mwara Gichanga- ASSOCIATE KICTANet

This session entailed a practical session that helped the participant understand the importance of digital literacy among women. Ms. Mwara instructed the participants to mark on the chart how active they are online and which digital platforms they are on. This is what the participants came up with:
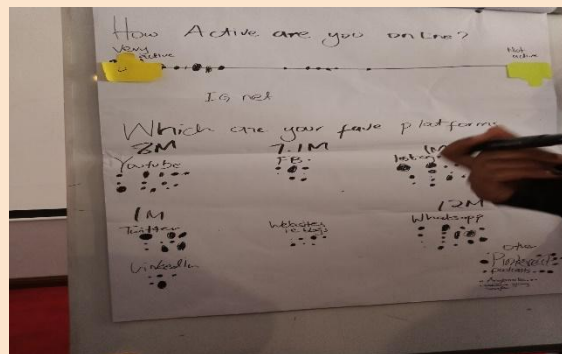
Podcastsing

Becky Wambui- The Audacity podcast

Ms. Becky gave a short history of where word podcasts came from and a short description of it. She described the podcast as a medium of communication which is purely in audio format. She narrated her journey with the Audacity podcast, the challenges she faced and what she learned along her journey. She spoke to the participants who would prefer to create and distribute content through audio formats and encouraged them that it is one the cheapest platforms, that only requires a microphone or a voice

recorder on mobile devices and uploading it to a distribution channel available on the internet called sound cloud.

Finally, Becky took the participants through a voice testing exercise using the voice recording feature in their mobile phones..

DAY 2

Introduction to the internet and how it works

Liz Orembo- KICTANet

Liz started the second day of the program with a recap of the previous day's sessions. The recap was in the form of an activity where they had a ball made out of paper and if it was thrown in the direction of a participant, the one who catches the ball said something they learned the previous day.
She continued with the introduction of the internet and asked participants to describe the internet. Among the definitions included: A network of networks, a world wide web, A platform for expression, and a repository of information. Liz went on to describe the Domain Name System (DNS). How the internet addressing system works. She explained the DNS system like the Internet address book, associating it with the contacts function of a mobile phone, where a user saves a contact's numeric number as a name. So instead of looking for web pages through 8.8.8.4, one would type google.com- which is easier to memorize.

In this session, participants were also introduced to digital security. Liz showed participants how to analyse a domain string, as a way of analysing authenticity of content. She also highlighted tools, within the participants reach, that can be used to enhance safe browsing. These included; Incognito browsing on google chrome, search engines such as duckduckgo that do not store information and VPNs to bypass networks. She also explained how incognito browsing works, its advantages, and its privacy limitations.

Introduction to digital rights

Miriam Obara – Siasa Place

In this session, Miriam gave a brief history of Siasa Place and how it began as a group of young people passionate about politics to use to meet up for such heated discussions and debate and eventually decided to give their voices a platform online. She then asked the participants to give a timeline of how long they have been engaging online and what kind of challenges they have faced especially because of their gender.

Participants expressed their observation that women find it hard to play multiple roles on the same platform. Women tend to be identified with one role through which they are viewed and judged for the other roles they take. In effect, they assume different personas in their different social media platforms.

A participant explained that she uses twitter to express political issues, Instagram for fun, and LinkedIn to display her design portfolio. On the other hand, men can play extreme roles, from comedians to fathers, to politicians, and serious advisors.

Some of the lessons that came up were Internet is meant for connectivity and openness, there should be freedom of expression online but is hate speech measured, access to information is a right, internet shutdowns are rights issues, coding is specific towards engineers values is discriminative by structure, the internet is playing catch up both technically and legally and rights online are the same offline. She also made participants understand how their data could be used online and the impacts.

Digital Rights Kenyan context

Bernard Ogoi- AMWIK
During this session, Bernard used a visual presentation that communicates the importance of digital rights. He then took the participants through the existing legal frameworks.
Bernard then explained to the participants where to refer to understand their rights and he pointed out the Constitution, Penal code, KICA, Access to Information Act, Computer misuse and cybercrime law, Media council act, Digital bill of rights, Africa declaration bill of rights. He also pointed out that some of the things that hinder digital rights are the law of how it is enforced, norms and practices, issues of intermediary liability.

Linking digital rights to everyday activities
Mr. Bernard went ahead and divided participants into three groups and assigned each a task for discussion which the groups later presented. Below are the images of the presentation of each group:

Group 1
Laws to protect a person who has been cyberbullied:

1. Article 33 freedom of expression
2. Article 16 sexual offences act
3. Article 27 a person who comments commits an offense under sub 1 is liable on conviction to a fine exceeding 20 million- or 10-years imprisonment.

Group 2
Legal frameworks that were broken for uploading a video of a minor being defiled:

1. Right to safety/security
2. Sexual offense act broken-defilement and incest
3. Child pornography
4. Right to privacy

Group 3

Laws that hinder freedom of expression in East Africa:

1. The respective legal provisions
2. Electronic and postal communications
3. Licensing and registration for a website
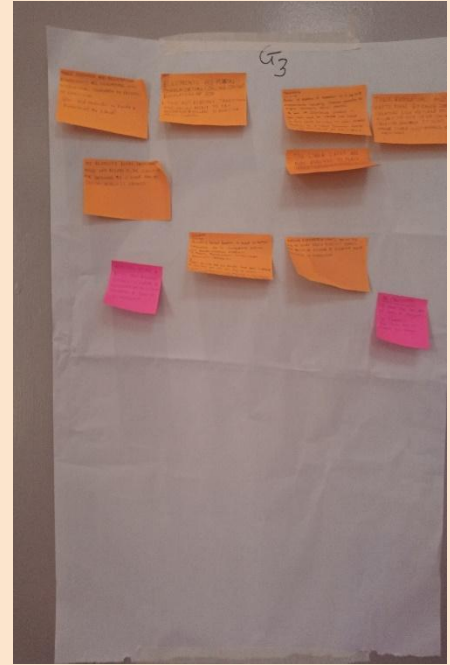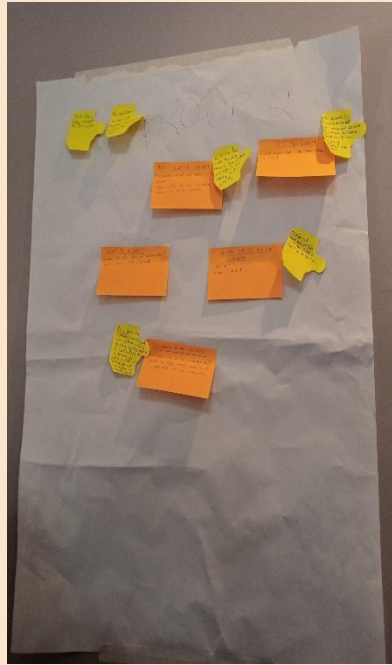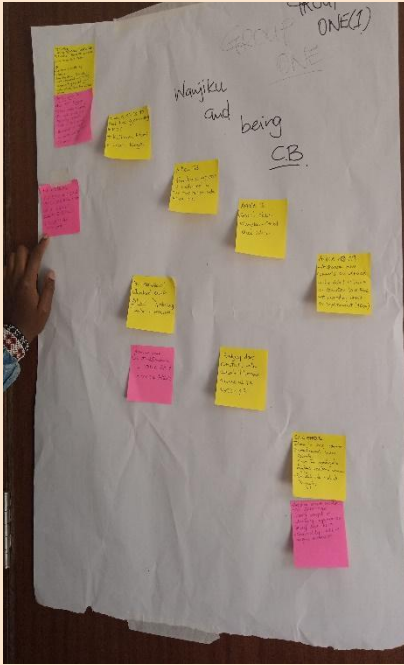
Managing digital footprints tools and practices

Mwende Ngao - BAKE

In this session, participants were taught about digital footprints, how to safely use the internet without leaving behind traces in the form of online habits or information that can be maliciously used against them. Mwende took the participants through an exercise using myshadow.org, a website that shows you the traces and digital shadows one leaves behind without knowing on their internet-enabled devices. She explained the importance of managing digital footprints and how digital footprints are collected. She also advised the participants that managing digital footprints also included creating useful online content that can shape women's profiles online. Searching oneself online to see what people have said about you is also a way of managing digital traces.

She added that employees are increasingly looking up people's interests and work portfolios in recruitment processes. It is therefore important for women to develop traces of content that can help them professionally.

The exercise also included creating strong passwords. Participants tested the strength of their passwords through https://howsecureismypassword.net/. Those who had strong passwords shared with the rest of the class the techniques they used. Most of them included long sentences or long English nouns. Liz then shared password management techniques such as password manager tools, use of mother tongue and long phrases, and mixing words with almost similar symbols (words like chrome converted to (hr0m3).

Mwende asked participants to note:

1. Keep private posts private
2. Create strong passwords (mostly in the mother tongue as it will not be possible to hack)
3. Split your footprints online
4. Delete unnecessary apps and always check cookies
5. Be cautious when posting

Getting involved

Miriam Obara – Siasa Place

In this session, Miriam wanted to get an understanding of how the participants interacted online, with that is the basis she highlighted the importance of moving from just being passive users and to shift to be more active communicators with quality content that brings impact to the society.
Participants with the training already received should be able to take advantage of the accessibility and connectivity already made available, and exploit it into getting them as women voices in spaces online challenging norms, changing practices and questioning the system.

Ms. Miriam finished the session by encouraging the participants to learn to identify the spaces and gaps to be filled and finding out how comfortably they fit in them, then slowly and consistently growing it so that it can impact people's lives.

DAY 3

Recap and Introduction to Digital Security

Liz Orembo - KICTANet

The last day of the training started with a recap of the previous day's training, where the participants were asked to recant what they learned through a thrown ball and alphabet exercise. Participants were asked to use the letter they were given to explain what they learned in the previous days.

Mr. Bernard then continued with the introduction to the digital security part of the program. He took the participants through a series of digital security habits which included:

- ☐ checking protocols of password and pin enabling on devices using two factors authentication
- ☐ Password management
- ☐ cross-checking and verifying correct emails address while opening emails and attachments to avoid phishing attacks
- ☐ keeping antivirus updated

JIJUE Self-assessment

Cecilia Maundu- IWART

Cecilia started her session encouraging the participants to discuss their communication habits, and what their dream internet would be. She went ahead to give them an assignment for discussion about why the participants are online, why it's important and what are the spaces they are in.

After the presentation Cecilia asked the groups to go ahead and create a dream internet with a name, why their dream internet would be significant, who it is for, who it is not for, the rules they will use and what topics people will talk about on the safe and dream internet.

The results of the discussion are as below:

GROUP 1 – SAUF

GROUP 2 - SALAMA

GROUP 3 – E-DIVERSE

Why are the spaces significant?

1. No hacking
2. No trolling
3. No cyberbullying
4. Full positivity

Who is it for

1. Everyone
2. Women (group 2)

Who is it not for?

1. Stalkers
2. Hackers
3. Cyberbullies
4. Toller's

Rules on the spaces

1. No negativity
2. Respect people's privacy
3. No screenshots on the content that is not originally yours (group 2)
4. Prior censorship
5. Mute negativity
6. Freedom of expression

Topics

1. Everything (group 1 and 3) Humanity, health, security-developmental topics (group 2)

JISAFISHE Digital clean-up

Mwendwa Kivuva - KICTANet

After the Jijue session, Mr. Kivuva trained on the importance of social cleanup. This session included practical activities where participants will enhance their digital security. Kivuva took the participants using their mobile and devices through:

- Physical security for devices
- Securing sensitive data in devices through passwords, encryption
- Wiping out cache
- Reviewing App permissions
- Managing passwords
- Delinking accounts where necessary.
- Properly deleting or deactivating unnecessary accounts.
- Clearing browsing history
- Installing a browser that respects privacy for sensitive work.
- Mastering app permissions to avoid getting hacked learning who to give access to your data
- Identifying App permissions and check if they apply to the use of the app e.g. location access, contact information, permission
- Creating strong and encrypted passwords.

JIPANGE -Good habits

Miriam Obara – Siasa Place

Ms. Miriam using a screen presentation took the participants through a practical exercise to test what they think good online habits are, she asked them to stand in a line and to move left or right side based on the online engagements on the screen that showed either good or bad habits. The participants had to decide whether habits, like trolling, bullying or posting third party content without consent, were part of digital citizenship.

From the practical session, the trainees come up with the following as good digital habits

- ☐ Changing passwords every other few time
- ☐ General cleaning/ spring cleaning checking on digital footprints, logging out on third party devices e.g. the school computer library and cyber cafes, creating extra accounts for activities such as shopping
- ☐ Checking on links sent and shared before clicking

EVALUATION

Mwara Gichanga KICTANet Associate

For the evaluation, Ms. Mwara asked the participants to share their experiences of the training applying the skills acquired on digital literacy and using social platforms and tools to communicate effectively online. The experiences were shared in the form of video format, writing and audio and were played for the rest of the training to comment and review.

Link to Evaluation Exercises from the Participants:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Dd2EvT_278Sq1Qy0tcuZFU-3nMH-yNE5?usp=sharing

CONCLUSION

The three-day training was intensive, interactive and informative especially to the young women as they needed the digital literacy and safety class to know how to be safe online as both consumers and content creators.

By the end of the training, everyone was willing to start creating content and make use of the online spaces to fill the women gap online. The participants had different content creators like podcasters, writers, YouTubers, Instagram and Facebook creators. This was a positive sign as most of the university students came in afraid of putting themselves out there as they all had heard stories of people being cyberbullied especially, women. They agreed on managing their digital footprints with the knowledge they acquired and started using the online space as digitally literate women.