Ethical Considerations

Ethics in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) are a set of moral principles that govern an individual or a group on what is acceptable behaviour while using digital devices. Ethical considerations provide protection for users and developers, researchers and organizations that implement, use and develop applications. In Kenya institutions and mandated under the law to provide guidance and approvals to innovators and any parties who develop applications and as well as organizations that intend to distribute their application for use by the citizen must put into consideration all the requirements that must be met before application is distributed.

Empower-Ed is an Android application which targets educators, mentors students and mentees to provide support in remedial teaching, mentorship and skills training. This provides that a set of ethical considerations must be put in place before the application is distributed for use.

Approvals and Compliance required to launch the Empower-Ed application:

Data Protection Compliance and User Consent

In Kenya data protection is a mandatory requirement for applications that require citizen's personal data and especially if the data contains information on minors. Regulatory bodies such as the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner requires that all citizen's data are protected according to the Kenya's Data Protection Act (DPA), 2019.In addition, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) should be conducted to identify, assess, and minimize the privacy risks of processing personal data. This support in creating awareness for the developers on the data protection risks associated with the project and therefore improve on the design of the project. Conducting a DPIA will improve awareness in your organization of the data protection risks associated with a project. This will help to improve the design of your project and enhance your communication about data privacy risks with relevant users and stakeholders. In addition, and consent must be filled by all the users of the applications and especially for minor must involve parent/guardians.

Ministry of Education (MoE) Approval

Empower-Ed is targeted users include teachers, mentors, student and mentees. The Ministry of education Kenya requires approvals for integration or formal of any educational materials that will require formal integration into the school's programs and activities. Integration of Empower Ed into public schools will require that's its content is aligned with the Competency Based Curriculum requirements.

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

Alignment with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) approved curriculum. Empower –Ed will include educational curriculum materials such as subjects, learning areas, skill training and development and selected assessment materials. This means that the content development must be alignment with KICD curriculum standards.

Google Play Store Approval (if distributing via Play Store)

Upon the project development, testing and user feedback are put into consideration in the final application distribution. Empower-Ed future plan is to have this application hosted for distribution by Google Play Store. Therefore, the application must comply with Google Developer Program Policies which include Applications targeting minors and data privacy requirements.

This requirement also includes submission of a privacy policy URL to the play store and declare application permissions especially due to data, storage and internet use requirements of the application.

Intellectual Property and Copyright Registration

Empower-Ed application developers have an option to copy right the registration of the application. This ensures exclusive ownership of the application. In Kenya, this is undertaken by the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) for trademarks and the Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO) that protects unique educational content developed by institutions and individuals.

Network and Device Compatibility Testing

The Ministry of ICT or ICT Authority requires that applications used in public schools or remote areas must be developed to promote equity, access and distribution of the application and ensure compatibility with school issued devices. These ethical considerations are laid out in the Policy on Information and Communication and Technology in Education and Training. (REPUBLIC OF KENYA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION POLICY ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2021 Ministry of Education: Policy on Information and Communication Technology in Education and Training, n.d.)