BRAIN BUILDERS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

8,800+

Students Safer, Smarter, and Secure Online

Empowering Nigerian Students with Digital Literacy and Online Safety

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About
BBYDI

Founded in 2014, Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI), is a youth-led nonprofit organization whose mission exemplifies the uses of technology to drive sustainable development and empowering citizens with technology and Artificial intelligence tools to solve practical challenges in Africa. We are dedicated to promoting environmental, community and societal sustainability by empowering women and youths to take active roles in leadership and decision-making processes. Through our initiatives, we have deepened knowledge in EDTech, Ai, CivicTech in especially Nigeria and Africa, fostering the efficient and ethical use of technology while advocating for gender equality and women's rights. Additionally, we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable opportunities for women in entrepreneurship, education, governance, community development, civic engagement, and peaceful political participation contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With a proven track record of impactful projects around and EDTech, CivicTech, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Literacy desk spanning Ai Journalism Fellowship in Nigeria, Digital Training for teachers in the North Central Nigeria, EdTech Advocacy with Stakeholders in Nigeria, Sensitization and fact checking training for communities in Nigeria, BBYDI remains steadfast in its mission to foster positive change and provide opportunities for youth advancement.

Through strategic partnerships, innovative projects, and advocacy efforts, BBYDI endeavours to cultivate a generation of young leaders who are passionate about sustainable development. Leveraging innovation and technology, we collaborate with stakeholders in marginalised communities and government institutions to promote digital education, facilitate empowerment projects, encourage community participation in development initiatives, and facilitate comprehensive climate education programs.
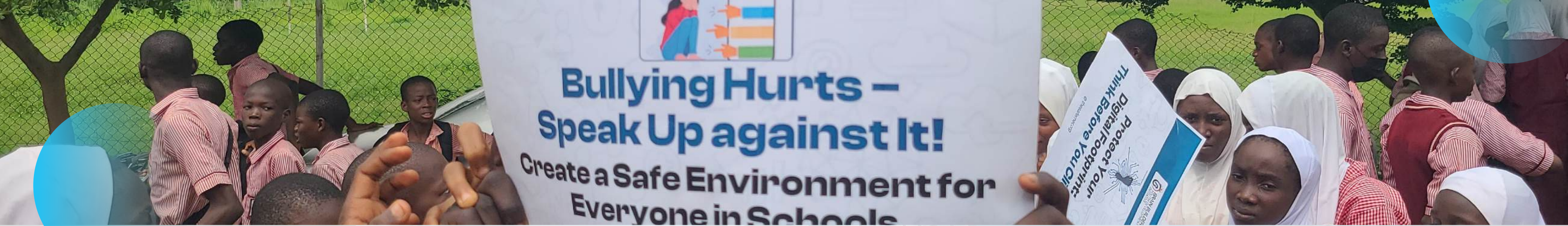
About **BBYDI**

Over the past years, BBYDI's initiatives have made a significant impact, reaching over 1,000,000 individuals across various age groups and backgrounds in several communities spanning all 36 states in Nigeria. Our diverse projects have directly engaged individuals and communities, fostering environmental stewardship, economic empowerment, and knowledge enhancement.

We have been fortunate to collaborate with esteemed partners and sponsors such as Box, Force of Nature, LEAP Africa, Nigeria Youth Futures Fund, Global Campaign for Education, International Fact-Checking Network, and US Global Engagement Centre and Becera, Youth Democracy Cohort, European Partnership for Development, whose support have been instrumental in amplifying the impact of our endeavors. As we continue to evolve and expand our reach, BBYDI remains committed to empowering youth, driving sustainable development, and building a brighter future for all.

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Contextual **Background**

The presence of the Internet has made a considerable shift in the way we live, work, and communicate. No doubt, the benefits of the internet are enormous but the risks associated with the internet are quite significant. The internet's dark side is replete with malicious activities that can compromise our personal information, financial security, and even our mental well-being.

The internet enables various levels of insidious acts; from faking emails, messages, or websites to trick unsuspecting users into revealing sensitive information, like passwords, credit card numbers, or personal data, and to designing malware to harm or exploit computer systems, often resulting in data loss, system crashes, or even complete takeover of the device

Some of its tools like social media, messaging apps, or online forums have been used to cyberbully its users, resulting in severe consequences, including emotional distress, anxiety, and even depression.

In the midst of these challenges, fortunately and unfortunately, Nigeria's internet penetration is growing rapidly with the penetration rate, which stood at 44.5% as of 2022 according to the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), with approximately over 84.3 million Nigerians having access to the internet, is now standing tall at 55.4% rate since 2023. .

With more Nigerians, especially young people getting access to the internet both at home and in school, The online world poses significant threats to children's safety and well-being. The spread of harmful content has made them vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including cyberbullying, harassment, and radicalization. Moreover, children are at risk of being exposed to violent and disturbing content, which can have long-lasting effects on their mental health and behavior.

These challenges call for the need to promote digital literacy, online safety, and digital rights among young people in Nigeria. By equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and approach the internet, we can empower them to become agents of change in society. Through targeted interventions like the The Safer-Internet (SaferNet) Project,we aim to promote digital literacy, online safety, and digital rights among young people in Nigeria especially by empowering young champions. The threat of internet safety and online security unlock the potential of marginalised learners to drive safety use of the internet and online identity.

The SaferNet is an initiative of the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI), aimed at promoting digital literacy, online safety, and digital rights among young people in Nigeria.

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Problem

Problem **Statement**

A staggering 70% of children and young people in Nigeria have fallen victim to online violence or harassment, according to a 2022 survey conducted by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In Nigeria, over 30 million young people have witnessed or experienced cyberbullying, while more than 10 million have been victims of online sexual exploitation.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for internet safety interventions in Nigeria, particularly among young people. The Safer-Internet Fellowship Project was designed to address this need by promoting digital literacy, online safety, and digital rights among young people. The project equipped young Nigerians with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the online world safely and responsibly. By doing so, we hope to reduce the incidence of online violence and harassment, and create a safer and more inclusive online environment for all.

The SaferNet is a critical step towards addressing the growing concerns about online safety and digital inequalities in Nigeria. By working together, we can create a brighter, safer future for all Nigerian youth.

Overview of Intervention:
The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship

Bearing in mind the overwhelming effects that having access to the internet can have both at home and in school, The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellows Fellowship, an Initiative of the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative has revolutionized online safety awareness among Nigerian secondary school students aged between 13-19 years. In this maiden edition, twenty three (23) dedicated fellows have reached 8,874 students across 45 schools, empowering them with digital literacy and online safety knowledge.

This intervention addresses a pressing need, as Nigeria's growing internet penetration has increased exposure to online risks, particularly among vulnerable youth. Cyberbullying, online harassment and child sexual exploitation are prevalent concerns, and this is why the importance of education and awareness.
The fellowship's impact is remarkable. Students demonstrated significant understanding of digital rights, online safety and privacy protections, with notable behavioral changes. Many began using two-step verification, creating strong passwords and reporting suspicious online activities. Teachers also exhibited increased confidence in supporting online safety initiatives.

The program's success stems from its interactive approach, contextual relevance and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Engaging methods, such as
- Q&A sessions, workshops and educational materials, enhanced learning retention.
- Collaboration with school administrators, teachers and parents ensured community buy-in and sustainability.

Despite challenges like limited resources and time constraints, the fellows persevered, leveraging school facilities and enlisting teacher support. Notable results from the fellowship includes;
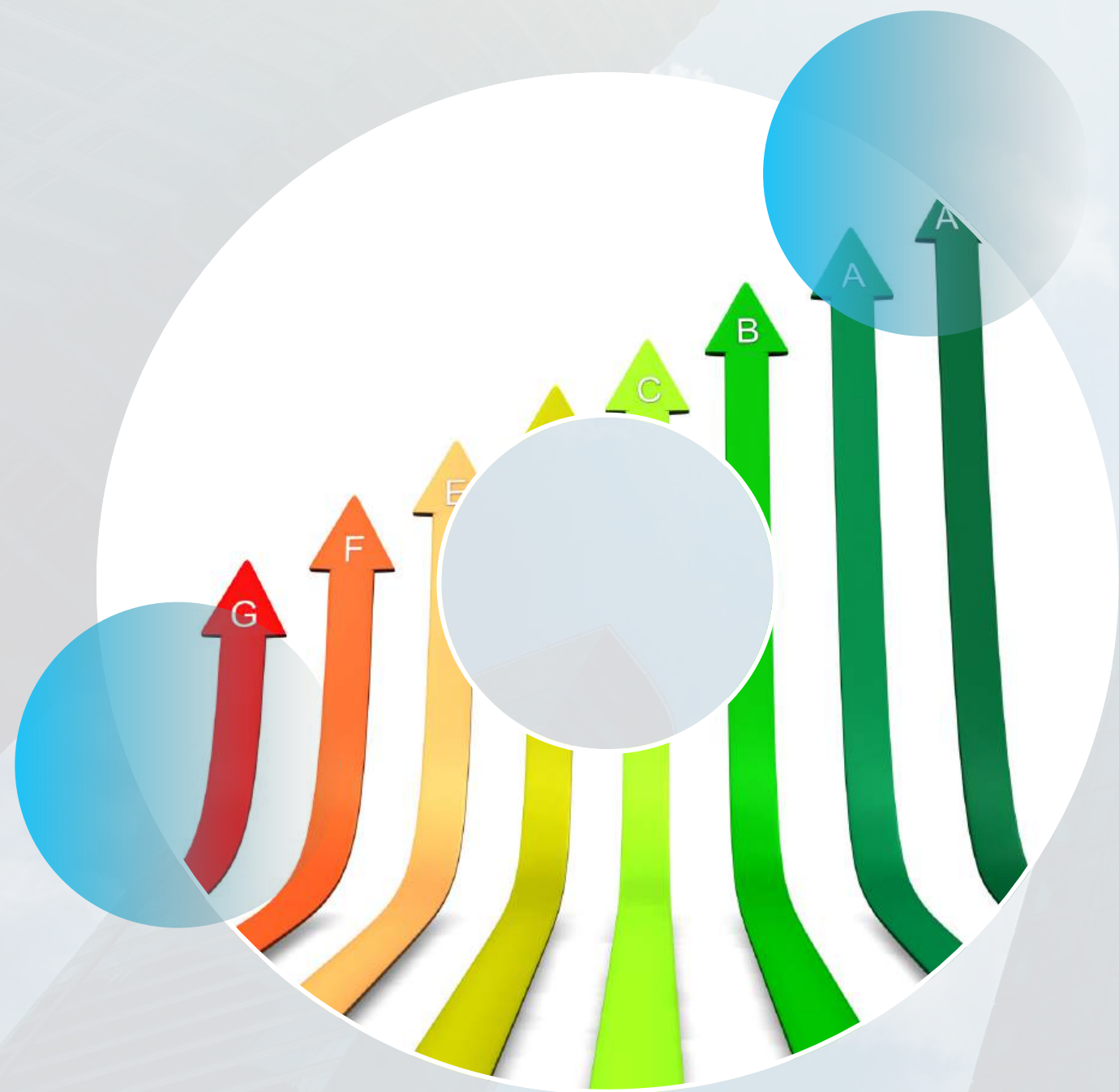
- 75% of students reported improved understanding of online safety.

- 80% demonstrated responsible digital citizenship.

- Teachers and administrators committed to integrating online safety into school curricula.

The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship's impact extends beyond statistics. It has fostered a culture of responsible digital citizenship, empowering students to navigate the online world safely. Scaling up this initiative will further contribute to a safer digital environment in Nigeria.

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Scale Vision:
Our Scale-Up Plan for SaferNet

The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship stands a chance to rejig digital literacy and online safety education in Nigeria. Building on our successful Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship, we envision a comprehensive scale-up plan to empower 15,000 students across 100 schools in two of Nigeria's geopolitical zones as we head to 2025.

Our mission is to institutionalize digital literacy and online safety education, where we charter young people to navigate the digital landscape responsibly. Strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including local education authorities, NGOs, CSOs and community leaders, will catalyze systemic change in the education sector.

Key components of our scale-up plan include:

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ADOPTION

We aim to work closely with the Ministry of Information and Digital Economy and Ministry of Education and other relevant authorities to revitalise how online security and internet safety is being taught in Nigeria's public schools. By aligning The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellows fellowship activities with educational standards and learning objectives, we seek to institutionalise online security and internet safety as an integral part of the educational system, ensuring sustained impact and long-term sustainability.

TEACHER TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Teachers are at the forefront of democratising education. Their roles are pivotal, considering the work they do in passing knowledge, we intend to get 500 teachers and educators skilled with pedagogical skills and knowledge.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) FRAMEWORK

To ensure the effectiveness and impact of our scale-up efforts, we will establish a robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework to track progress, measure outcomes, and identify areas for improvement. We will iteratively refine our approaches and interventions through data-driven analysis and continuous feedback mechanisms to maximise effectiveness and efficiency.

- Building on the success of The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship in 43 schools, we aim to replicate and scale up our initiative to other states and regions across Nigeria, but with two regions in 2025.

The Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship scale-up plan embodies our commitment to empowering Nigerian youth with digital citizenship skills, fostering a safer online environment and responsible digital culture.

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Summary of **Key Activities**

The online security and internet safety project follows a systemic range of activities aimed at empowering the most vulnerable and those most prone to cyberbullying, and internet unrest with online and internet knowledge, skills and tips to navigate the porous internet. These activities were meticulously designed to engage fellows, students and educators in a transformative learning journey, fostering online safety and internet security.

TARGET AUDIENCE SELECTION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of our project, we conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to gain insights into the specific requirements of our target population at various locations. The needs assessment informed our decision-making process in selecting the specific locations for project implementation. We targeted areas with the highest concentration of needs, ensuring that our project would have the greatest impact on the communities we serve. Based on the analysis, we prioritized the needs of the target population, considering factors such as urgency, feasibility, and impact. With the assessment, we were able to tailor our project to the unique requirements of the target population at each location. This approach allowed us to address their specific challenges effectively and contribute to positive outcomes for the community.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The baseline assessment was conducted at the beginning of the intervention to establish a baseline level of understanding and awareness. It included a range of questions designed to assess teachers' and students' knowledge of online security and internet safety, their attitudes and perceptions towards access to the internet which we found that there were urgent gaps that needed to be filled as a matter of urgency.

SELECTION OF DIGITAL RIGHTS AND ONLINE SAFETY FELLOWS

We sent out a call for applications and 25 top successful applicants were selected for the fellowship.

ONBOARDING OF DIGITAL RIGHTS AND ONLINE SAFETY FELLOWS

The onboarding and training phase equips selected fellows with necessary knowledge, skills and tools to execute successful community-based projects. Comprehensive training covers digital rights, online safety, project management and community engagement. Interactive sessions, led by experienced trainers, ensure fellows understand project objectives, outcomes and responsibilities. Fellows receive training materials and assessment to ensure preparation for project implementation.

COMMUNITY-BASED/SCHOOL PROJECTS

Fellows execute digital rights and online safety projects in at least two schools each, reaching 8,800+ students across 45 schools. Projects promote digital literacy, online safety awareness and responsible digital citizenship through workshops, campaigns and community outreach. Fellows work closely with schools, adapting programs to specific needs. Regular coaching, mentoring and technical assistance ensure project success.
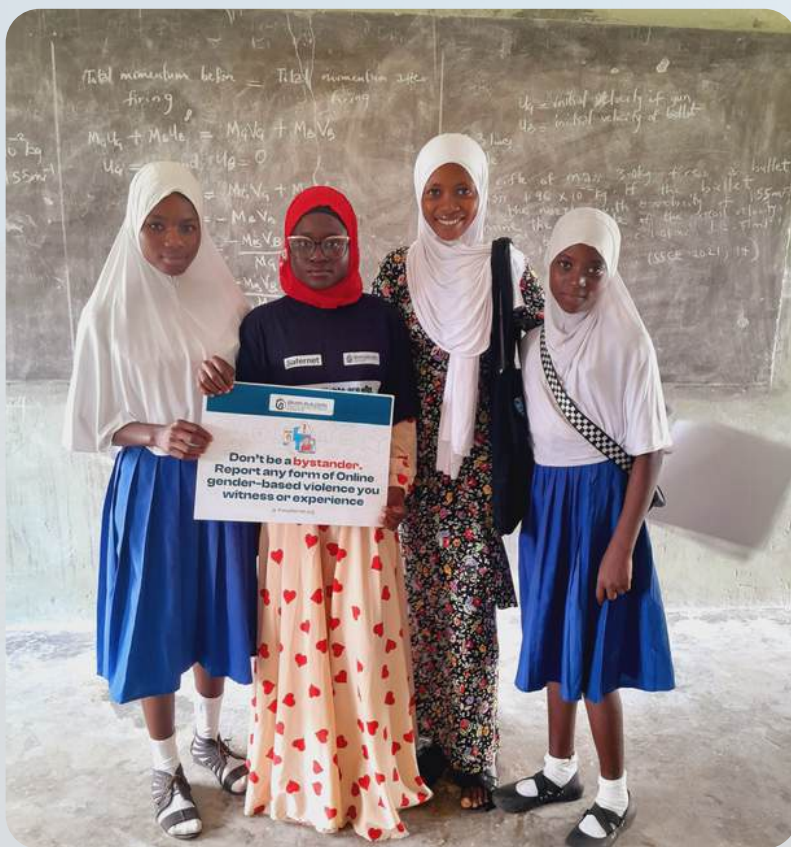
OUR GALLERY

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout the project implementation, we conducted rigorous monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the effectiveness and impact of our interventions. This included the conduct of pre-training tests and post training surveys and assessments to assess the effectiveness and impact of interventions. The assessments measured changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to digital rights and online safety. Qualitative, verbal feedback from fellows and students who are the beneficiaries of the projects provided insights for program improvement.

The SaferNet Digital Rights And Online Safety Fellowship project embarked on a multifaceted approach to empower unsuspecting and potential victims of online insecurity with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability. Through targeted interventions, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration, we sought to foster a culture of online safety and empower youth to become agents of positive change in their schools, communities, and beyond.

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Scope of Impact:
Evaluation

To assess the effectiveness of our intervention, we employed a comprehensive evaluation strategy involving baseline and end-line training assessments. These assessments were designed to measure changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to digital rights and online safety.

ACTIVITY TIMELINE

APPLICATION AND SELECTION (MAY-JUNE 2024)

The call for applications went live across BBYDI's social media platforms from May to June, inviting aspiring fellows to apply. After reviewing submissions, the top 25 fellows were selected and notified via congratulatory emails from June 7th to 9th.

UNVEILING FELLOWS (JUNE 2024)

The top 25 selected fellows were unveiled as Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellows 2024 across social media platforms in June This milestone marked the beginning of their fellowship journey.

PRE-ONBOARDING (AUGUST 2024)

Pre-evaluation tests were administered to fellows in June, assessing their knowledge and preparedness. Pre-onboarding engagement commenced on the platform, introducing fellows to the program's expectations.

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FACILITATOR INVITATION (AUGUST 2024)

Letters of invitation were sent to three digital rights and online safety facilitators and one community engagement facilitator in June. These experts would provide critical training and guidance.

ONBOARDING: (AUGUST 2024)

Fellows underwent detailed training on community-based project requirements from June 17th. This comprehensive onboarding prepared them for the challenges ahead.

COMMUNITY/SCHOOL-BASED PROJECTS (AUGUST-DECEMBER 2024)

Fellows executed digital rights and online safety projects in at least two schools each from July 3rd to 31st. These projects promoted digital literacy and online safety awareness among students.

SCHOOLS / COMMUNITIES VISITED

- Olokuta Junior Secondary School
- Community Secondary School, Ganmo
- Olokuta Senior Secondary School
- Bishop Smith Senior Memorial College
- Minaret Comprehensive High School
- Faith Academy
- Community Junior Secondary School, Akata
- Gaa-Odota Senior Secondary School
- Ansaru-U-Deen Junior Secondary School
- Model Secondary School
- Community Secondary School, Ogbondoroko
- Government Secondary School, Afon
- Danialu Secondary School
- Government Day Secondary School, Gaa-kanbi
- Emmanuel Baptist college

- Government Day Secondary School, Karuma
- Nana Aisha Memorial Secondary School
- Government Junior Technical College
- Ajose Group of Schools
- St. Barnabas Senior Secondary School
- St. John Junior Secondary School
- Government Secondary School, Fate
- Kiddy Ville College
- Government Day Secondary School, Shao
- Bishop Smith Junior Memorial College
- Union Baptist Grammar School
- College of Arabic and Islamic studies (Junior)
- Learners Academy, Ilorin
- G.D.S.S., Amule
- Ile-Apa

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CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE (AUGUST 2024)

Fellows received certificates after satisfactory assessment and report acceptance on August 7th or thereafter. This milestone celebrated their dedication to digital rights and online safety advocacy.

REPORT SUBMISSION (OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2024)

Fellows submitted their project reports to the team from July 31st to August 5th. These reports highlighted achievements, challenges and lessons learned.

POST-EVALUATION ENGAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2024)

Post-evaluation engagement sessions took place from August 6th, providing feedback and guidance. Fellows reflected on their experiences, sharing best practices.

Impact **Reach**

The project reached 8,800+ students, 122 teachers and over 45 schools in several local governments in Kwara state.Here are some of the feedback we got from some of the beneficiaries.

Success Stories

OLAMIDE OLADELE - EMMANUEL BAPTIST COLLEGE

After the session, many students expressed a desire to be more careful about what they share online and to be mindful of the potential dangers of the internet

GABRIEL DANIEL - BISHOP SMITH SECONDARY SCHOOL

I learned that it's important to keep some information private online.

HALIMAT ABDULQUDUS - GOVERNMENT DAY SCHOOL SHAO

Before this training, I didn't know that using my date of birth for my bank account is not safe. With this training, I understand it and I will correct that.

JUSTINA OMOFAIYE - AJOSE GROUP OF SCHOOLS

I never realized how vulnerable my online accounts were until I learned about 2-step verification. This training opened my eyes to the importance of adding an extra layer of security.

Conclusion

The SaferNet Digital Rights and Online Safety Fellowship has made significant strides in promoting digital literacy and online safety awareness among Nigerian youth. With 8,800+ students and 122 teachers impacted across 45 schools, the project has demonstrated its potential for scalable and sustainable change. The fellowship's comprehensive approach, combining training, community engagement and school-based projects, has empowered young people to navigate the online world safely and responsibly.

The project's success is attributed to its contextual relevance, interactive approach and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The engagement of teachers, school administrators and parents has ensured community buy-in and sustainability. Notably, 75% of students reported improved understanding of online safety, and 80% demonstrated responsible digital citizenship.

As Nigeria's internet penetration continues to grow, initiatives like the SaferNet Fellowship are crucial in mitigating online risks. By scaling up this project, we can create a safer digital environment, empowering Nigerian youth to harness the internet's benefits while minimizing its harms.

Recommendations

To further amplify the project's impact, we recommend scaling up the fellowship to reach more schools and regions. Strategic partnerships with government agencies, NGOs and private sector organizations can enhance resource mobilization and sustainability. Integrating digital rights and online safety into Nigeria's educational curriculum will ensure long-term impact.

Capacity building for teachers and educators is critical. Providing ongoing training and support will enable them to effectively integrate online safety into their teaching practices. Establishing a national online safety framework, aligned with global best practices, will provide a cohesive approach to addressing online risks.

Future iterations of the fellowship should prioritize mentorship programs, peer-led initiatives and community-driven projects. Leveraging technology, such as mobile applications and online platforms, can enhance outreach and engagement. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will ensure the project remains responsive to emerging online threats and adapts to the evolving needs of Nigerian youth.

BRAIN BUILDERS
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

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