FORWARD

“Survival in the digital age requires access to technology and the skill to navigate digital platforms. However, the uptake of these technologies is dependent on understanding the technology. Our working objective is to have citizens who are able to fully utilise digital tools and increase their online participation.”

Nasubo Ongoma - iHub

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kenya has made tremendous strides to digital transformation to ease service delivery and creating an efficient e-government using ICTs to “provide government e-services that are simple to use and convenient for citizens and businesses”. A digital strategy was mapped up to actualise this.

With the launch of all these ICT tools there still seems to be a gap between implementation by government and use by citizens. A memorable quote from one of the participants in the Focus Group Discussions in Nakuru, “e-government is a highway only accessible by few.”

There is a disconnect between citizens and the ICT tools because, for example, systems are forced on citizens, if you don’t uptake, face the consequences! Moreover, no educational programs are available to bring people online and to understand use of these ICT tools.
iHub has an interest in improving government responsiveness services to both its own employees and citizens and to enhance the effectiveness of its role in promoting life in the digital age.

With the ever changing technology, faster and more modern equipment is developed. Digital platforms aid in communication, collaboration, information literacy, security (protect online identity) and for employment.

In the light of this, the iHub conducted one (1) day training for County Officials and Youth on Digital Literacy and Citizenship. The objective was to ensure that by the end of this training, the participant would be able to:

- Describe the broad digital literacy needs of government officials and youth in the county government structures.
- Understand the complexity of various models concerning mobile and digital technology.
- Understand and identify appropriate tools and technology available for persons with various disabilities.

**The Process**

*Training Needs Assessment:*
IHUB conducted a training needs assessment for the participants prior to commencement of the training on site. Discussions with program technical team and responses from proposed participants helped identify gaps that would be addressed in the training. As it was to be only a one-day training, only a post training questionnaire was administered to participants to test their knowledge and skills level in matters of Digital Literacy and Citizenship and the general results are as explained in the outcomes section of this report. This helped to further highlight gaps and areas of focus over the subsequent training programs.
Training methods:
IHUB employed a mixed method approach including but not limited to; conducting spaced lectures, where the trainers involve giving information on best practice in Digital Literacy programming, reflections, discussions and summary of material covered. Case studies were used to bring in realistic scenarios into problem solving activities. This enabled learners to demonstrate relevance to their current professional and personal challenges. Learner Dialogues were used to encourage the participants to actively engage with the content being learned rather than being dependent on the trainer for learning. Questions were posed so that learners reflect on and consider within the context of their personal experience and knowledge.

Evaluation methods:
The success of the training workshop was assessed using post-training test data and workshop evaluation forms completed by the participants.

OUTCOMES
Overall, the training attracted a total of 99 participants drawn from government officials and youth in three Counties (Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa). The training had a good gender mix, that is, 40 female and 59 male participants. Generally, the participants rated the training as successful. An area of weakness noted by most participants was the lack of training materials provided at the start of the workshop. The trainers had planned to provide the training materials after the close of the workshop to allow more concentration by participants. The materials were eventually handed over to the participants through their emails. Further analysis of the participants feedback on the post-training test indicated that there was a need for the involvement of more persons with disability (PWDs) in the training exercise. This was positive feedback as it tallied with the iHub plan of conducting a digital literacy training for the visually impaired and the hearing impaired. It is good to note that the training in Kisumu County had 3 representatives from the PWDs community, one woman and two men.
The younger participants (aged between 18-31 years) felt that the training scope and reach should be expanded in order to accommodate more youth leaders, who represent a bigger group but lack the skills to navigate comfortably the digital space.

"Next time the training should be done to a bigger group because majority of youth leaders are not informed of the digital literacy knowledge" - Participant, Mombasa

The greatest change in knowledge was seen in understanding how to safely navigate the digital space and knowledge of what content to share with which audience and at what time. This was supported by data from end of workshop evaluation which is summarized in figure below.

The topics rated as most important by the participants included:
- How to identify and assess potential hacking;
- Application of mobile technology; digital participation and inclusion of PWDs;
- Themes of Digital Citizenship and privacy.

The importance attached to these topics indicated the need for further training and institutional capacity building.

**Best Practise: Nairobi County Administration**

iHub conducted training in Nairobi as well for all the county and sub-county administrators. This was timely as it shed more light on inner workings of the County Government in the digital space. We used Nairobi as a case study as it serves as an ideal example of best practice around integrating information literacy into administration that other counties to emulate.

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**Lessons that can be borrowed from Nairobi and replicated in other counties**

- **Nairobi County has a replicable model of information literacy. Information Literacy here is defined as “recognizing when information is needed and being able to efficiently locate, accurately evaluate, effectively use, and clearly communicate information in various formats.”** Nairobi County has excelled in this. Participants from Nairobi County repeatedly mentioned the importance of the digital space in their line of work.
"We value the digital space right now because as professionals, digital devices have made a lot of tasks easier to perform." - Participant, Nairobi County

Below are a few lessons that we picked up from interacting with Nairobi County Administrators:

- Networking between different department - The county has a solid networking platform set on WhatsApp, where different employees/county administrators can share notes and experiences, find solutions to pressing issues in a sort of peer assisted way.

- Creating an open platform to interact with citizens on the ground - Nairobi has about 30 groups on WhatsApp and Facebook for responding to citizen queries. These also form part of a system for reporting between the country administration and leaders on the ground.

- Online Barazas for public participation -

- Inter-ministerial coordination - Nairobi has created distinct teams online to deal with various issues as they arise. These are drawn from different ministries and government departments and they converge in the online space to discuss, agree on and coordinate various functions that cut across teams, without having to plan for tedious physical meetings. The participants report more than 80% attendance in the meetings held in the online platforms.

- Rapid Response - The participants reported that they have found the digital space very effective in responding to emergencies and security issues rapidly or in swiftly responding to repair and maintenance issues in the county. For example, a citizen can take a picture of a leaking sewage line and post it on a public platform and one of the county administrators in that platform would share the picture with the Nairobi Water and Ministries of Health and Environment teams in the inter-ministerial group, ensuring that the leaking sewage is tended to rapidly and prevent any health risks.
Emerging issues from training for consideration

This part of the report helps team members move toward effective project execution for future training programs. These include:

- The trainers observed that the participants were not fully conversant with digital literacy principles; it is therefore recommended that the entire staff have regular trainings in digital literacy;
- There is need to establish a buddy system and strengthen support supervision to improve work-flow and digital collaboration and learning among the staff and enhance own skills;
- There was limited understanding of digital participation & inclusivity; we therefore recommend training on digital participation for persons with disabilities, government officers and youth leaders;
- Provide participants with regular trainings and copies of guidelines or standard operating procedures around the digital space that are allowed in the Kenyan ecosystem;
- Consider online training given the access to internet;
- Strengthen quality assurance through feedback from clients or client surveys;
- Follow-up support was proposed for the team. IHUB trainers have proposed to come up with a Whatsapp App group that will be used as an avenue for providing follow-up support on a need basis after the training. The participant teams across the counties have been encouraged to share ideas on managing cases of any emerging complex digital issues.
RECOMMENDATION 1

Platform Interface

Create a more intuitive interface that allows users to easily navigate the applications developed by government and the digital space.
RECOMMENDATION 2

Design thinking for better UX

Government should partner up with design thinkers in order to ensure that their platforms are more user friendly and user centric as opposed to implementing a top-down design.
RECOMMENDATION 3

Bridge the digital divide thru' training

Government has the muscle to cascade digital literacy training to the grassroots to target citizens of all ages and financial ability. This will greatly reduce the current digital divide and raise a digitally empowered citizenry.
Engage through social media

Partner up with brand ambassadors to spread the word about the available government platforms and services.
Training Program

A quality training plan was discussed between trainers and iHub team at the onset of the program to help avoid wasting time, money, and effort. This also let the team determine what to include in the 1 day training.

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<td>- Research</td>
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<td>- Digital Participation (Incl. Digital Inclusion &amp; PWDs)</td>
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