

Spotlight Report

April - June 2023

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Introduction

KICTANet is a multistakeholder think tank for ICT policy and regulation whose guiding philosophy encourages synergies for ICT policy-related activities and initiatives. The network acts as a catalyst for reform in the ICT sector and is guided by four pillars: 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 overall mission is to promote an enabling environment in the ICT sector that is robust, open, accessible, and rights-based through multistakeholderism. Its strategic objectives during the 2022 - 2024 period are effective 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.

This impact report covers the initiatives and activities undertaken during the second quarter of April-June 2023. Some notable activities during the period include the launch of the Tatua Digital Resilience Center, the release of the Digital Accessibility Report, and the hosting of the Digital Identity Workshop at Rightscon in Costa Rica. Others were the induction of new voices in ICT policy-making through the 8th edition of the Kenya School of Internet Governance (KeSIG), and the convening of the 16th edition of the Kenya Internet Governance Forum (KIGF).

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

Multistakeholder Engagement



The Annual ICT Connected Summit 2023

KICTANet participated in the 12th edition of the Connected Summit organised by the ICT Authority (ICTA) in April 2023. h

Topics discussed during the three-day conference included smart cities, artificial intelligence, data privacy, cybersecurity, digital trade, and the future of work. A panel led by

thought leaders including the Data Commissioner, Immaculate Kassait, the CEO of KICTANet, Grace Githaiga, ISACA President Anthony Muiyuro, and others, discussed key privacy concerns related to digital technologies and explored strategies for protecting data privacy and mitigating cybersecurity threats. KICTANet is recognised as an industry stakeholder in raising awareness on issues of privacy and data protection.



Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF23)

The 10th edition of the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF23) was held in Nairobi, bringing together representatives from various sectors under the theme of 'Building a Sustainable Internet for All'.

The sessions focused on internet shutdowns, universal service fund utilization, data protection, content moderation, and censorship.

The event started with a high-level panel discussion comprising Ms. Emma Inamutila Theofelus, Namibia Deputy Minister for Information, Communication, and Technology, Ms. Grace Githaiga, Chief Executive Officer and Convenor, KICTANet, Mr. Gbenga Sesan, Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative; and Mr. Vladimir Garay, Advocacy Director, Derechos Digitales.

The panel discussed the challenges of rolling out internet infrastructure and emphasized the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration in delivering internet access.

The Pan-African bilingual event was hosted by the Paradigm Initiative in collaboration with KICTANet, and the Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law (CIPIT), Strathmore University.



Engagement with a Delegation of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee

KICTANet trustees met with a staff delegation from the U.S. Senate Finance Committee to discuss how Kenya can benefit from the Kenya-U.S. Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations from an ICT policy perspective.

The meeting was in tandem with the ongoing Kenya-U.S. Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP) negotiations and aimed to

familiarize the delegation with Kenya's general business environment, including policy issues on ICT, labour, climate change, and industrial relations.



Tatua Digital Resilience Centre Launch

KICTANet, in partnership with the Africa Internet Rights Alliance (AIRA), launched the Tatua Digital Resilience Centre aimed at supporting social justice organizations (SJOs) in East Africa.

The centre's focus is to help SJOs maintain, grow, change, recover, and survive in a changing environment by implementing

effective digital strategies.

Across East Africa, social justice organizations continue to face a number of challenges. The key challenges they face include the shrinking civic space; restrictive and hostile operating environments; their limited capacity, knowledge, and awareness of digital resilience; the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and funding limitations that inhibit their activities. Despite these challenges, social justice organizations continue to work towards their goals of promoting social justice and equality for all people.

Tatua Digitial Resilience Center will initially support SJOs in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, and later scale to other countries. The Center's AdvisoryBoard comprises KICTANet, CIPESA, Pollicy, CIPIT, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, and independent subject-matter experts.

The center is part of the Ford Foundation's Weaving Resilience Initiative for Stronger Civil Society in the Global South.



KICTANet's Digital Accessibility Twitter space on Research on the Accessibility of Government Websites

KICTANet's Digital Accessibility team held a Twitter space to discuss their experiences in assessing government websites.

In response to the COVID-19 lockdowns, the government of Kenya expedited the digitization of its services, resulting in various ministries enhancing

their digital presence. However, concerns have been raised about the accessibility of the information presented on these websites, particularly for individuals with disabilities. The space was held ahead of the launch of the "KICTANet Accessibility of Kenya Government Websites to Persons with Disabilities-ScoreCard 2023," report launch.

The team hopes that the recommendations provided in their report will be implemented by the respective ministries so as to address unequal access to information and prevent digital marginalization. KICTANet's policy advocacy and capacity-building pillars are supported by evidence-based research.

Listen to what the researchers and the panel speakers discussed in this exciting Twitter Space talk here!



The 2nd African Media Convention in Lusaka, Zambia

KICTANet participated in the 2nd African Media Convention held in Lusaka, Zambia from May 11-13. The event was hosted by the Southern Africa Editors Forum (SAEF) and the Media Liaison Committee-Zambia, in partnership with UNESCO, the African Union (AU), and a multi-stakeholder team. The convention brought together over 300 stakeholders to review freedom of expression and freedom of the media on the continent and develop strategies for safeguarding these rights. The theme of the convention was "Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom

of Expression as a Driver for All Other Human Rights" and is part of efforts to emphasize the relevance and role of World Press Freedom Day (WPFD). KICTANet <u>participates in such forums</u> to provide insights on emerging trends that impede freedom of expression and freedom of the media.



ICT Week 2023

KICTANet participated in the 2023 ICT Week Forum from May 17-18. The event was oby the Information, Communications, and Digital Economy Cabinet Secretary Eliud Owalo, who stated that ICT Week is annual event to foster conversations on catalyzing the sector at the core of Kenya's socio-economic development. The theme of the ICT week was "Digital Inclusion: Enhancing Access and Usage of ICTs for All." KICTANet

representatives participated in a panel discussion exploring approaches and recommendations on how to address the issues around the affordability of ICT devices.



CSO Teen Safety and Well-being Round Table

KICTANet participated in a CSO Teen Safety and Well-Being Round Table organized by Meta Inc. KICTANet called for an inclusive approach in formulating child online protection policies, taking into account children raised in different family dynamics. During the discussions, stakeholders questioned Meta on whether the

user experience for children is child-friendly, including the language of the community standards and the reporting process. One of Meta's biggest challenges remains age verification processes to ensure that age-appropriate content and controls are applied, as some accounts are opened for children by their parents or children lie about their age at the account opening stage. Meta has consolidated all its <u>safety policies</u> on one platform.



UK AID Partners Workshop for Community Networks in Kenya

UK AID's Digital Access Program hosted a 4-day workshop in Machakos County, bringing together various partners including the African Centre for Women, Information, and Communications Technology (ACWIT), the Association of the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK), the Association of Internet Service Providers of Kenya, and the Association of Community Networks of Kenya (ACNKe), amongst other partners in the government, including the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) and the ICT Authority (ICTA). Since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of community networks in Africa through movement-building efforts.

In Kenya, the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) developed a <u>Licensing and Shared Spectrum Framework for Community Networks</u> with contributions from KICTANet, the entire community, and other partners such as the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, and supported by the United Kingdom's Digital Access Programme. The framework integrates a new licensing category for community networks within the Unified Licensing Framework.

ACNKe is made up of members from 13 community networks in Kenya, representing 8 counties. They include AngazaNet (Nairobi), AheriNet (Kisumu), Alinet (Laikipia), Athi Community Network (Meru), Dunia Moja (Kilifi), Lanet Umoja (Nakuru), Tanda (Nairobi), Oasis Mathare (Nairobi), Action Pour Le Progres (Turkana), Kijiji Yetu (Siaya), Ngikeyokok (Turkana), Siaya Community Library (Siaya) and GIV (Turkana).



Rightscon 2023 Summit in Costa Rica

KICTANet held successful dissemination session at the Rightscon summit in San Jose, Costa Rica, sharing their experience bootstrapping the Angaza Network, which provides reliable affordable and internet economically disadvantaged areas of Mathare Valley with a population of over 400,000, occupying a space of three-square miles.

The session focused on building a resilient and inclusive community network, with infrastructure, equipment, and backhaul being key factors for resilience, while non-partisan community engagement is important for inclusivity.

KICTANet also facilitated the Digital ID Community Summit.



4th Children's Internet Governance Forum

KICTANet, in partnership with Watoto Watch, convened the 4th Children's Internet Governance Forum in Busia County, bringing together children from various schools in the region. The event aimed to empower all Kenyan children and brought together representatives of children's organizations and policymakers to address the specific needs and

concerns of children. Stakeholders <u>challenged</u> the government to enact policies advocating for internet governance for proper management of online content.



Special Documentary Screening of 'Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age.' KICTANet, in partnership with the GIZ Digital Transformation Centre, held a special screening of the documentary "Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age" and a short film by KICTANet, "Kenyan Women Experience Online Gender-Based Violence." The event, which was part of Kenya Internet Governance Week, was held at the Sarova Panafric Hotel in

Nairobi and brought together over 40 participants, including Hon. Mercy Wanjau, Secretary to the Cabinet, and the EU Ambassador Lady. The film gives a voice to women who have been silenced through online harassment and abuse.



Data Protection and Privacy from a Youth Perspective

KICTANet, in partnership with Meta Inc., hosted a session on Data Protection and Privacy in Nairobi on June 21, 2023, bringing together over 50 youth representatives to discuss

solutions, and experiences that youth and children face while online. <u>KICTANet's Cybersecurity and Cyber Hygiene Awareness programs</u> have proven effective in training women politicians on online safety.

Meta Inc. acknowledges that youths are at the core of digital policy, product, and service formulation. Dr. Ololade Shyllon of Meta Inc. highlighted that the company considers the interests of children through interventions that engage youth and children worldwide.



3rd Edition of the Kenya Youth IGF

On June 21, 2023, KICTANet convened the 3rd Kenya Youth IGF in Nairobi.

The hybrid forum, themed: *Internet We Want - Empowering all Youth,* focused on youth involvement in Internet governance, social media, and how it relates to mental health issues and awareness.

The forum kicked off with a keynote speech from Senator Hon. Allan

Chesang, Chairperson of the Senate ICT Committee. The Senator highlighted how the Jitume ICT program is revolutionizing digital education in Kenya. With 1450 digital hubs across the country with a capacity of 1000 students per session, the initiative will go a long way in empowering the youth with the skills they need to succeed. The forum brought together over 70 participants.



The 16th edition of the Kenya IGF

On June 22, 2023, the 16th edition of the Kenya IGF was convened by KICTANet and other Industry stakeholders, Nairobi. The forum brought together over 250 participants from various stakeholder groups to discuss Internet Governance.

Notable thought leaders during a High-Level Panel discussion included Dr. Vincent Ngundi of the

Communications Authority (CA), Ms. Grace Githaiga (KICTANet), Mr. 'Gbenga Sesan (Paradigm Initiative), Bernd Lakemeier (GIZ), and Ms. Mercy Ndegwa (Meta).

The Principal Secretary of ICT and Digital Economy, Eng. John Tanui, joined an esteemed panel in an evening fireside chat titled "Harnessing the Power of AI and Emerging Technologies." The PS observed that AI is here to stay and urged participants to propose new policies, regulations, and industry best practices to position Kenya as a key player in the digital economy.

This year's global IGF theme is 'The Internet We Want – Empowering All People', with the Kenya IGF theme aligned with the global theme and responding to the local context. This year's forum brought together over 350 participants from various stakeholder groups.



Global Diplomacy Lab Session On Disinformation from a Gender Perspective

On June 23, 2023, KICTANet and GIZ Digital Transformation
Centre co-facilitated a workshop themed 'Challenge Holder Projects in the Realm of Misinformation and Disinformation and the Impact of Emerging Technology (AI)'.

KICTANet shared its work on Online Gender Based Violence namely; the production of the Digital

Enquirer Kit e-learning module on Online Gender-Based Violence and Community of Practice Workshops with women and minority groups in Kenya.

The sessions were hosted by the Global Diplomacy Lab at the GIZ Country Office in collaboration with KICTANet. The challenge holder session was based on GIZ-DTC Digital Engagements and Digital interventions that focus on youth and women.

Policy Advocacy

Data Privacy Podcasts



KICTANet, in collaboration with GIZ/DTC Kenya and Nairobi Legal Hackers, has produced a podcast series called "The Data Protectors Podcast" to help SMEs in Kenya comply with data protection regulations. The podcast brings together Kenyan and European experts to explore different aspects of data protection compliance, share lessons learned, and identify opportunities created with the enactment of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR). The podcast is part of the AU-EU D4D Hub project. During the period under review, the following podcasts were produced:

Episode 3: The Cost of Compliance

Episodes 1 and 2 of the Data Protectors Podcast presented the data protection principles and the first component of compliance, which is registration.

Episode 3 builds on these themes to further explore the costs of complying with the Data Protection Act. This episode focuses on the necessary compliance documentation for small and medium-sized enterprises. The process of how to acquire the relevant documents in a cost-effective manner is explained. Finally, useful guidance on how to get Data Protection Officers without breaking the bank is provided.



Episode 4: Cross-border data transfers

According to the Data Protection Act of 2019, a data controller or data processor may transfer personal data to another country only where proof has been given to the Data Commissioner that the data will be transferred securely to a place with equal or stronger data protection laws compared to Kenya. However, there are also certain situations where data can be transferred without notifying the Data

Commissioner, such as when the transfer is for legitimate interest, public interest, or with the consent of the data subject.



Episode 5: Engaging with Data Protection Authorities

Episode 5 of the Data Protectors podcast introduces SMEs to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) and explains how they can build a good relationship with the Office. This episode is graced by Tamar Kaldani, who is the former Data Commissioner of Georgia. and Rose Mosero, who is the Kenyan Deputy Data Commissioner. speakers demystify the role of the ODPC in Kenya and separate myths from the truth as Rose Mosero clarifies how SMEs can effectively engage the ODPC, report any complaints they might have, and get their issues addressed and resolved speedily by the ODPC.

Tamar Kaldani shares some lessons for both regulators and SMEs on how to build a good relationship with each other and maximize the benefits.



Episode 6: The Future of Data Protection

In episode 6, the focus was to try and predict the future of data protection and data security in Kenya and the globe as a whole.

Tarun Samtani and Francis Monyango dissect what the future of data protection will look like. They argue, along with other experts, that one of the biggest shifts likely to occur in the future is a movement toward a world where individuals have greater ownership over their rights.

Tarun opines that data ownership will move to a model where individuals can use a fully encrypted, unique digital identity that can be ported from place to place.

Monyango also argues that the future will see an over-emphasis on privacy and that this will affect big tech platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp that depend on data-based advertisements to remain

profitable.

Additionally, they aver that the future will see a greater demand for transparency by individuals targeting the organizations that handle their personal data. In conclusion, even in the future, "we will still need to defend and protect our data from intruders, theft, and cyber security threats."



KICTANet Technology Election Observer Mission Final Report

During the election, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) cleared 16,098 candidates to compete for six main elective positions across the country's 291 constituencies in 47 counties. KICTANet observed elections in various polling stations in 21 counties, focusing on technology aspects.

The <u>report</u> summarizes the key findings of the technology election observation mission during Kenya's general election on August 9, 2022.

Capacity Building

Take on Tech Weekly Program on KBC

Take on Tech is a weekly Technology program that airs on the National Broadcaster (KBC) and breaks down tech issues in a non-tech way. During the period under review, the following topics were featured:



Digital Identity in Kenya

Digital Identity in Kenya was one of the episodes featured. The guest was Irungu Houghton, Executive Director, Amnesty International Kenya.

This was his take: "The digital identifier and the digitization of services are probably one of the biggest projects that the

Government of Kenya has ever rolled out." In some ways, I think there's no more interesting time to be a Kenyan or a digital citizen than now. We are leading into a new digital dawn, a new period in which everything changes forever, and we know, for example, that digitization and e-commerce have changed the way that we do everything. Listen to the episode here ■ Take On Tech | Digital Identity In Kenya



Digital Resilience

In this episode, KICTANet Trustee Mwendwa Kivuva shared some highlights from the Tatua Digital Resilience Center Launch. Listen to the episode here

Take on Tech I Digital Resilience



Africa ICT Landscape

In this episode Emma Theofelus, Namibia's Deputy Minister for ICT shares highlights about the Africa ICT Landscape. Listen to the episode here

■ Take On Tech: Africa ICT Landscape



Moving Government Services Online and its Implications on Persons with Disabilities

"There may be digital accessibility frameworks in place, but they are not addressing the specific needs of persons with disabilities. If this is not well taken care of, we'll have another section of marginalized people" says Nicodemus Nyakundi, one of the KICTANet Accessibility Fellows. Listen to the

<u>recording</u> on Good Morning Kenya Breakfa Show where some of the KICTANet's Digital Accessibility work on advocating for the inclusion of persons with disabilities is highlighted.



Germany, EU, and Estonia Launch DTC in Kenya

KICTANet actively participated in the launch of the Kenya Digital Transformation Centre. It was launched together with implementing partner Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GiZ) and the government of Kenya.

Echoing the day's message, German Ambassador Sebastian Groth said: "Jointly, we can address individual and system biases

to increase women's participation in the tech sector and make the internet a safer space."

In attendance were ICT and Digital Economy CS Eliud Owalo and the chairpersons of the National Assembly and Senate ICT Committees. The ministry said the country's digital transformation holds the promise to leapfrog socio-economic development. Owalo urged Kenyans to take part in the digital economy in a way that tech start-ups operate in a conducive and fair environment and people trust digital services.

KICTANet remains committed to providing a multi-stakeholder platform for engagement on the pressing challenges within the ICT sector with a view to developing best practices and recommendations to advance the existing policy, legal, and regulatory framework. The network values the support and trust of its partners, who have continued to back its work. KICTANet also acknowledges the contributions of its members in shaping ICT policy in Kenya through sharing their valuable ICT knowledge.



Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy Courtesy Call

The KICTANet team, led by the chairman of the board of trustees Ali Hussein, Grace Githaiga, Barrack Otieno, and Mwendwa Kivuva, had a meeting with top officials drawn from the Ministry of Information, Communication, and the Digital Economy where they discussed areas of collaboration and partnership in matters related to ICT policy. As a leading ICT Policy Think Tank in the region, KICTANet will continue to

engage with all stakeholders to ensure there is an enabling Tech Environment in the country and the region.



Safeguarding the Digital Space

On June 23, 2023, KICTANet <u>participated in an NTV</u>

<u>Talk show dubbed the AMLive show</u> to discuss how to counter harmful content on the internet.

KICTANet's representative reiterated that women have the right to enjoy the internet just like their male peers. However, their online participation is limited by online violence. KICTANet has conducted research, capacity-building initiatives, stakeholder engagement with women and tech companies, and policy advocacy for a safer and more inclusive internet.



The 8th edition of Kenya School of Internet Governance

Kenya School of Internet Governance (KeSIG) is held annually during Kenya IGF Week and precedes the Kenya IGF.

The inaugural school was organized by KICTANet in 2016 in Nairobi, with 30 participants going through a three-day intensive capacity-building program on Internet Governance. The School was the

first national school of Internet Governance in Africa. Since then, KICTANet has hosted the school each year.

KeSIG 2023 took place over a period of three weeks. On the first day, over 75 participants were taken through the basic concepts of Internet governance with a focus on Kenya's contribution throughout the years. Topical issues such as online protest and content generation were covered on the second day. On the third day, participants interacted with policymakers such as the Communications Authority, legislative drafters, and private sector policy advocates. Some of the notable leaders that addressed the 2023 cohort included Hon, Mercy Wanjau, Secretary to Cabinet, among others.



Workshop on Women's Public Participation

KICTANet, in partnership with the International Centre for Non-Profit Law (ICNL), conducted a training on the mechanisms and leveraging of ICTs for Women's Public Participation and engagement. The training held between June 19-20, 2023, in Nairobi, brought together 31 participants representing different stakeholder groups, including civil society, government, and academia.

The trainers pointed out instances where physical and digital public participation by persons with disabilities is thwarted because little thought goes into both forms of accessibility. The workshop was part of Kenya Internet Governance

(KIGF) Week.

Research



Research Draft Report Validation: <u>Accessibility of Government Websites</u> <u>for Persons with Disabilities</u>

The ICT Accessibility and Equality of Persons with Disabilities team at KICTANet has been conducting research to come up with a scorecard on the accessibility of government websites for persons with disabilities. On April 13, the team hosted a virtual validation meeting for the first draft of the document. Among the invited

participants were government representatives, organizations and associations for persons with disabilities, the private sector, the media, community networks, standard bodies, and the regulatory authorities.

The report validation session had valuable comments and questions from the participants, including representatives from GIZ, UPDK, Idea Media, the Society of Professionals with Visual Disabilities (SOPVID), Jenga Jumuiya Network, the Kenya Society of the Blind, and Disability Sausage Media



Launch of the Scorecard Report on the Accessibility of Government Websites to Persons with Disabilities

The KICTANet ICT Access and Equality for Persons with Disabilities Team in celebration of Global Accessibility Awareness Day on 18th May 2023, launched a scorecard report on the Accessibility of

Government Websites to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

The launch brought together various local and international stakeholders from the government, civil society, and other institutions. They included the Communications Authority, Ombudsman, ADD International, ITAC Consulting Ltd., Inclusive Tech Group, IAWRT, InABLE, Intenews, NDPK, Disability Africa Consulting, The Society of Professionals with Visual Disabilities, and individual persons with disabilities who are enthusiastic about digital accessibility.

An open discussion that involved active engagement with the attendees both online and in-person delved into ways of seeking collaborations to improve policies and drive policy implementations and regulations, the challenges that persons with disabilities face in the digital world, such as low literacy levels, assessment and registration of persons with disabilities, affordability of assistive technology, sustainability of accessibility projects and programs, adherence to ICT standards, institutional compliance, and the role of the Communication Authority. As technology evolves, so do accessibility needs and therefore the need to keep pace with emerging technologies to ensure accessibility!

The full report can be accessed via this link. <u>Accessibility of Government Websites to Persons with Disability</u>



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