ZITET

ZIMBABWE INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERMENT TRUST

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OUR STORY
OUR IMPACT

2024

Promoting Digital Equity
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ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

The Zimbabwe Information and Technology Empowerment Trust (ZITET) is a registered non-profit, non-governmental and apolitical organisation that aims to promote digital equity in resource-constrained communities through capacity building and professional development initiatives, research, and information dissemination. ZITET promotes digital equity to ensure that communities in Zimbabwe have access to information, enabling technologies and digital skills that are central in the technological era. Access to information and technology is the cornerstone of human capital development. It ignites the community's creative potential and sharpens critical thinking skills, both of which are essential for sustainable development. To effectively reach our programme beneficiaries, we employ a diverse array of strategies, capacity building, research, information dissemination and leverage strategic partnerships with likeminded organisations and individuals.

VISION

We envision equitable and inclusive access to information and technology for sustainable human capital development in Zimbabwe

MISSION

To improve the economic and social opportunities of resource-constrained communities in Zimbabwe by promoting digital equity through human capital development, research and information dissemination.

CORE VALUES

Innovation: We strive to redefine the standard of excellence. We are open to new ideas. We foster creativity.

Accountability: We are dedicated to our work and take full responsibility for outcomes.

Integrity: We adhere to moral and ethical principles; we are of sound moral character; and we are honest.

Servant Leadership: We are committed to community development and the common good.

Inclusion: We are open to serving everyone without discrimination. We value diversity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ZITET Impact Annual Report highlights our organisation's achievements and milestones over the past year, showcasing our commitment to driving positive change through innovative programmes and strategic partnerships. Through our flagship initiatives, such as digital and media literacy, community engagement, and research, we have empowered individuals and communities to thrive in an increasingly digital world. Our Capacity Building Programmes have trained over 1,000 people from diverse age groups on digital rights and safety, disinformation, constitutional literacy, and media literacy. Additionally, we have generated valuable knowledge products that serve as reference sources for policy and practice. To reach a wider audience, we leveraged social media to run campaigns on several issues, including combating gender-based violence, promoting cybersecurity, and enhancing media and information literacy which reached over 10,000 people. The success of our programmes was anchored on strategic partnerships with local, regional and international organisations

Our priority areas for 2025 are driven by Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, we are responsive to the evolving operating environment characterised by advances in technology, information overload, and natural and man-made disasters such as climate change. Our programming seeks to address these issues by empowering communities with the requisite skills and knowledge to resist shocks and develop sustainable solutions. Some of the priorities for our future programming include expanding our digital and media literacy training programmes to cover advanced topics such as artificial intelligence and data privacy, digital literacy for rural communities, digipreneurship, media and information literacy. We also plan to launch new community engagement initiatives like intergenerational dialogues and community-led research projects as well as collaborating with international think tanks to produce cutting-edge research on the impact of technology on society.

CAPACITY BUILDING

In an era where digital skills and knowledge are paramount, our capacity-building programmes aim to empower individuals and communities by providing essential training and education. These initiatives, in partnership with other organisations, focus on enhancing digital literacy, promoting media and information literacy and facilitating inter-generational and intercultural dialogue.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Throughout the year, 400 people were trained on digital literacy skills. The training covered computer basics, digital safety, and digital branding. Furthermore, ZITET collaborated with the Zimbabwe Health Interventions (ZHI) to train 30 young girls in entrepreneurship on essential digital literacy skills. The training covered basic computer operations, internet navigation, digital marketing, netiquette and the use of digital tools to enhance personal and professional productivity. Participants gained confidence in using digital technologies, enabling them to access information, communicate effectively, and improve their entrepreneurial ventures.

400 trained on digital literacy skills

IN-PERSON CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME ON TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAW (INTELDEVLAW)

ZITET collaborated with the Development Literacy Institute (DLI) to train 25 youths in Mutare on digital rights and legal frameworks governing the digital space. The programme sought to bridge the knowledge gap at the intersection of technology, economic growth and legal frameworks, particularly as Zimbabwe transitions to a digital economy. The training equipped youths with the knowledge to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly, cultivating a generation of informed digital citizens.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST DISINFORMATION PROJECT

The Building Resilience Against Disinformation (BRAD) programme successfully equipped over 400 youths from Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, Mutare, and Umzingwane with essential media and information literacy skills. The training focused on identifying and combating disinformation and enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving, encouraging civic engagement and enhancing media literacy.

The programme had a significant multiplier effect, as the trained youths replicated the training in their respective communities. This BRAD programme led to the establishment of five Fact-Checking Clubs and seven more workshops that benefited over 300 more youths.

Participants developed essential skills to critically evaluate information, create and disseminate content responsibly, understand the impact of artificial intelligence on media and information literacy and implement strategies to reduce the spread of misinformation. This training also sharpened participant's civic engagement skills, empowering them to make use of ICT's to actively contribute to community development initiatives and civic participation.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

CLIMATE DISINFORMATION

ZITET in partnership with All For Climate Action (AFCA) Climate Café, trained 15 climate activists and advocates on recognising and addressing climate disinformation. The training included sessions on climate science, the impact of misinformation on climate action, and strategies to counter false narratives. The cohort's skills and awareness of climate disinformation were enhanced, contributing to a more effective climate communication and climate action in their communities.

ENSURING DIGITAL SAFETY THROUGH INTER-GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

ZITET facilitated an Inter-generational Dialogue to enhance digital safety among children and other vulnerable members of the community. In partnership with the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Chikonohono Church in Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West province, the programme trained 25 people who were drawn from diverse age groups on digital rights, safety, and strategies to ensure productivity and safety online. Participants collectively developed a Community Pledge to serve as a reference document for digital safety in the community. The session also focused on bridging the digital divide between generations, promoting mutual understanding and exchange of digital skills. This initiative fostered stronger community bonds, enhanced digital literacy across different age groups and encouraged collaborative learning and support.

CONSTITUTIONAL LITERACY

In partnership with the Digital Literacy Initiative (DLI), 38 people were trained in constitutional literacy. This capacity building initiative came as a result of the low levels of constitutional literacy amongst the youth. The training covered the fundamentals of constitutional rights and key elements of the Constitution. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the building blocks of the Constitution and their constitutional rights, empowering them to proactively promote, protect and fulfil these rights.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY FOR AFRICA

ZITET played a pivotal role in the virtual training programme on "Empowering Africa: Building Media Literacy Capacity," organised by the Digital Communication Network(DCN). This training equipped participants with essential skills and knowledge to advocate for diversity and inclusion in media representation, combat stereotypes, and amplify underrepresented voices. The workshop was attended by over 90 individuals from more than 15 African countries and demonstrated a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive and representative media landscape across the continent.

AWARENESS RAISING AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

ZITET conducts awareness raising programmes and social media campaigns to ensure that communities are educated and well informed on the critical topics on digital equity and inclusion despite their geographical location.

ZITET makes use of its website (www.zitet.org.zw), LinkedIn account (https://www.linkedin.com/company/zitet/), X (@ZITEC5), Facebook page (https://facebook.com/ZITETDIGITAL), and WhatsApp (ZITET Hub).

Some of the notable awareness initiatives and social media campaigns that were successfully launched by ZITET in the year 2024 include the following:

BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST DISINFORMATION SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The campaign showcased the impact of disinformation on the critical development sectors and on basic human rights. Some of the stories featured the impact of disinformation on climate action, mental health, sexual and reproductive health rights, entrepreneurship and other initiatives. The campaign also showcased the work that the BRAD project beneficiaries were doing in their communities to combat disinformation. Below are some of the campaign messages. Visit our social media platforms to learn more.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AGAINST DISINFORMATION

PEACE GUMBO
Mental Health Champion , Bulawayo

As a mental health champion, attending the Building Resilience Against Disinformation workshop significantly enhanced my mental health skills by teaching me to identify and combat false information, including negative stereotypes about mental illness that cause society to stigmatize victims. I learned to discern factual content, reducing anxiety and misconceptions. This clarity has empowered me to challenge stereotypes in mental health, fostering a more accurate and supportive environment for myself and others amidst the digital information overload

Building Resilience Against DISINFORMATION

As an entrepreneur, the workshop helped me realize that there are are upcoming entrepreneurs or businesses that are falling prey to disinformation. This has caused financial losses or loss of business opportunities due to poor business decisions. I took up a task to host a business seminar alongside other experts in the business field. The seminar enlightened established and upcoming entrepreneurs in my community on financial literacy, entrepreneurship skills and provided a platform to exhibit their products and expand their networks. I believe that through this seminar, entrepreneurs were empowered to advance SDG 8 - Decent work economic growth

-Zaheedah-
Entreprenuer
Mutare

Building Resilience Against DISINFORMATION

The workshop Impacted my community work as a Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocate in implementing SDGs 3 and 5. It served a strong purpose to help curb disinformation on sexual practices and family planning practices in traditional societies that still hold negative views as far as adolescents and sexual reproductive health is concerned. So much myths and disinformation is circulated, hence I took the opportunity to enlighten my community. This initiative helped them understand that some myths and methods are aimed to disrupt their access to sexual reproductive services, hence it is important to consult a health care professional on all reproductive issues. It was a humbling experience to give back to the community that raised me.

-Sharon Maputire-
SRHR Advocate
Bulawayo

Building Resilience Against DISINFORMATION

The ZITET Media Literacy training workshop was incredibly enlightening. It enhanced my knowledge on disinformation, misinformation, and fact-checking. Now I can spot fake news from a mile away and I can verify sources like a pro! I highly recommend it to anyone looking to stay ahead of disinformation and be a fact-checking master.
I am a teacher who empowers young people through arts and education. Outside the classroom, I advocate for mental health awareness and demystify related issues. I also run an annual school shoe drive, donating essential resources to students in need, advancing SDG4 (Quality Education). Through these efforts, I strive to put a smile on every learner's face.

"Action is the catalyst for yeilding results"

-Fundile-
Educator /SADC Youth Parliamentarian
Bulawayo

YOUTH LED CYBERSECURITY MONTH CAMPAIGN

This campaign was led by ten (10) cybersecurity enthusiasts and champions who developed campaign messages, creative designs and shared cybersecurity tips, facts and tools. The campaign reached over 15000 engagements on LinkedIn, and Facebook.

15000+ social media engagements

YOUTH LED CYBERSECURITY MONTH CAMPAIGN

The Youth Led Cybersecurity Awareness campaign also featured a radio programme that was aired on the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) campus radio station - PaChikomoFM. The programme sought to increase cybersecurity awareness amongst youths and members of the academia.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY WEEK CAMPAIGN

Launched every year, the Media and Information Literacy Week campaign aims to ensure media and information literacy for all in the digital world. Through Media and Information Literacy skills, digital citizens are able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources, discern and respect plural perspectives.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

An act of violence perpetrated by one or more individuals that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in part or fully using information and communication technologies or digital tools, against a person based on their gender

TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Cyberbullying: is the intentional and repetitive use of digital devices to harm individuals.

Doxing: Publicly releasing an individual's private information, including home and email addresses, phone numbers, employer details, and photos of family members or children

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images: the distribution of sexually explicit photos or videos of a person without their consent.

Sextortion: Coercing someone into sexual activity through blackmail, threats, or bribery involving the release of intimate images or sensitive information.

Cyberstalking: the use of technology to monitor someone's activities and behaviour in real-time or historically.

ZITET conducted an awareness campaign on Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), during the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. This campaign sought to raise the public awareness on the types of TFGBV that often go unreported. TFGBV is now rampart in online spaces and there is need for more awareness campaigns to ensure safety in digital spaces and online platforms.

HEALTH-RELATED CAMPAIGNS (BREASTFEEDING AND BREAST CANCER AWARENESS)

ZITET partnered the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC), through the Esigodini District Food and Nutrition Security Committee to debunk breastfeeding misinformation and disinformation during the World Breastfeeding Week.

ZITET also launched another campaign focused on debunking breast cancer disinformation during the Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2024 COMMEMORATION

Closing the Gap
BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT FOR ALL

7 August 2024   09:00am
Venue: Umzingwane Ward 1 next to Sigola Primary School

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

ZITET established strategic partnerships with local, regional and international organisations for knowledge exchange and resource mobilisation.

ZITET also participated in local, regional and international conferences, summits and convenings to strengthen its partnerships, broaden its networks and to contribute meaningfully to conversations on topical issues such as digital equity, digital inclusion, AI governance and emerging technologies. Some of the recent convenings that ZITET participated in during the reporting period include the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Youth Summit, Zimbabwe Library Association (ZIMLA) Annual Conference, Thomson Reuters Foundation Strengthening Advocacy and Communicationson AI Ethics, Data and Digital Rights training, Africa Internet Governance (AIG Forum), and DCN Global events.

RESEARCH

DIGITAL UPTAKE AND DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

In our ongoing efforts to understand and enhance media and digital literacy and resilience in Zimbabwe, we have made significant strides in generating research and knowledge products that can be used to raise awareness, support policy and practice initiatives and build the capacity of individuals. Below are some key knowledge products generated during the reporting period.

- One manuscript has been developed for potential publication by the University of Pretoria, focusing on building resilience against disinformation among youths. This manuscript is currently under peer review.

- An article titled "Embracing Media Information Literacy in Community Development Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa" was published in the Journal of Media Literacy by the International Council for Media Literacy. You can access the article here: https://ic4ml.org/journal-article/embracing-media-information-literacy-in-community-development-initiatives-in-sub-saharan-africa/

- ZITET has drafted a Digital Literacy Toolkit titled "A Girl's Guide to Digital Citizenship." This toolkit is designed to empower young women and girls to become confident digital role models, capable of effectively using digital technologies.

- ZITET has developed self-reflection worksheets on Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence and Building Resilience Against Disinformation. These worksheets are available here https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zBrODAFI_LjTWg-yQnG6RX4qXY9VQykg?usp=drive_link

LOOKING AHEAD- 2025 PRIORITIES

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, EMPOWERING MARGINALISED VOICES.

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE

ZITET recognises the critical importance of access to techologies and information for human capital development, and for ensuring equity in the digital era. In that regard, ZITET is scalling up its digital equity and digital inclusion efforts to ensure that under-resourced communities are empowered, because access to information and enabling technologies is a right not a priviledge.

Looking ahead, ZITET will prioritise the following:

1. Enhancing access to digital devices, equipment and tools by under-resourced communities
2. Promoting digital literacy for rural communities
3. Promoting digital safety and digital skills for all
4. Enhancing Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy and AI readiness amongst communities
5. Ensure rights respecting AI governance
6. Promoting ethical use of Gen AI in education
7. Digiprenuership
8. Research for evidence based policy development and decision making
9. Promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for all
10. Strategic partnerships and collaboration towards bridging the digital divide.

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