

Digital Health and Rights Project Consortium (2025)
***Paying the Costs of Connection: Human rights of young adults in the digital age
in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Vietnam***

Annex:
**Recommendations from study participants and Community Advisory
Teams (CATs) in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Vietnam**

Digital Exclusion and the Right to Health

1. Communities and civil society should advocate for better access to affordable, quality, secure internet connections and expanded network coverage to reduce digital exclusion.

“Advocate to expand network coverage, access” (Ghana)

“Advocacy and campaigning for infrastructure strengthening” (Colombia)

2. To reduce digital exclusion and fulfil the right to health, national governments should;
 - a. Increase access to digital technologies like mobile phones by facilitating more affordable options like installment payment plans.
 - b. Work with technology companies to reduce the cost of data and provide free data credits to those most digitally excluded.
 - c. Invest in digital solutions that are affordable, accessible and secure, in particular, ensuring that eHealth apps are developed to be accessible and free to use.
 - d. Improve network coverage to ensure all geographies are connected, particularly in rural areas with a quality internet connection.
 - e. Work to create public Wifi zones that provide free, quality, secure connection to the internet.

“I think that Ghana Health Service, who are in charge of Health should head spear this project to make it a reality” (Ghana)

“Yes, maybe the government, the city council. Well, with the, with the resources. They could put free internet, so people can connect” (Colombia)

“And then if everyone has that smartphone the government can provide Wi-Fi for the community, then we can have access to the internet” (Kenya)

“I think the ideal is that the internet speed should be strong, the connection should reach mountainous areas, remote areas and not be supervised. I think the government is the one who does this” (Vietnam)

To reduce digital exclusion, technology companies should operate with the value of equitable access. This means reducing monopolies over technology and data markets, lowering the cost of technologies and data and providing value-based access mechanisms that do not trap people into cycles of debt, for instance, providing the option of an installment payment plan that is transparent and has no hidden charges.

“the devices should be made affordable so everyone can purchase one” (Ghana)

“we need a diversity of operators so that all the people can choose what kind of connection they want, one that better fits them, because not all of them share the same value” (Colombia)

1. Stigma and Cybersecurity (technology-facilitated abuse)

1. To tackle technology-facilitated abuse, communities and civil society must;
 - a. Sensitise and train members on digital harms and how to address them
 - b. Create avenues of solidarity, such as alternative platforms or community hotlines, so that members can share their experiences and seek support
 - c. Advocate for redress mechanisms and hold the legal system accountable for ensuring redress for victims of technology-facilitated abuse

“Sensitize and train members on the nature of violations present in the online spaces to enable them to address them” (Kenya)

2. National governments must step up to prevent digital harms by strengthening laws and policies on all forms of tech-facilitated abuse, including cyberbullying, and ensuring that these are implemented with the necessary support (such as legal aid) for victims of abuse. These should have specific considerations for historically stigmatised communities, such as PLWHIV, with training provided to staff enforcing these laws to raise awareness further and prevent systemic stigma.

“Government to take a more active role in protecting the cybersecurity of young people” (Vietnam)

“...the government should create policy and even implement policy that people who bully others on social media, on all platforms, should be held responsible” (Kenya)

3. Technology companies, particularly social media companies, should ensure their platforms have mechanisms to report and seek redress for tech-facilitated abuse.

2. Digital literacy, digital health literacy and AI Information issues (and misinformation)

Communities should be empowered to provide digital literacy training, especially to community leaders, YPLHIV, and other key populations, preferably in a peer-to-peer training model. Training should cover all the topics raised in the research, including human rights, cybersecurity, misinformation, artificial intelligence, and technology-facilitated abuse. Other actors, including governments, civil society, and global institutions, should also help facilitate increased funding and capacity for this community-led training.

"You know, an HIV-positive person who has the knowledge. And have passed this period. So I think you can go and educate the group of people" (Kenya)

"I think the community should be taught on the positivity and negativity of using the internet so that you can be able to make a well-informed decision when you are going to use the internet" (Kenya)

"...having a literacy campaign. It can be like an online something, an ad that is showing what you can do on your phone regarding health services" (Ghana)

1. National governments must play a key role in facilitating digital literacy training, working *with* communities and civil society to ensure this responds to community needs, and integrating this into broader healthcare and education service provision (such as in training health workers and embedding digital skills in school curricula).

"The Ministry of Health can also have a voice when it comes to accessing information, health-related information using the media" (Ghana)

"Digital literacy, I think this is the work of the government, I think from a very young age, people should access some of these things" (Kenya)

2. To prevent misinformation and promote digital empowerment, national governments must better regulate digital health information, for example, by requiring disclaimers or declarations of conflicts of interest on websites.

"If it can be regulated, it will be easier to avoid having so many accounts that are misleading people about getting the wrong prescriptions from the wrong sites" (Kenya)

"I think we should have certified doctors online to give the right kind of information because I go online to the internet and say all sort of things" (Ghana)

3. Poor data protection, privacy and corporate surveillance

Communities should put mechanisms in place for community-led data protection, including public digital literacy training and education on how to keep safe online, community trust-building activities and community-led advocacy (in particular toward social media companies)

"In my opinion, I have to protect myself, and I also have to take responsibility for that" (Vietnam)

"...for our information to be protected we need people from our own community whom we can trust" (Ghana)

"So, the first thing we should do is advocate for inclusivity everywhere we have this information, do not use it against us" (Kenya)

1. National governments should take a leading role in protecting data privacy and preventing surveillance by;
 - a. Organising a cross-governmental roundtable to identify key gaps in data privacy laws and propose stronger policies with clear responsibility for ensuring they are implemented effectively
 - b. Working to strengthen data protection laws to ensure the responsible use of data, user protection, and address issues like misinformation, privacy breaches, and harmful content
 - c. Ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to hold those who breach these laws to account
 - d. Remaining transparent about government access to and use of personal data of citizen
 - e. Ensure that citizens and relevant public servants (i.e. healthcare workers) have adequate and up-to-date training on data privacy and protection

"They should set rules and regulations that governs sharing of our, uhh, our personal data to other companies and all those things" (Ghana)

"The government should disallow the platform that we are using if they fail to keep our privacy. So if they can keep our privacy then they should be shut down" (Kenya)

2. Companies should be accountable to users regarding data privacy and improve privacy settings and options for users, i.e. allowing users to approve comments that appear publicly on their posts, and hosting clear and easy-to-use reporting mechanisms for online harm experienced on their platforms.

"So I think the other apps like Facebook and those dating apps should upgrade when it comes to privacy. Because they collect so much of our information" (Ghana)

"I'd say companies like Safaricom [Should be responsible for making online spaces safe]" (Kenya)

"So, I think uhh, the ministry of health should still keep on educating its workers on how necessary they should keep pa-patient's information confidential" (Ghana)

4. Access to Redress for Digital Harms

1. Community Groups and CBO's should
 - a. Ensure members receive sensitisation and training on their digital rights and mechanisms of reporting harm and seeking redress.
 - b. Develop community resources and support mechanisms such as community paralegal teams.
 - c. Train communities to conduct advocacy, particularly using digital advocacy skills

"Community sensitization and training on these issues that affect them. Such as their rights and mechanisms of reporting" (Kenya)

"We can always incorporate digital advocacy, and we impact our participants with that because most of our cases are from the digital platforms" (Kenya)

2. National governments should ensure that the law is enforced and that those who break the law are held accountable so that survivors get justice. Additionally, they should proactively and constructively engage in international processes like the UPR or contribute to setting up a new international accountability mechanism.

"...how do we remedy it with the government and also make sure that these survivors get justice, someone is accountable for that behavior or whatever they did" (Ghana)

"I think what can be done is the law should be enforced. When it comes to personal issues, when you find a person has disclosed your information, you should report and the case should be followed and come up with a solution" (Kenya)

"And there should be an ini– initiative at the United Nations level. It should not necessarily be at the United Nation level. It could be, uhm, uhm, other countries that feel that responsibility or the need to initiate that and then gradually pull other countries in it and and put in place and accountability mechanism" (Ghana)

5. Digital Governance and Participation

Communities should play a leading role in digital design, development and governance and be empowered to be a part of these systems and processes from start to finish. They should be considered critical collaborators for other stakeholders like governments and technology companies.

"I believe that a comprehensive platform should be created or apps should be created involving the community members as well" (Ghana)

"our communities should lead, let our communities be at the positions of power in the sense that when we are there" (Ghana)

"I think we can create something, tech people with HIV people. We create a group where only HIV people receive that information, but not everybody in general" (Kenya)

National governments should ensure the meaningful engagement of key stakeholders, including YPLHIV and other key populations. In particular, operationalizing this in the inclusion of these groups in policy-making ensures that they have a seat in decisions on issues that directly affect them.

"So most people don't really involve us in, like, their daily activities. They really, like, ignore us" (Ghana)

"I think the underserved community should be engaged in the policy-making body more specifically in the internet governance docket because that is where all these acts of violence and all these vulnerabilities come across" (Kenya)

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