

PROJECT TITLE: ENHANCING THE DIGITAL RIGHTS OF NONPROFITS IN NIGERIA



ICNL

INTERNATIONAL CENTER
FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW



REPORT OF 2020 ICNL WORKSHOP ON

UNDERSTANDING HOW CYBER/DIGITAL LAWS AND POLICIES, AI, ML, BIG DATA AND OTHER DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IMPACT NONPROFITS OPERATIONS



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The Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) took nonprofit leaders and civil society actors, across the country, on a resourceful exploration of digital rights, trends and techniques to engender a digitally robust future for the sector.

On Wednesday September 9, 2020, an hybrid (online and offline) workshop was organized in Ibadan, Oyo state by the Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) with funding support from the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) to discuss, share experience on the theme: “Cyber/Digital Laws and Policies, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data and other Digital Technologies, Impact Nonprofit operations in Nigeria”. The event was imperative as it provided a platform to create awareness and increase nonprofit knowledge about pertinent issues relating to technological use for civic space growth against the backdrop of technological advancements which impact all sectors in Nigeria.

The workshop which was attended by 20 offline and 52 online participants, in view of COVID-19 safety protocols featured presentations all delivered online by seasoned ICT experts and learned nonprofit colleagues across Nigeria and other Africa regions.

The keynote speaker for the event, **Catherine Anite**, Executive Director, Freedom of Expression Hub, Uganda and a member of the High Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom, illuminated current trends and realities of technological use in the world, noting the importance of localizing and mainstreaming technology in Africa in ways that bring these issues to the fore within the third sector. She said “As Artificial Intelligence (AI), and ML gain traction in Nigeria and the rest of Africa, shaping the enjoyment of digital rights, has been hindered by an arbitrary regime of policy, legislation and an overzealous regulatory framework. Censorship, surveillance, blockage of content, unnecessary persecution and prosecution are threatening the enjoyment of rights online and adversely affecting civil society organisations advocating for these rights”. She added that it is important for civil society organisations to have a clear understanding of the policy, legislative and regulatory framework of digital rights, including the opportunities and challenges that AI and machine learning may pose to the broader enjoyment of human rights. See Catherine Anite’s presentation here <http://bit.ly/3aJdgFt>

“AI, ML and big data will cause the most significant shift in the way nonprofits do their work as we have never seen in times past. If civil society organisations are to play a critical role in decades to come, they must adopt a more radical approach to how they understand and interpret the pros and cons of AI, ML and big data to civic space and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” said **Oluseyi Oyebisi**, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs. “This event has come at a time when we are seeing the need for technology now, more than ever, especially with the need to stay distant but connected during this global pandemic and it is vital that civil society adapts to technological advancements so as to remain relevant in resolving the many challenges we face.” he added. See Oluseyi Oyebisi’s presentation here <http://bit.ly/37ATIXc>

In the same vein, **Oluwakorede Asuni**, Co-convener of DotCivics affirmed the universality of data saying, “Data is everywhere

and nonprofit beneficiaries, particularly those in rural and hard-to-reach communities in Nigeria will benefit from what AI, ML and big data can offer in different fields such as education, health care, medical imaging analysis and agriculture but must also understand and deal with the negatives it can bring from disinformation, misinformation, to fake news, among others, therefore, it is imperative to become aware”. See Oluwakorede Asuni’s presentation here <http://bit.ly/38m9HSJ>

For **Gbenga Sesan**, Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative, “There is the need for nonprofits to start thinking of interventions to curb the disadvantages that comes along with ICT related issues. As nonprofits, we must also become more conscious of how cyber regulations can either enable or hinder our work so that we can begin to seek for better accountability from our leaders”. See Gbenga Sesan’s presentation here <http://gbengasesan.com/?p=1519>

Participants also heard from Bukola Shonibare, a legal practitioner and nonprofit leader who spoke on technology accessibility and affordability stressed the importance of bridging the technology gap between the haves and the have-nots through awareness of extant laws and advocacy for better legislation. See Bukola Shonibare’s presentation here <http://bit.ly/3pfoWDU>

Along with **Adam Talsma**, Country Director, Reboot who provided insights on how nonprofits leaders can utilize their online presence and invest in innovation capacity to leverage technology and avoid wasted efforts, access to influence change and reach a wider audience across varying platforms. See Abraham Talsma’s presentation here <http://bit.ly/3mDE24f>

For participants, conversations around the way nonprofits and technology is novel within the Nigerian civic space. One of the participants commented; “Nigerian nonprofits have to advocate for their digital rights by demanding accountability for the review of ICT laws violating the human rights of individuals and CSOs”.

“This type of conversation is a welcome development and nonprofits must now leverage on big data so as to work more effectively - the use of AI/ML to achieve more with ease” added another participant.

The Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNGO) represents nonprofits, think tanks, coalitions, associations, foundations and other non-state actors dedicated to delivering development to grassroots communities and the vulnerable across the country in the fields of education, health, environment, gender, agriculture, social protection, youth, poverty, good governance, and other areas of progressing national development. Since 1992, NNGO has worked to advance the common interests of the nonprofit sector, providing programs that advance national development, civil society legitimacy, transparency, and accountability.

Sessions at the workshop focused on the digital rights of nonprofits, principles and freedoms as well as human rights as a foundation for governance of technologies that impact CSO operations and how nonprofits can use technology to advance their operations. It is hoped that the knowledge from this event will inspire participants in becoming more aware of technology trends to optimize their nonprofit operations, going forward.

KEY TAKE AWAYS/RESOLUTIONS

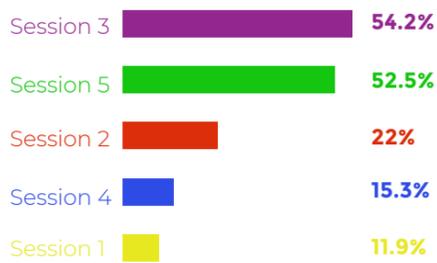
- The workshop gave an insight on how nonprofits should now begin to work as a coalition and collaborate to develop technological network/partnerships.
- There is the need for nonprofit leaders to go for more knowledge on ICT related courses.
- Nigerian nonprofits have to advocate for their digital rights by demanding accountability for the review of ICT laws violating the human rights of individuals and CSOs.
- The need for nonprofits to leverage on big data so as to work more effectively i.e. the use of AI/ML to achieve more with ease.
- There is also the need for nonprofits to start thinking of interventions to curb the disadvantages that comes along with ICT related issues.
- It is now important for nonprofits to be technological inclined as this is the future of work for the sector and the global world at large.

EVALUATION WORKSHOP

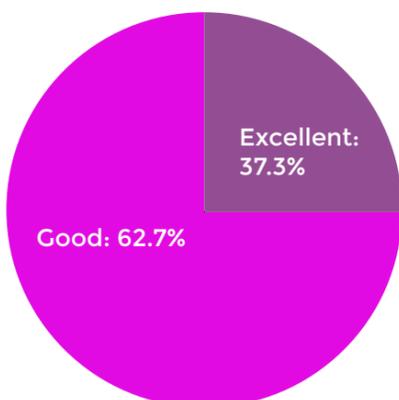
1. The workshop sessions provided new insights

Sessions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Session 1: Digital Freedom/Unfreedom.	30.5%	69.5%	0%
Session 2: Artificial Intelligence/Machine learning and Big Data Fundamental.	20.3%	78.0%	1.7%
Session 3: Human Rights as a Foundation for Governance of Technologies.	37.3%	61.0%	1.7%
Session 4: Cyberlaws and Policies that Impact Civil Society Operations.	20.3%	69.5%	10.2%
Session 5: How Nonprofits can use Technology to Advance their Operations.	47.5%	52.5%	0%

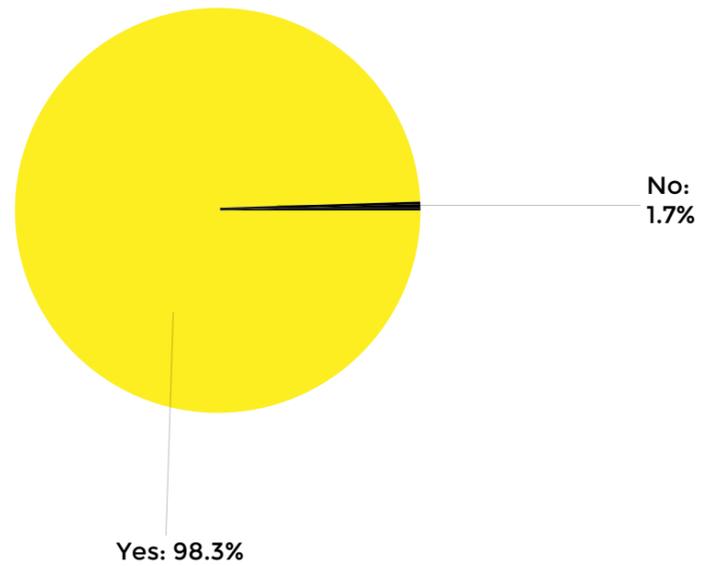
2. Which session did you enjoy the most ?



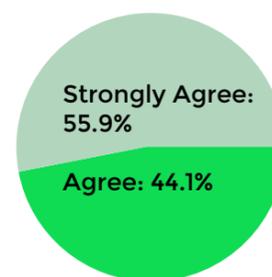
3. Overall, how would you rate the quality of presentations at the webinar/workshop?



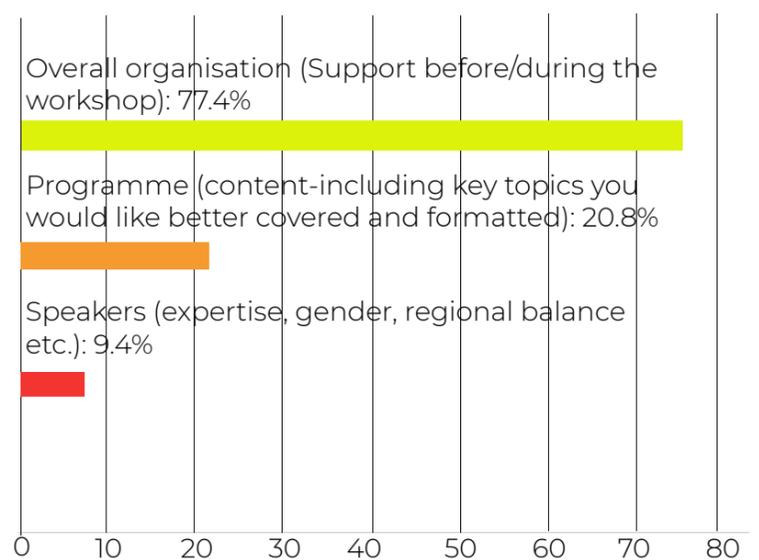
4. Has this webinar/workshop increased your knowledge on how technology can be used in optimizing your organisation's operations?



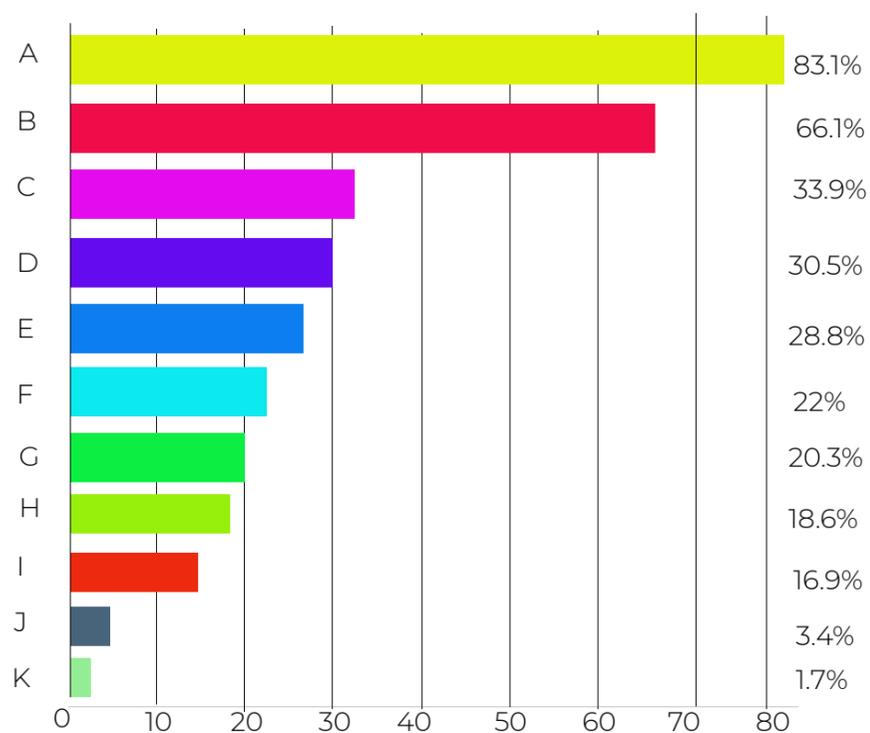
5. Would this recent understanding of the Cyberlaws and ICT laws in Nigeria now impact how your organisation carries out its activities?



6. What would you like to see improved or changed at the next workshop?



7. What will you do with what you gained at the workshop?



A - 83.1% of participants said they would share information gained at the workshop with colleagues, peers and/or partner organisations,

B - 66.1% of participants noted that they would build capacity within their organisations,

C- 33.9% of participants said they would motivate their colleagues, peers and partners, develop new collaborations,

D- 30.5% of participants said they would use knowledge gotten to influence their work focus/ approach of their organisation,

E- 28.8% of participants said they would strengthen existing collaborations ,

F- 22% of participants noted that knowledge gained would be used to refine and improve existing work/research practice,

G- 20.3% of participants said they would join existing partnerships/networks,

I- 18.6% said they would strengthen advocacy and/ or policy work ,

J- 16.9% of participants opined that knowledge gotten would be used to initiate new project/activity , raise awareness of community, policy and/or scientific leaders, share information/experience with new contacts met at the workshop,

K- 3.4% said they are unsure of what they would do with the knowledge gained ,

L- 1.7% of participants said they will not do anything differently.

CONCLUSION

The workshop presentations / sessions created a platform to educate nonprofits on how the Cyberlaws and ICT laws in Nigeria would impact how they carry out their activities while also giving them insights on how to enhance their human rights as a foundation for governance of technologies.

Survey responses indicated that participants now have an increased knowledge on how technology can be used in achieving more work within their organisation.

About NNNGO

The Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) is the first generic membership body for civil society organisations in Nigeria that facilitates effective advocacy on issues of poverty and other developmental issues. Established in 1992, NNNGO represents over 2800 organizations ranging from small groups working at the local level, to larger networks working at the national level.

This publication is developed with financial assistance from the The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). The contents are the sole responsibility of Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the ICNL.

Cover Photo : 2020, SDM Tavern, Ibadan, Nigeria at ICNL Workshop.

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