Tech4Families Stakeholder Workshop Report

Introduction

The Tech4Families stakeholder workshop was conducted in Kano on the 4th of April 2019, at Babale Suites. There were a total number of 21 out of 26 invited participants in attendance; 20 from Kano state and 1 from Plateau state. There were 10 female participants and 11 males. (The complete agenda is included as Annex I)

A full list of attendees is included as Annex II. However, some of the key stakeholders who participated include:

- A representative from 9 Mobile
- A woman activist
- A traditional leader
- A liberal Islamic scholar
- The deputy director of CITAD
- The director of Women, Ministry of Women Affairs
- A sociologist and gender specialist
- FGD facilitators
- A former commissioner from the Ministry of Science and Technology

Objective of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to share knowledge and ideas with participants about the Tech4Families project goal and objectives, present initial findings from the formative research, get additional feedback on the issues surrounding women's access to technology in Kano and its environs; solicit support and community buy-in for the project's goals and approaches; garner further insight into the gender digital divide in northern Nigeria, and receive additional suggestions for the project and radio programming design.

Introductory Session

Equal Access International's Nigeria Country Director, Michael O'Mahony provided opening remarks and a brief overview of the project objectives. The participants introduced themselves and Gad Peter gave an overview of Equal Access International, including our geographic and practice area reach, and an overview of the scope of EAI's programming in the region as well as an in-depth overview of the Tech4Families project and activities.

Presentation of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Findings

FGD facilitator, Abdul Ibrahim presented on the FGD findings. Outlining the purpose of the study, the overall goal of the FGDs, the scope and limitations of the study, and a summary of our findings. To conclude, he provided recommendations for successful implementation .

Key Takeaways from Stakeholders

1. Almost all the participants said that the family unit was a major inhibiting factor to women's use of technology and the internet and that further research into this was essential.
2. One of the limitations the participants highlighted was the scope of the study noting that 8 FGDs of only 80 people and 20 IDIs was too small to reflect the true views and perceptions of over 11 million people who live in Kano state. The participants noted that focusing on only the Kano metropolis does not capture the demographics of the state, specifically the views of rural and urban dwellers. Almost all the participants said that the family unit was a major inhibiting factor to women's use of technology and the internet and that further research into this was essential. (EAI staff did share this was a small pilot study and are currently exploring ways that we might be able to efficiently expand our analysis).

Key Stakeholder Points:

- **Hon. Zainab Audu Bako**; former Commissioner Ministry of science and Technology Kano State said, "I was privileged to have held the first ever science and technology exhibition in Kano state and I was thrilled with the kind of participation we had and it is incredible to note that in Kano state, I believe we have the highest number of innovators and inventors. Unfortunately, they are at the grassroots level and their potential is untapped. Some are as young as nine waiting for us to bring them out to the world; unfortunately, the government is not doing enough. So, we had to advise and encourage the government to revive that ministry, so all this untapped potential can be empowered.
- Reneto, an NGO based in Abuja, invited us for an exhibition and Kano state had the highest inventors in that workshop. The talent we have here is amazing but we are not utilizing them the way we are supposed to.

- Furthermore, literacy and cost are the main reasons why we do not have a lot of women using the online digital technology.
- These are the two major impediments we are facing as a society. If women are properly trained and included in the use of technology, they will be empowered both in their trade and day to day life."

- **Dr. Mai Kano Madaki** said, "The major source of any type of success in the world is the family and the enhanced capacity of the woman makes a better family; by building a woman's capacity, you are building the capacity of that specific society. If we wish to increase, improve, or enhance women participation or utilization in technology then we go back to the family system or structure.

- As much as the previous speaker highlighted the issue of cost and literacy, we must also highlight the issue of orientation and socialization and stress the needs, to all of us as a parents or potential parents, the importance of that within our individual and collective family system. If we are able to send all our young girls to schools and build their capacity through societal organizations, all the issues of the gender digital divide will be solved. We cannot completely rely on government because the government cannot solve all our problems, they can only give some complimentary support."

Panel Discussion

A panel discussion was conducted by Dr. Ibrahim Ilyas Adam (a moderate religious scholar, and an expert in Gender Studies and Islamic Family Law). Panelists included: Tamwakat Golit, Project Manager Search for Common Ground; Protection, Empowerment and Resilience Building for Women in North Eastern Nigeria; Mallam Isah Garba, Deputy Director CITAD; and Dr. Maikano Madaki, Doctor of Sociology Bayero University Kano.

The purpose of the panel was to solicit the panelists' view on the FGD findings, including whether or not the findings relate to evidence in their respective work, and to initiate discussion on the various ways the panelists can work to reduce the gender digital divide in their day to day lives, alongside their views on the potential benefits the Tech4Families project could bring for both men and women. Below are some of the questions posed to the panelists and their corresponding responses:

Q1) What are your initial reflections on the findings of the formative research?

- Dr. Maikano Madaki- "I understood the concept and followed the presentation of findings and what enticed me more was the methodology used to conduct the FGDs. The findings are good, but I think there is more to it than that. The groups are too small to reflect the

actual views and perception of the Kano population, as 8 FGDs and 20 KIIs cannot represent the views of over 11 million people living in Kano state".

- Dr. Ibrahim Ilyas Adam: "I feel like the negligence of the government and the lack of involvement of the government is the major cause of the problem statement. The government does not take the use of technology as a priority because a lot of studies show there is no provision for technological devices in schools and in instances where there are, there is no personnel to teach students how to use the devices."

- Tamwakat Golit: "I commend the effort of the researcher for a job well done but I think the scope of the study is limited and cannot represent the views or perceptions of the entire state. The study should not have been restricted to access and use of technology. I would have loved to see the study look into why women and girls in northern Nigeria are not encouraged to go into science and technology courses to address those issues."

- Isah Garba: "Accessibility, affordability and availability of technology are key and without the internet, we are denying people access to education. A CITAD research found out that 84.4% of schools in Kano with computer labs were not using the computers. Another research also showed that about 90% of schools did not even have computers to begin with".

- Abdussamad Ahmad Yusuf: Equal Access International Peace Promotion Fellow- "The school I have attended had a computer lab but for all the three years I spent in the senior secondary school, I was never taken to the lab. Government should provide the computer literacy training aids and also train the facilitators in all the basic schools".

Q2) Where you surprised by any of the findings?

- Dr. Maikano Madaki- "I am not surprised because the area covered in the research covered Kano state ….(and) it tallies to some extent with previous research done. I agree with the findings especially the fact that Internet accessibility has something to do with literacy and I clearly know how Kano is performing on the national scale grading of illiteracy, poverty, and culture. Because we have a strong cultural attachment, we are more likely not to succumb to technological development or anything that is perceived to deviate from our culture. All of us are not doing enough in terms of training, mobilization, and reorientation".

- Fatima Ibrahim Turaki: "Why is it that the concern on moral decadence influenced by access and use of the internet is more on the girls"?
  Replies:
  Dr. Maiakano Madaki: "Girls' are believed to be more fragile and vulnerable but nevertheless, if our girls are properly socialized and monitored, they will use Internet/technology positively".

Dr. Iliyas: "Even from a religious perspective, girls are more vulnerable to social vices due to various factors. That is why religion segmented how to treat girls and boys at various stages of their formative years."

- Gad Peter- "Believing that culture is one of the major causes of the gender digital divide, how can we reshape that culture"?
  Reply:
  Dr. Maikano Madaki: "Just like we have done away with barbaric cultural practices that were once mainstream in our society, we must find ways to equally do away with negative cultural practices that are not beneficial to us in the current age we live in."

Q3) Do you agree with the findings?

- Abdul Ibrahim: "I think the issue of close monitoring of Internet usage by girls will grossly limit the benefits they will derive. That said, orientation and re-orientation is everything. Parental re-orientation is the key in addressing this issue of gender digital divide."

- Tamwakat Golit: "I think people presume girls are more vulnerable than boys while they are not, so basically the gender digital divide is largely caused by culture. We need to have a re-orientation among parents and community leaders".

- Halima Abba Ibrahim: "It is natural that when you try to deny kids access to anything such as the Internet, their curiosity level heightens and at the end of the day, they will dig more than necessary. What should a parent do about such situation"?
  Reply:
  Dr. Mai Kano: "Human beings are naturally curious especially at a tender age because an elderly person is more programmed, more experienced and more likely to agree with certain instructions or boundaries without feeling the need to test it. I think there shouldn't be a question of denying the kids access to anything without justifying that reason to them so that the child can understand and be convinced about your reasons. As a parent, I will not stop a child from using the Internet because I know as Mallam Isa said, the Internet has come to stay, so I will rather tailor my energy to teach my kids how to use the Internet wisely and positively in order to ensure they benefit from the good things it has to offer."

Q4) There was a strong link in the research between a woman's use of technology and her morality, why do you think that is? Have you seen evidence of this in your own work/communities?

- Dr. Maikano: "Yes I will say there is and that also takes us back to the cultural issue. People perceive the Internet as more or less a Western thing - propagating immorality in the society. I think this has a link with a lack of oversight on the content that people post

online day in day out, but then it also has to do with how we take it, how we utilize it and how we teach our younger generation to use it."

- Tamwakat Golit: "I think there is a link because of the immoral content that sometimes goes viral online and that has made parents believe that the Internet has nothing good to offer. Another reason is good stories hardly make waves online, it is more often the negative stories that go viral online."

- Isa Garba: "I think it is about our perception. Everybody including all of us here are trying to create an artificial dichotomy between our physical life and technological life, which in reality does not exist because what happens in the virtual world is the translation of what happens in the physical world. All that we post or come across online is a representation of the physical life. So basically, we are creating a phobia which is consuming us and the more we try to build this dichotomy, the more we put ourselves at a disadvantage of not reaping the benefits and potentials of the Internet."

Q5) Each of you represents a very different part of society, what can you do within your own day to day lives to reduce the gender digital divide?

- Dr. Iliyas: At the policy level, any effort in trying to address this issue must take poverty into account, particularly the northern region. The issue of good governance should also be a point of concern."

- Dr. Maikano: "I will go contrary to what Sheikh has said. In as much as the Government has a role to play, we equally must act at our individual and collective capacity. It is a collective responsibility and we must work hard to give the younger generation proper re-orientation and change the narrative. Let us teach them what they need to learn, tell them what they need to hear so that we will solve our societal challenges within our small communities. We must abscond from sharing inappropriate content and fake news online to safeguard the image of the Internet for our younger ones to emulate. Social media platforms also need to create mechanisms that allow people have total control of their privacy online."

- Tamwakat Golit: "Aside socialization which basically targets the younger generation in the society, key stakeholders especially those that are passionate about advancing the cause of gender equality should also be a primary target. Having key influencers in the society add their voice to the problem statement will lead to the change we want to see. We must equally create spaces and good media messaging in our little ways to advocate and create awareness on gender digital divide."

- Isah Garba: "We have major work ahead of us because we have reduced ourselves to purely consumers of the content on the Internet, which is basically created by others regardless of its effects on our culture and religion. We need to build capacity to develop content that we can consider culturally, socially, and religiously appropriate. Women also

need to be sensitized on how to report hate speech and gender-based violence they encounter online. This will help neutralize the prevalence of such content online."

- Dr. Ilyas: "Computer literacy as a requirement for education must be enforced as a rule and the government needs to do better at regulating negative content online."
- Kubura Dankani, Director Women, Ministry of Women Affairs Kano State: "Government and relevant agencies should be conducting seminars for parents to sensitize them on the benefits of technology to their girls, how to adequately monitor their online activity, and the type of content they should be encourage to access".

Q6) What positive benefits do you think a project like this one could bring for women and even men?

- All panelists agreed that a project like the Tech4Families project will no doubt be beneficial to both men and women in terms of enhancing their lives and livelihood options.

After the panel discussion, other participants listed out some major factors they feel exacerbate the gender digital divide in northern Nigeria as follows:

- High rate of out of school girls
- Lack of computer literacy
- Lack of skills to constructively use Internet facilities to earn a livelihood, gain knowledge, health tips, and cosmetic tips
- High cost of data bundle
- Inadequate relevant Hausa content on the Internet
- Parental fear
- Misperception that the Internet leads to moral decadence
- Patriarchal nature of a northern family setting
- Resistance to change/conservative nature of northern society

Questions and responses to questions asked after the Panel Discussion session

- Abdussamad Ahmad Yusuf asked the panelists "What are the basic strategies on how to reduce the Gender Digital Divide"?

    Dr. Ibrahim Ilyas:

- Ensuring good governance because Internet accessibility, availability, and affordability are not readily available at scale.
- Internet censorship to be introduced even though it was observed that politicians might abuse such policies for their own political gain.

- Individually and collectively provide proper socialization to youth.

  Tamwakat Golit:

- Developing an audio-visual program aiming to bridge the gender digital divide. The program should feature key stakeholders that are passionate in bridging the gender digital divide and other respected members of the society.
- Creating a social media platform that will campaign against gender digital divide. The platforms should have an active participation from some respected members in the community. Such people should be sharing their experience on how technology added value to their lives.
- Families should serve as the major institution to bring this societal change and break the down barriers to access and use.

Dr. Maikano Madaki:

- Due to the conservative nature of the northern community, the content to be developed should follow the pattern of behavioral change. Many other cultures have been changed by that.
- Encourage local content developers to continuously develop online content that are both culturally and socially sensitive. This will encourage parents to allow girls use the internet more.

Isah Garba:

- Young women should be trained to serve as online mentors to younger girls. Training by young women who have utilized the Internet successfully can help change the narrative.
- Advocate for the incorporation of computer literacy skills at all levels of education.

Group Activity: A Close Look at Social Norms

After the panel discussion, a presentation was made to clarify what social norms are, how they affect how people behave and how they make decisions, why people follow social norms and why social norms are important in the Tech4Families project. The participants broke into breakout groups and were asked to engage and unearth social norms that lead to the gender digital divide. Below are the takeaways from each of the group presentations.

Group 1

Group one discussed religious and cultural social norms that impact women and girls access to and use of technology. This included the belief that under Islam, women's lives are dependent on their parents, their husbands, and their children or male relatives. Looking at the issue from a

micro perspective (at the family level), parents restrict girls' use of the Internet due to fears of moral decadence. From the macro perspective, religious leaders restrict women and girls' access and use of technology due to fear of moral decadence. There are also religious clerics who don't believe in the use of any modern technological device and who speak out against accessing the Internet. The group's recommendation for bridging the gender digital divide are:

- Have community leaders serve as sensitization agents to generate tolerance and acceptance of women and girls access the Internet.
- Media houses should produce programs that advocate for women and girls to have freedom to access the Internet.

Group 2

This group identified the people within the community who have the most influence on social norms. They role played the perspectives of various family and community members e.g. mother, husband, father, and cleric.

- From the perspective of a woman, it is the men who have the most influence because they are the primary decision makers within the family.
- Women also believe that the traditional and religious leaders have influence because there are instances when they are the point of call when women have issues within their homes and the community at large.
- Women believe that teachers can influence social norms in children because they interact with the children on a regular basis. Female mentors such as older sisters or aunties, who children look up to and emulate also reinforce social norms.
- Women believe their children's peers and people they interact with daily influence the decision to follow social norms.

The group paired the husbands and fathers together because they are more or less the same set of people. Outcomes: fathers and husbands feel women have the most influence in changing social norms because women are closer to their children and therefore interact more freely and openly with them; thereby being a major source of influence. Women also serve as a communication bridge between children and fathers and though tend to be blamed for moral breakdown of children. Ironically, the women do not believe in the powers they are claimed to have with regards to influence. Husbands/fathers also believe in traditional leaders' influence to reinforce and shape norms. Traditional leaders are also influential in terms of policy changes and implementation because they have the power to hold governments accountable because the government extends them a listening ear and courtesy.

Clerics believe in their ability to influence change because they are given reverence in the society. They preach according to the content of the book and expect their teachings to guide the way and manner in which the society socializes, and how people live within the society. The clerics believe in the power of the media and that is why clerics target media to communicate their sermons to enable them to reach to a wider population.

Group 3

This group discussed the social sanctions that result from not following social norms. The group listed out the social sanctions as they affect the husbands, fathers, and clerics.

- Husbands are skeptical about letting their wives have access to the Internet and technology because they may be influenced by foreign things that not compatible with our social norms and jealousy of having his wife intermingling with other men.
- If this happens, they might be perceived to be married to wayward wives and not have control over their wives. This in turn will affect their social standing and respect within their society.
- Fathers on the other hand inhibit children's access to technology and the Internet due to fear of juvenile delinquency and their children imbibing some behaviors that might not be compatible with our social norms and culture.
- Fathers are also scared of moral decadence and fear of gender-based violence that might affect their female children when they access technology and engage online.
- If that were to occur, fathers fear the social outburst that may occur and the possibility of being ostracized by the community for raising wayward girls and not having total control over his family and dependents.
- In extreme cases, such fathers might lose their relevance within the society and may no longer be consulted to make decisions that affect the community.
- Societies might reject girls who experience gender-based violence online, viewing them as too exposed and often leading to lack of marital suitors.
- Fathers also get scared of religious clerics calling them out during sermons and citing them as bad examples.

Group 4

The final group discussed what inspires community members to behave outside of cultural norms or break norms. They looked at the reasons from the perspective of a woman/wife, a husband/father and that of a cleric.

- According to the group, the things that inspire women/wives to break away from a social norm are peer group influence, western education, gender-based violence, having co-wives, change of environment, and civilization/modernization.
- For the husband/father, the inspiration to break away from social norms comes from superiority complex, western education, civilization/modernization, peer group influence, change of social class and ailments such as depression. And lastly for the cleric, the reasons are centered on education, popularity/relevance of the message they want to pass across, and gender-based violence.

Conclusion

All participants agreed with the preliminary findings of the FGDs and felt EAI did a good job with the research. One of the limitations they highlighted was the scope of the study, noting that 8 FGDs of only 80 people and 20 IDIs were too small to reflect the true views and perceptions of over 11 million+ people in Kano state. In the course of the workshop, 3 radio stations (Freedom Radio, Express Radio, and Rahama Radio) were identified as the best stations to air the content and the best air times were identified to be 6-10am, 3-5pm, and 7-10pm respectively. Two CAG leaders were identified for the radio content. Three additional people will be identified.

The key points raised and points of action are:

- There is a need to train women in tech at the grassroots level to help bridge the gender digital divide.
- The best way to tackle the gender digital divide is at the grassroot/family level because even if policies are put in place if there is resistance at the family level, nothing will be achieved.
- There is the need to work with female role models working in the Tech field to highlight how they have positively used and benefited from technology.
- There is also a need to break community myths on the negative perceptions about technology and its connection to moral decadence.
- The government does not prioritize technology because a lot of studies show there is no provision for technological devices in schools and in instances where there are, there is no personnel to teach students how to use technological devices.

Annex I: Workshop Agenda

Agenda Outline for Tech4Families Stakeholder Meeting

Date: 4th April 2019

Venue: Babale Suites, Kano.

Time	Activity	Facilitator
8:00am-9:00am	Registration of Participants	Jameel Ahmad Zubair
9:00am-9:15am	Welcome Remarks From EAI Country Director	Michael J.F. O'Mahony
9:15am-9:30am	Introduction of participants	All
9:30am-10.00am	Overview of Equal Access and the Tech4Families project	Gad Peter
10:00am-10:30am	Presentation of key Findings from the Focus Group Discussions	Abdulrahman Ibrahim
10:30am-12:00pm	Panel Discussion: Dr. Ibrahim Ilyas Adam Tamwakat Golit Prof. Aisha Tofa Isah Garba	Maryam Rabiu Muhammad
12:00pm-1:00pm	Social Norms Group Activity	Fatima Turaki Ibrahim
1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch and Prayers	
2:00pm-2:30pm	Closing remarks and departure	Gad Peter

Annex II: Participant List

CATEGORY	NAME	ORGANIZATION
Women Activist	Tamwakat Golit	Search for Common Ground
Representative from a telecoms company	Fatima Mahmoud	9 Mobile
Traditional leaders	Jamilu Shuaibu	Mai Unguwar Tarauni
Liberal Islamic scholars	Dr. Ibrahim Ilyas Adam	Ihsan Global Peace
Deputy Director CITAD	Mallam Isah Garba	CITAD
Representative of the Ministry of Women Affairs	Kubra Dankani	Director of Women Affairs Kano
Representatives of selected media organizations	Ubaidah Muhd Lawan	Aminchi Radio Kano
Community Reporter	Salisu Baffayo	Freedom Radio Kano
Sociologist/FT Content Advisory Group Member	Dr. Maikano Madaki	Bayero University Kano
Former Peace Promotion Fellow	Muhammad Muktar Garba	
Former Peace Promotion Fellow	Hajara Abdullahi	Northwest University
Current Peace Promotion Fellow	Hadiza Ahmad Aminu	Express Radio Kano
Current Peace Promotion Fellow	Abdussamad Ahmad Yusuf	Youth Corper
Female FGD participant	Mary Sila	Mercy Corp
Female FGD participant	Naja'atu Lawal Ismail	Lawyer

Female FGD participant	Adama Muhammad Danfulani	
Male FGD participant	Muhammad Auwal Sani	Social Worker
Male FGD participant	Sagir Umar Aliyu	
Male FGD participant	Aliyu Musa Shehu	
Female FGD Facilitator and recruitor	Binta Abdullahi Umar	
Male FGD Facilitator and recruitor	Abdurrahman Ibrahim	
Female Opinion Leader	Hajiya Zainab Audu Bako	Former Commissioner of Science and Technology Kano