'a youth initiative to increase digital citizenship in local communities'
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VISION
To proactively engage youth in addressing internet related issues in their communities through digital literacy, networking, and activism.

MISSION
Digital Grassroots fosters community engagement in Internet Governance through a global youth network thereby encouraging Internet innovation, reducing inequalities between genders and rural-urban disparities, and giving youth, the digital natives, control of the future we want—our digital future and that of future generations.
WE ARE A BIG FAMILY OF YOUTH IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Full names of our team since 2017-2019: Esther Mwema (President) | Uffa Modey (Vice President | Adisa Bolutife (Finance Director | Eileen Cejas (Communications Director)

+ Sindy Obed, Shadrach Ankrah, Wevyn Muganda, Wathagi Ndungu, Katie Watson, Noha Ashraf, Dajana Mulaj, Rebecca Ryakitimbo, Charlotte N’Guessan, Adja Sembene, Kyritsis Charalimos
WE MET AT THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA IN 2017

All under 25 years old, we met as part of Internet Society’s Youth@IGF program. The Internet Governance Forum 2017 was at the UN Offices at Geneva. We met once, launched the project Digital Grassroots, and it has grown organically to date. Our work proves the power of youth.
WE DID NOT DO IT ALONE

At the Internet Governance Forum 2017, we met a lot of experts in Internet Governance. Being new to the space, we found it difficult to engage and saw very little representation of ourselves on the agenda, on the panels, and in the space. We decided to form Digital Grassroots to respond to our experience as young people in the space. In our first Digital Grassroots Ambassadors program, we connected the experts we met to mentor young people in our program on various facets of internet Governance. We did not want to be the only youth in the space. We determined to get more young people involved, especially youth from underrepresented regions facing a lot of internet challenges in their community.
WE CREATED SOME RESOURCES

As part of our journey, we created some resources to respond to youth specific issues in Internet Governance, while prioritizing simplicity so that everyone who has access to our material can understand it, whether they are experts on internet issues or just the average user. We created the Digital Grassroots Internet Literacy Course which features topics ‘Internet for Social Life, Internet for Security and Internet for Economy.’ We curated a Communique on ‘Youth Resolutions in Internet Governance’. We gamified digital rights concepts through our ‘Digital Rights Monopoly’ and mapped the globe’s internet infrastructure to show why we need to ‘localize internet governance’ in order to maintain an open and equal internet.
Taking you from cohort 1 two 3 four

OUR COHORTS
The poster on the left was our very first call to action for the Digital Grassroots Ambassadors program in 2018. We've had four cohorts, + 2 additional programs.

As of 2019, we have 127 ambassadors.

Cohort One 2018—44 Ambassadors
Cohort Two 2018—30 Ambassadors
Cohort Three 2018—24 Ambassadors
(Cohort 3 was the Francophone version)
Cohort Four 2019—29 Ambassadors

Additional program for existing Digital Grassroots Ambassadors
Community Leaders Program 2019—7 Community Leaders

Internet Society ‘Shaping the Internet’ course for Digital Grassroots Ambassadors—16 Ambassadors

Details of our programs are included in our outcome reports for each program. The outcome reports will be publicized as they are released. Find out more on www.digitalgrassroots.org
OUR ADVOCACY
THE BEST PART

About Digital Grassroots is that we do it in our free time, and mainly with our own resources. This has made the journey exciting and helped us build strong relationships across continents even though we’d only met once at a conference before beginning this ongoing journey.

SINCE 2018, OUR ADVOCACY INCLUDED BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO

IGF 2015 Public Consultation
Cybersecurity conference Prague
Kenya Youth Convening on Internet Governance
Kenya IGF
Tanzania IGF
Arusha Womens School of Internet Governance
Mozilla Open Leaders 2018
Mozilla Sprint 2018
Mozilla Festival 2018 and 2019

Do Good Kenya
Africa Internet Summit
Data Strong Kenya
SEEDIG
Women in Tech Kenya
Women in Tech Zambia
620 Open Letter
LAC IGF
IGF Booth 2018 and 2019
Scene Arabia interview
Kenya Newspaper feature

Cohort 1
Cohort 2
Cohort 3
Cohort 4
Community Leaders
Mozilla Open Leaders
X Internet Health
Internet Health Report reading list
AFRISIG
ICANN NextGen

IGF Afganistan
Africa Youth Internet Governance Forum
Include Youth in Internet Governance Petition
Safer Internet Day
Haiti IGF
Communique on Youth Resolutions in IG
Digital Rights Monopoly
Localizing Internet Governance globe
Mozilla Open Leaders Expert
Digital Rights Southern Africa Summit
Nigeria Youth IGF
We Are project with Creating Networks Youth Obs
ICANN Policy meeting
IGF France 2018 closing ceremony speech
And so much more...
The Kenya Youth Convening on Internet Governance (KYOG) is a national annual forum where youth engage in internet governance topics and join discussions with experts and their peers.

Objectives of the KYOG include:
- Capacity building of youth participation in IG issues
- Encourage youth contribution in internet-related issues
- Provide a platform to cultivate leadership and influence creation and implementation of policies
AND SOME OF OUR FAVORITE ADVOCACY SPACES

Internet Freedom Festival (2019) | RightsCon 2019 | Women Deliver 2019 | Engineers Without Borders | Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity | Social Media | and more...
Today: Digital Grassroots is counting on you

Digital Grassroots needs your help with "Youth Inclusion in Global Internet Governance". Join Digital Grassroots and 419 supporters today.

Sign this petition

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A #SaferInternetDay means, educating online users to become #Digital Litetates who will be able to detect unsolicited email messages, change their password regularly, install anti-virus software, read privacy policies and be aware of security issues in apps.

@digigrassroots
9:16 AM - 5 Feb 2019

As we youth are always engaged #OnLineSafety in various social network activities, we must not just be online users but before we post something online, we must analyze and see if it will hate the other person online.

@digigrassroots @EileenCejas
9:19 AM - 5 Feb 2019

This day when we talk about #SaferInternetDay 🌐 Internet, @GoogleForEdu think that we should #BeSmart to be free in internet. #DIGRA #SaferInternetDay2019 🌐#YouthInIG cc @isocbenin @ParadigmHQ @digigrassroots

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Advise for the 2 year olds on the internet? Our Youth stakeholder has an interesting take on this!

#SaferInternetDay 🌐 #SIDAfrica #SID2019 🌐
@internetsociety @ISOC_NextGen

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What does a safer internet means to you?
#SaferInternetDay

4:32 AM - 5 Feb 2019

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Thanks for joining us!

DIGITAL GRASSROOTS
www.digitalgrassroots.org
The step we celebrate the most is when our Ambassadors became trainers and mentors in our following cohorts. We believe in giving back and are happy to see our Ambassadors passing it forward to other youth. We include a few shout-outs, and acknowledge that we cannot mention all the amazing work our Ambassadors have accomplished in their work. For instance; Morisola Alaba and Aubin Zoh attended the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum 2019 (#DRIF19) at Lagos, Nigeria, organised by Paradigm Initiative. Morisola also hosted a session on “Strategic Litigation and Limitations as a response to Digital Rights restrictions”. Manuela Peralta from Cohort 1 attended the Mexican version of SSIG. Shadrach Ankrah attended the Youth IGF Ghana. Vallarie Yiega attended the national Kenyan School of Internet Governance 2019. De La Providence Baraka attended the national IGF Democratic Republic of Congo. + more.
We wish we could mention all our Ambassadors have been up to, but that would take another book. We will squeeze in a few.

Peter Mmbando conducted a Community Outreach in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Ruth Atim attended the Africa Internet Summit. Richmond Dakpogan attended the 3rd School of Internet Governance Benin.

Aubin Zoh attended the Digital Rights Workshops organised by Paradigm Initiative.

Nancy Wachira hosted a lunch meetup session at Radical Networks 2019, under the theme “What’s the fuss about connectivity and infrastructure?”

Abdul Malik attended ICANN64 as an ICANN fellow in Kobe, Japan. Ajani Oluwaseun Sanjo and Vallarie Yiega were ICANN NextGen fellows.

Hanna Pishchyk presented Digital Grassroots at an NGO Fair in Belarus.

Confucius Caradoc Bedzina led a session teaching youth on internet literacy.
OUR COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY LEADERS PROGRAM

FEB—APR 2019

In six weeks, we trained seven Digital Grassroots Ambassadors on foundation basics on how to be internet leaders in their local communities and drive positive change through community building, engagements and networks.

Each community leader was matched with a mentor for the duration of the program.

Our first Community Leaders Program hosted youth from Kenya, Pakistan, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Botswana, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our focus is underrepresented communities in the space of Internet Governance, or youth living in areas with increasing digital rights issues.

Digital Grassroots President Esther Mwema conceptualized this project as part of her fellowship as an Internet Freedom Festival Community Development Fellow 2019 with a focus on the ‘Next Net’ theme.

OUR 2019 COMMUNITY LEADERS

Awuor Ayiecho (Kenya); Confucius Caradoc Bedzina (Ghana); Eric Morgen Moyo (Zimbabwe); Liah Shonhe (Botswana); Mahum Tariq (Pakistan); De La Providence Baraka (D.R Congo); Ruth Atim (Uganda)

Community Leader Mentors: Adisa Bolutife, Chenai Chair, Esther Mwema, Uffa Modey, Wathagi Ndungu
In 2020, we are launching the Community Leaders for Internet Health and part of Open Leaders X which is an offshoot from Mozilla Open Leaders program in which Digital Grassroots participated in in 2018.

This initiative, launched at Mozilla Festival 2019, led by DIGRA’s President Esther Mwema and Vice President Uffa Modey. Stay updated on www.digitalgrassroots.org

DIGITAL GRASSROOTS FORUM + AMBASSADORS NETWORK

We run a weekly newsletter, and forums for our ambassadors. All are welcome to be part of our network: https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/digitalgrassroots
OUR FRIENDS

MENTORS
ORGANIZATIONS
YOU
MENTORS HAVE BEEN THE BACKBONE OF ALL OUR PROGRAMS <3

Digital Grassroots has collaborated with at least 40 mentors in our 4 cohorts of the Ambassadors program. Whilst not all their images can be featured here, you can find out more in the Outcome Report of each cohort. Special thanks to all our wonderful mentors for volunteering 4 weeks of your time and expertise to us.
THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORTED US

INTERNET SOCIETY
Digital Grassroots grew out of Internet Society’s Youth@IGF program in 2017. Since then, Digital Grassroots has received a lot of support and guidance from Internet Society as well as its chapters across the globe. The dedication of the Internet Society team is impeccable. Special shoutout to Alejandra Prieto of ISOC who has supported us since inception to date.

Youth Observatory has become a committed ally to the collective work we do to engage more young people in internet governance.

MOZILLA
The open and distributed leadership model that has allowed Digital Grassroots to thrive is thanks to Mozilla Open Leaders program we took as a team in 2018. Since then, we have gone on to host Mozilla Sprints, facilitated Mozilla Festival, and are now launching Open Leaders X Open Campaigning for the Internet Health Report.

INTERNET FREEDOM FESTIVAL
Internet Freedom Festival came at a pivotal time in our growth as a youth initiative. Digital Grassroots President being selected as an IFF Community Development fellow connected us to the wider community fighting against surveillance and censorship. The IFF is a strong ally for grassroots and frontline defenders.
OUR AWARDS

+ TEAM ACHIEVEMENTS
Our work has been highlighted by our allies:


**Our Team:**
- Vice President Uffa Modey for Eko Konnect Award [for supporting Nigerian School of Internet Governance.] July 2019. Lagos, Nigeria.
- Wathagi Ndungu Volunteer of the Year Award 2018.
- Rebecca Ryakitimbo received an award from the Ministry of Women's Affairs for her work in Tanzania, 2017.

Awards are nice but we are more proud of effective work we have achieved through collaboration and open leadership.
We present this to

EILEEN CEJAS

for the development of the MOST INCLUSIVE PROJECT in the Creating Networks Projects Competition organized by the Youth Observatory
**CONCEPT**

I just love the concept of this community leaders program and kudos to the organisers and brains behind it. I know how hard it is to organize such an activity online and DIGRA nailed it. Congrats for the Job well done. (Ruth)

**RESPONSIVE**

If I had the opportunity to do this again, I would jump right in. The communication level on your side is on another level. The responses were prompt and I never had any frustrations during my training. Kudos to the team. (Kholofelo)

**INCLUSIVE**

The Ambassadors program is very rich and inclusive for youth. I would like to thank and congratulate the whole team. This program is complete because it addresses many important topics. (Ibrahim)

**LEARNING**

As a mentor, meeting a group of young, interested and curious people who want to make the difference in Internet Governance working for a safer and better internet has been a great experience. I’ve learned a lot from them all. (Federica)

**MENTOR**

My mentor (in the Ambassadors Program) provided me with intensive articles on becoming active in global internet security, governance and using internet to bring peace and support my community as a youth. (Victor)

**INITIATIVE**

Kudos on the entire initiative and program, it is much better than some long running, big budget fellowship or programs in this field. I’d definitely recommend another IG expert to become a mentor in the program! (Su Sonia)

**COMMUNITY**

The community engagement activities gave me the opportunity to make impact in my community by creating awareness on Internet Governance and I found it very interesting to interact with people. (Mpieri)

**ADVENTUROUS**

The program is delightful and adventurous as it made me reach out to my friends, family members and even strangers in my community and get their perception. Also, it strengthened my bond with them. (Olalekan)
CREDITS

The Digital Grassroots Year Book is a collection of the efforts and hard work of young people featured here and our allies who have supported us in the background.

We dedicate this book to all the young people who want to create a positive change in their community and are using the internet to do just that. Our work is not possible without the daring group of young people who put their heart, youth, and skills into DIGRA.

SPECIAL SHOUTOUT

Content Developer: Eileen Cejas
Design and Editor: Esther Mwema
Images: Digital Grassroots family

FUNDING

The book has been supported by funding provided by the Internet Society for Digital Grassroots. Team DIGRA also made contributions to make this book possible.
'We work with youth to address internet issues in their communities...'

WWW.DIGITALGRASSROOTS.ORG