Digital Grassroots Ambassadors Program (Community Edition) Toolkit
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Welcome

Welcome to the Digital Grassroots Ambassadors Program (Community Edition) Toolkit! This guide is here to help you make a difference in your community. It's all about empowering people to bring positive change to underserved areas worldwide. Our program shows how digital skills, empowerment, and community involvement can make a real difference. With this toolkit, you'll have everything you need to kickstart this movement in your own community.
The Digital Grassroots Ambassadors Program originated from the belief that everyone should have access to digital literacy and the internet. Initially, Digital Grassroots engaged trainers from its community and invited applications to enhance the skills of individuals in underrepresented groups, bridging the digital and gender gap and promoting inclusive participation in internet governance.

The Community Edition of the Digital Grassroots Ambassadors Program aims to extend this vision and replicate its success in various communities. We understand that each community has its own unique challenges and opportunities. This toolkit provides a flexible roadmap, allowing you to tailor the program to the specific needs and characteristics of your community.

The key difference between the community edition and the standard edition lies in the involvement of trainers and their communities. In the community edition, trainers are responsible for selecting interested participants from their communities to participate in the program. They determine the selection process and finalize the list of participants who will engage in the DIGRA program. This marks a departure from the past, where trainers were selected by Digital Grassroots without much knowledge of their trainees.
Program Objectives

- Enhance the digital rights and Internet Governance knowledge and skills of youth and adolescents.
- Foster youth and adolescent inclusion in the Internet Governance sphere.
- Promote digital literacy and inclusion among community members to enhance participation in the digital space.
- Expand the network of digital ambassadors and encourage participation in community engagement projects related to Internet governance.
- Raise awareness of digital rights and Internet governance among youths aged 14 to 29 years.
- Facilitate collaborative partnerships among various stakeholders in the digital space.
Why Replicate the Program?

**Digital Empowerment**
In today's digital-centric world, having digital literacy is crucial for personal and community advancement. By replicating the program, we equip individuals with the necessary skills to succeed in the digital era.

**Community Development**
This initiative extends beyond teaching digital skills; it fosters community cohesion. It creates a sense of belonging, encourages collaboration, and aligns communities towards a shared vision of progress.

**Inclusivity**
Making digital literacy accessible to underserved communities is essential for bridging the digital divide. Replicating the program ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the digital revolution, leaving no one behind.

**Inspiration and Leadership**
Through this program, we nurture digital leaders who serve as catalysts for positive change. These leaders inspire others and drive impactful transformations within their communities.
The program is designed for individuals with a solid understanding of internet governance who want to equip members of their communities to participate in the program. The emphasis is on fostering community ownership.

Prerequisites for Trainers:

1. Adequate knowledge of Digital Rights and Internet Governance.
2. Affiliation as Digital Grassroots Ambassadors.
3. Involvement in a community with a strong connection.
4. Demonstrated leadership and social skills.
5. Proficiency in virtual literacy training.
6. Ability to navigate various digital platforms, including meeting (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, Zoho, etc.) and e-learning platforms.
7. Willingness to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure smooth program implementation.
8. Openness to teamwork, collaborative reporting, and real-time communication.
9. Effective communication with trainees and support team at Digital Grassroots.
10. Commitment to fulfilling contractual obligations.
Trainers play a crucial role in identifying and selecting individuals eager to enhance their skills through our program. Building a strong community network is key to attracting participants. They are to focus on;

**Online course phase:** During the online course phase, trainees engage in self-paced learning modules on Moodle. Additionally, they participate in weekly touch base meetings with trainers, fostering idea-sharing and updates.

**Community engagement projects:** Community engagement projects provide a platform for collaboration among trainees, enabling them to work on projects benefiting both themselves and their communities. This collaboration fosters enduring relationships beyond the program's duration.

**Training duration, timelines and assignments/weekly activities:** Our training program features clear timelines and assignments, enhancing trainee participation. Trainers monitor progress and engage with trainees in real-time discussions on module topics, which are designed to address fundamental digital and internet governance issues in an easily understandable manner.
To effectively identify and recruit potential participants for our program, trainers must adhere to the following steps:

- **Perform a Training Needs Analysis (TNA):** Before reaching out to potential participants, conduct a thorough analysis of their training needs within the target communities. This helps in prioritizing and tailoring the program accordingly.

- **Conduct Pre-course Assessments:** Gain deeper insights into potential participants by conducting pre-course assessments. This step aids in shortlisting candidates based on their specific needs and level of commitment.

- **Assess Basic Literacy Levels:** Evaluate the basic literacy levels of prospective participants. Determine their ability to read, write, and access the internet, as our program primarily operates online.

- **Check Availability and Flexibility:** Ensure that potential participants have flexible schedules to accommodate program requirements. This includes active engagement in online discussions, task completion, community projects, and weekly meetings.
Participant Recruitment

- **Establish Requirements**: Define specific criteria for participants:

  1. **Age**: Participants must be between 14-29 years old.
  2. **Connectivity**: Access to broadband internet and an internet-enabled device is essential for virtual participation.
  3. **Passion for Digital Literacy**: Prospective participants should demonstrate enthusiasm for digital literacy and a commitment to applying acquired knowledge within their communities.
  4. **Community Membership**: Participants should belong to the trainer’s community, whether physical or online.
  5. **Commitment**: Emphasize the importance of passion and commitment throughout the program duration.
Here’s a breakdown of how the program will unfold:

**Phase 1: Onboarding and Trainee Registrations (2 weeks):** During this phase, selected community trainers will undergo a comprehensive onboarding process to prepare them for training their community members. Trainers will also be responsible for encouraging their community members to register for the Internet Literacy Course on our course site.

**Phase 2: Online Course Phase (4 weeks):** For the next four weeks, trainees will engage in the Internet Literacy online coursework, specifically designed to address key internet and digital rights issues within local communities.

**Phase 3: Mentorship Phase (3 weeks):** In the final phase, trainees will participate in a three-week mentorship program with a mentor, focusing on youth participation in Internet Governance.

- **Duration:** The program spans 9 weeks, including 2 weeks for onboarding, 4 weeks for the online course, and 3 weeks for the mentorship phase.
- **Cohort Schedule:** While Cohort 6 was a one-time occurrence for the community edition, subsequent editions will operate on a rolling basis throughout the year.

**Trainer Guidelines:**

Trainers are expected to adhere strictly to the course timeline and complete activities and tasks promptly. This ensures the smooth progression of the program and the optimal learning experience for all participants.
Communication is key in ensuring the success of our program, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) play a vital role in achieving our goals. Trainers are encouraged to prioritize and integrate M&E practices throughout the program.

To facilitate effective implementation, we provide trainers with specific tools and templates designed for the M&E process. These tools include a score sheet for weekly trainee monitoring. At the end of each week, trainers are required to complete these score sheets and utilize all provided templates.

Furthermore, trainers are expected to actively oversee their trainees’ progress, extending this responsibility into the mentorship phase. It’s essential for trainers to monitor and evaluate their trainees consistently throughout the program, ensuring their success.

Weekly monitoring and evaluation are crucial components of our approach. By utilizing the M&E tools and approaches provided, we can track progress effectively and support trainees in reaching their full potential.
1. **Participant Information Management**: Trainers are responsible for efficiently gathering participant information, including names and contact details, during selection and registration processes.

2. **Virtual Platform Selection**: Choose a reliable virtual platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams for hosting training sessions. Clearly communicate technology requirements, including internet speed and device specifications, to participants.

3. **Guidance on Virtual Tools**: Provide guidance or training on virtual tools like Moodle to ensure necessary resources are easily accessible on online platforms.

4. **Engagement Strategies**: Implement engagement strategies to keep participants actively involved, utilizing features such as polls, chat, and breakout rooms.

5. **Technical Support**: Ensure technical support is readily available during virtual sessions. Conduct pre-session checks to address any participant issues and record sessions for those needing material review or unable to attend in real-time.

6. **Consideration of Time Zones**: When scheduling sessions, consider participants’ time zones to ensure they are reasonable for all involved.

7. **Feedback Mechanism**: Establish a virtual feedback mechanism to actively gather input from participants on the effectiveness of the virtual training.
1. **Audience Identification:** Our primary audience comprises youth aged 14-29 who are passionate about internet governance, digital literacy, and activism. Additionally, we will target organizations that work closely with youth, internet governance experts, mentors, and media outlets.

2. **Communication Channels:** We will leverage various online platforms including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, online communities, public campaigns, and targeted email outreach. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of offline engagement and will host events at universities, community centers, and collaborate with local organizations to extend our reach.

3. **Messaging:** Our messaging will focus on highlighting the tangible benefits of participating in the program, including knowledge acquisition, skill development, and societal impact. We will share inspiring stories, emphasize inclusivity and diversity, and communicate in clear and straightforward language to resonate with our audience.

4. **Additional Strategies:** To enhance our communication efforts, we will incorporate visual elements, establish strategic partnerships, monitor outcomes to track progress, and stay informed about emerging trends and opportunities. It is imperative that we maintain authenticity, responsiveness, and consistency across all our communication channels.

In addition to the outlined strategies, we will implement email campaigns, engage in media outreach activities, and foster peer-to-peer advocacy to further amplify our message. Furthermore, we will continuously assess and refine our strategies to ensure ongoing enhancement and effectiveness.
Success Stories and Best Practices

During Cohort 6, we witnessed remarkable success stories and identified best practices that fueled our community's growth. Here's what worked well:

1. **Diverse Community Engagement:** Members from various professional and educational backgrounds came together, finding common ground and forging valuable connections throughout the program.

2. **Accessible Content:** Our module content was easily accessible, streamlining the learning journey for both trainers and trainees, thus optimizing the use of resources.

3. **Supplementary Resources:** The supplementary materials in the reference section proved invaluable, offering deeper insights into covered topics and enhancing the learning experience.

4. **Interactive Zoom Meetings:** Weekly Zoom sessions between trainers and trainees provided an interactive platform for updates, discussions, and feedback. These sessions facilitated progress tracking, adaptability assessment, and shared experiences among participants.

5. **Breakout Room Engagement:** Utilizing breakout rooms fostered intimate interactions among trainees, enabling one-on-one engagement virtually and fostering meaningful connections. This approach contributed significantly to the sense of community within the program.

6. **Community Edition Benefits:** The Community edition facilitated smoother interactions between trainers and trainees by creating a familiar environment, thus fostering a relaxed and conducive learning space.
To successfully replicate the Digital Grassroots Ambassador Program - Community Edition, you'll need the following resources:

**Human Resources:**
- **Trainers:** Ambassadors and experienced trainers knowledgeable in digital literacy, internet governance, grassroots organizing, and community engagement.
- **Mentors:** Seasoned professionals willing to mentor and support program participants.
- **Program Coordinator:** An individual in charge of day-to-day program management, including recruitment, logistics, and communication.
- **Technical Support:** Someone skilled in setting up and managing online platforms and tools.

**Material Resources:**
- **Training Materials:** Curriculum, manuals, and other resources to facilitate program delivery.
- **Technology:** Computers, internet access, and online platforms for training, communication, and collaboration.
- **Marketing and Outreach Materials:** Brochures, flyers, and online content to promote the program.

The material resources will be provided by the Digital Grassroots team.
At the core of nurturing active involvement within the Digital Grassroots (DIGRA) community lies the role of our trainers. They play a crucial part in encouraging engagement, highlighting its benefits, and sharing success stories. To achieve these goals, we employ a range of strategies:

1. **Highlighting Benefits**: Trainers emphasize the advantages of engagement, fostering a sense of belonging through ice-breaker activities and open discussions.

2. **Regular Updates**: Keeping the community informed about activities, events, and opportunities through frequent updates is vital for sustaining engagement.

3. **Virtual Platforms**: Utilizing virtual meetups and webinars creates opportunities for interaction and knowledge-sharing among community members.

4. **Collaborative Projects and Mentorship**: Encouraging collaborative projects and mentorship programs promotes teamwork and connects participants with experienced community members.

5. **Professional Development**: Demonstrating the importance of engagement in professional development is essential for maintaining involvement.

6. **Online Forums and Social Media**: Establishing online forums or social media channels encourages discussions and resource-sharing, with trainers actively participating to demonstrate their value.
7. **Recognition System:** Acknowledging and celebrating active contributors through a recognition system further motivates engagement.

8. **Feedback Mechanism:** Implementing a feedback mechanism allows trainers to understand participants’ experiences and gather suggestions for improvement, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

9. **Alumni Engagement:** Trainers play a crucial role in fostering ongoing connections and collaboration among program alumni, promoting networking, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing opportunities. They create avenues for alumni to interact, learn, and collaborate on projects, cultivating a strong alumni network that leads to increased career opportunities, personal growth, and positive contributions to the broader community.
Recruitment and Engagement:

**Challenge:**
Attracting a diverse pool of participants while ensuring sustained engagement can be difficult. Balancing the needs of individuals with different backgrounds and expertise levels adds complexity to this task.

**Solution:**
1. Targeted outreach efforts will encompass underserved and underrepresented groups.
2. Promotion will be diversified across community organizations, social media platforms, and local media outlets.
3. Interactive activities will be designed to cater to the varied interests of participants.
4. A supportive environment will be fostered by facilitating connections among participants, mentors, and subject matter experts.

Program Delivery and Logistics:

**Challenge:**
Effective program delivery and logistical coordination demand careful attention.

**Solution:**
1. Needs assessments will be conducted to tailor programs to local contexts.
2. A variety of teaching methods will be employed to accommodate diverse learning styles.
3. Ongoing feedback and support mechanisms will be provided throughout the program duration.
4. Technology will be leveraged to facilitate enhanced collaboration and learning experiences.

Communication and Expectation Management:

Challenge:
Inconsistent communication with the Digital Grassroots team has led to confusion and difficulty managing expectations. Rushed messages hinder the ability to address situations beyond immediate control.

Solution:
1. Establish clear communication protocols and channels for all team members.
2. Implement regular check-ins and updates to ensure everyone is on the same page.
3. Provide training or resources to improve communication skills within the team.
4. Prioritize clarity and transparency in all communications to avoid misunderstandings.

Participant Completion Rates:

Challenge:
Some trainees are unable to complete the program due to personal reasons like illness and time constraints.
Challenges and Mitigation

Solution:
1. Offer flexibility in program timelines and schedules to accommodate participants' personal commitments.
2. Provide individualized support and encouragement to those facing challenges.
3. Explore options for remote participation or asynchronous learning to make the program more accessible.
4. Foster a supportive community where participants feel comfortable seeking help and sharing their experiences.
My journey as a digital literacy corp working with the DIGRA Community Edition (Cohort 6) has been a transformative experience. Initially, identifying suitable trainees posed a challenge, but by selecting a community of literate individuals with a background in internet literacy, I ensured a more effective training process. This approach also facilitated the dissemination of knowledge to communities in need, as evidenced by the diverse community projects chosen by the trainees.

Engaging the trainees was a process. We tackled internet-related issues specific to Kenya, acknowledging the diverse challenges faced in our country. A collaborative approach fostered by peer learning and weekly group meetings enhanced understanding and impact. The self-paced learning empowered the trainees to manage their schedules while fostering deeper connections through Zoom breakout rooms. Virtual interaction strengthened the bonds between these potential ambassadors, especially during the development of their community engagement projects. Teamwork, though challenging at times, led to the blossoming of transformative and executable ideas.

Interacting with the trainees was both rewarding and challenging. Addressing various internet-related issues and acknowledging the diverse challenges faced in my country required a collaborative approach. Through peer learning and weekly group meetings, we were able to achieve a greater impact. The self-paced learning and flexible scheduling of weekly engagements allowed for a deeper experience, especially during virtual interactions.
Despite the challenges, the journey has been immensely fulfilling. It has enabled me to harness my leadership abilities, deepen my understanding of internet literacy and governance, and expand my network. Working with diverse individuals has taught me patience and the importance of accommodating different learning paces. While there were challenges, such as a lower-than-expected participation rate, I believe that the impact of this training intervention will be felt for generations to come.

Being an ambassador trainee in a previous cohort, I can attest that this program offers more than just certification. It provides an opportunity for career development, networking, and digital literacy enhancement. I am confident that the passion and drive of the DIGRA team and program participants will lead to tangible success stories, ultimately creating a more internet-friendly and digitally literate continent.

Haria Abdulrahman Wakili

My role as a trainer in the Digital Grassroots Ambassador Program Cohort 6 (Community Edition) has provided me with a unique perspective on community engagement and collaboration. Working with digital rights champions from diverse backgrounds has been both fascinating and rewarding. Witnessing the participants’ passion and enthusiasm for leveraging digital literacy to drive change in their communities has been truly inspiring. Despite their different perspectives and experiences, they are united by a common goal, which is evident in their collaboration and shared ideas.
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Somtochukwu Ugwu

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Organizing and facilitating weekly meetings and discussions has improved my speaking and writing skills significantly.

However, one of the major setbacks has been that not all my trainees completed the program. Some faced challenges such as illness, fatigue, and time constraints, leading them to opt out. Despite my efforts to encourage them through private calls and messages, I had to respect their decisions. Additionally, inconsistent communication with the Digital Grassroots team posed challenges, leaving us unsure about expectations and feeling rushed. Managing these setbacks was difficult, as they were beyond my control.