Annual Report

2024

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WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to those who have contributed to the success of Zaina Foundation's mission of promoting digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania. We welcome you to read our annual report which highlights the progress we have made in promoting the state of digital rights and inclusion throughout 2024. We are grateful to our partners, supporters, and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make our programs and initiatives reality.

We extend our deepest appreciation to our donors whose generosity has enabled us to reach more individuals and communities in need. Your support has made a significant impact on the lives of many, and we are honored to have your trust and partnership.

We also want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff and board members who have played a critical role in development and implementation of our programs. Your commitment to our goals and vision has been instrumental in achieving our mission and making a positive difference in our country.

We also want to recognize the communities we serve, including women human rights defenders, journalists, marginalized women, students, activists, lawyers, advocates for digital rights and people with disabilities. Your resilience, strength and determination inspire us every day to continue our work and strive for a more just and equitable world. Thank you for your support and partnership. We look forward to continuing our journey together towards a brighter future for all.

As we embark to a new year, 2025, we are looking forward to a productive and successful journey prioritizing advocacy for internet freedom; advocacy for ending online gender-based violence (OGBV); advocacy for women participation in elections; and policy reforms on digital rights and inclusion focusing on EPOCA regulation of 2022, MSA (2016), PDPA (2022), and Cybercrime act (2015).

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Zaituni Njovu
Executive Director - Zaina Foundation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zaina Foundation continues with its efforts focused on promoting digital rights and inclusion for women in Tanzania. In 2024, Zaina Foundation made significant progress in advancing its mission and vision. The key highlights from this reporting period include:

Training and convening:
» Conducted digital security training sessions for 15 women journalists in the Kilimanjaro region, equipping them with skills to navigate online spaces safely.
» Conducted a digital security empowerment event for 30 rural women in Bagamoyo District, raising awareness about digital rights and online safety.
» Conducted a comprehensive internet shutdown training for 20 women internet shutdown fellows from 8 regions across Tanzania.
» Hosted a Media Policy Advocacy Workshop in Dar es Salaam region.
» Conducted a Digital Security Training for Women Journalists in Pemba, Zanzibar, Mwanza and Iringa.
» Collaborated with Access Now and Tech & Media Convergency to conduct a virtual internet shutdown workshop for the Tanzania digital rights coalition members.

Digital rights clubs:
» Conducted two digital rights clubs' sessions at Kondo Secondary School and one session at Pwani Secondary School in Dar es Salaam region.

Advocacy Efforts:
» Spearheaded a social media campaign on internet freedom, recruiting and training a team of Internet Shutdown Fellows to advocate for internet freedom around elections.
» Consolidated the recommendations for key reforms to the Media Services Act No. 5 of 2016 as amended in 2023 and presented them to the policy makers.

Fostered understanding about the Tanzania Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) No. 11 of 2022 and its Regulations among the Tanzania digital rights coalition members in partnership with Paradigm Initiative and Amnesty Kenya.

Media Engagement:
» Secured media coverage through interviews, articles, and social media campaigns to amplify digital rights issues and sensitize the public.

Collaborative work:
» Collaborated and partnered with diverse stakeholders, including government, civil society, media, journalists, and activists, to leverage expertise and drive collective action on digital rights.

This report demonstrates Zaina Foundation's persistent commitment and multi-dimensional approach to empowering women, enhancing digital literacy, and dismantling barriers to digital inclusion in Tanzania. Moving forward, the organization aims to further strengthen its efforts in promoting the state of digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Zaina Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which was founded in 2017 and registered under the NGO's Act of 2002 with the aim of promoting digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania. Zaina Foundation was also registered in Zanzibar in 2022 according to the Society Act No 6 of 1995. Our mission is to create safe spaces for women online while ensuring adherence to digital rights. We do envision a world where digital rights for women are protected and respected through advocacy on internet freedom, digital security skills, policy reforms, collaborations, workshops and convening.

Our Objectives Encompass:

Promotion of digital rights and inclusion: This objective focuses on advocating for the protection of fundamental rights in the digital realm, such as privacy, freedom of expression, and access to information. Through awareness campaigns, policy engagement, and capacity-building initiatives, we work to ensure that women have equitable access to digital technologies and opportunities.

Advocacy on internet freedom: Our advocacy efforts aim to safeguard internet freedom by advocating for policies and regulations at local, national, and international levels that promote digital rights including an open, secure, accessible and affordable internet.

We engage with policymakers, industry stakeholders, and civil society to advocate for laws and practices that protect online freedoms, combat censorship, and prevent digital rights violations.

Educating at-risk women on digital security:

This objective focuses on empowering at-risk women and women human rights defenders with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and securely. Through targeted digital security programs and workshops, we provide training on digital security, privacy protection, and online harassment prevention. By addressing the unique challenges faced by at-risk women, we aim to enhance their digital literacy and empower them to participate safely in the digital society.

Localization and translation of digital tools and contents in Swahili language: We work towards making digital tools and content accessible to Swahili-speaking communities by localizing and translating relevant resources into the Swahili language. This initiative aims to bridge language barriers and promote digital inclusion among Swahili-speaking populations including women, thereby enabling greater access to information and opportunities in the digital age.

This progressive report covers the period from January 2024 to November 2024. During this time, Zaina Foundation has made significant progress in advancing its mission and objectives in promoting digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania.

2. TRAININGS AND CONVENINGS

• From January up to November, 2024 Zaina Foundation organized and conducted Digital Security Training for 75 Women Journalists in Kilimanjaro, Pemba, Mwanza, Iringa and Mtwara regions. This comprehensive training equipped participants with deep skills, practical and knowledge for secure navigation of the digital landscape, addressing the escalating challenges and threats faced by women journalists. The training utilized dynamic and interactive methodologies, integrating hands-on exercises, case studies, and peer-to-peer learning sessions.

Topics covered included device hygiene, online safety, multimedia and networking, countering online gender-based violence (OGBV), and mobile safety. Practical sessions involved checking device hygiene, installing password managers, social engineering, email security and secure communications. Participants actively engaged in discussions and shared real-life OGBV incidents, proposing solutions collaboratively.

The key takeaway included the importance of continuous learning opportunities and meaningful inclusion of women journalists in technology. Moving forward, Zaina Foundation aims to further empower women journalists by providing ongoing support and fostering a supportive community for digital security awareness and advocacy in Tanzania.

The Executive Director – Ms. Zaituni Njovu, facilitating the digital security training in Kilimanjaro region

- On March 6, 2024, Zaina Foundation commemorated International Women's Day by hosting a digital security empowerment event for 30 rural women in Kiromo ward, Bagamoyo District in Pwani region. The purpose was to raise awareness about digital rights and equip marginalized women with skills to navigate the digital platforms safely. The event covered topics such as secure communications, protection against online harassment, and leveraging technology in daily activities.

Participants highlighted the importance of digital literacy in combating online gender-based violence (OGBV) and leveraging technology for business and social connectivity. As Zaina Foundation continues to bridge the digital divide and fostering inclusion, further sensitization on digital rights, inclusion and establishing community labs for connecting women in digital platforms stand to be among our key priorities.

One of the participants responding to a question during the IWD commemoration event with women from Kiromo ward

- Zaina Foundation organized a comprehensive Internet shutdown training in April, 2024, for 20 women activists as part of advocacy activities on Internet Freedom awareness in Tanzania. Internet Shutdown Fellowship in a year-long program under Zaina Foundation supported by Access Now. In this project 20 women activists were selected from 8 regions in Tanzania to advocate for Internet Shutdown not to happen ahead of local government and presidential elections in Tanzania both 2024 and 2025. Activities included in this project: Capacity building on scenarios of Internet shutdown, online campaign on Internet freedom in Tanzania during election period, write open letter to government to hold them accountable to ensure open and free access of Internet throughout elections period in Tanzania, Connect community in Tanzania with tools teams in order for them to get access to circumvention technology include Virtual Private Network (VPN) these tools will support them to bypass censorship in case Internet shutdown happen.

- Zaina Foundation implementing the Internet Shutdown project (Predict, Prepare, Prevent, Respond to Internet shutdown ahead of elections in Tanzania 2024/2025), Zaina Foundation has been hosting virtual monthly meetings with 20 fellows from 8 regions across Tanzania. These fellows are actively engaging in the internet freedom campaign through social media platforms. The meetings serve as the means for strengthening the capacity of fellows to enhance their internet freedom advocacy plans, performing network measurement using Open Observatory for Network Interference (OONI) tool and documenting the impact of internet shutdown.

Internet shutdown fellows doing group presentation on the role of civil society organizations in responding to internet shutdown incidences

- In May, 2024, Zaina Foundation hosted a Media Policy Advocacy Workshop at the Four Points by Sheraton in Dar es Salaam region along with commemorating the 31st World Press Freedom Day. The event drew participation from 19 individuals, including journalists, legal experts, and policy analysts, with a notable representation of 15 females and 4 males. The objective of the workshop was to empower participants with insights into recent amendments to the Media Services Act No. 5 of 2016, passed by the Tanzanian parliament in June 2023. Through presentations and group discussions, attendees explored the implications of these amendments on press freedom and freedom of expression in Tanzania. They collaborated to analyze and identify critical sections for reform, drawing from recommendations by the East African Court of Justice. The workshop concluded with presentations from participant groups, outlining recommendations for key reforms to the Media Services Act No. 5 of 2016 as amended in 2023. These recommendations, along with the analysis of the amendments, serves as the foundation for Zaina Foundation's advocacy tool.

Zaina Foundation's Policy Analyst - Mr. Kahale presenting the key sections of the MSA that needs amendment

- Towards the local government 2024 and 2025 presidential elections in Tanzania, Zaina Foundation organized and conducted a Digital Security Training for 20 at risk Women Journalists from Pemba to strengthen their security knowledge and skills on the digital landscape challenges and appropriate use of multimedia to disseminate information in the digital age.

The training took place at Hotel Verde for two days from June, 2024. The primary goal was to raise awareness about specific digital security risks and vulnerabilities affecting women journalists. Moreover, the training delivered practical strategies and tools for ensuring safety online for women journalists, and fostering a supportive community for women journalists in Zanzibar to share their experiences and best practices in their work.
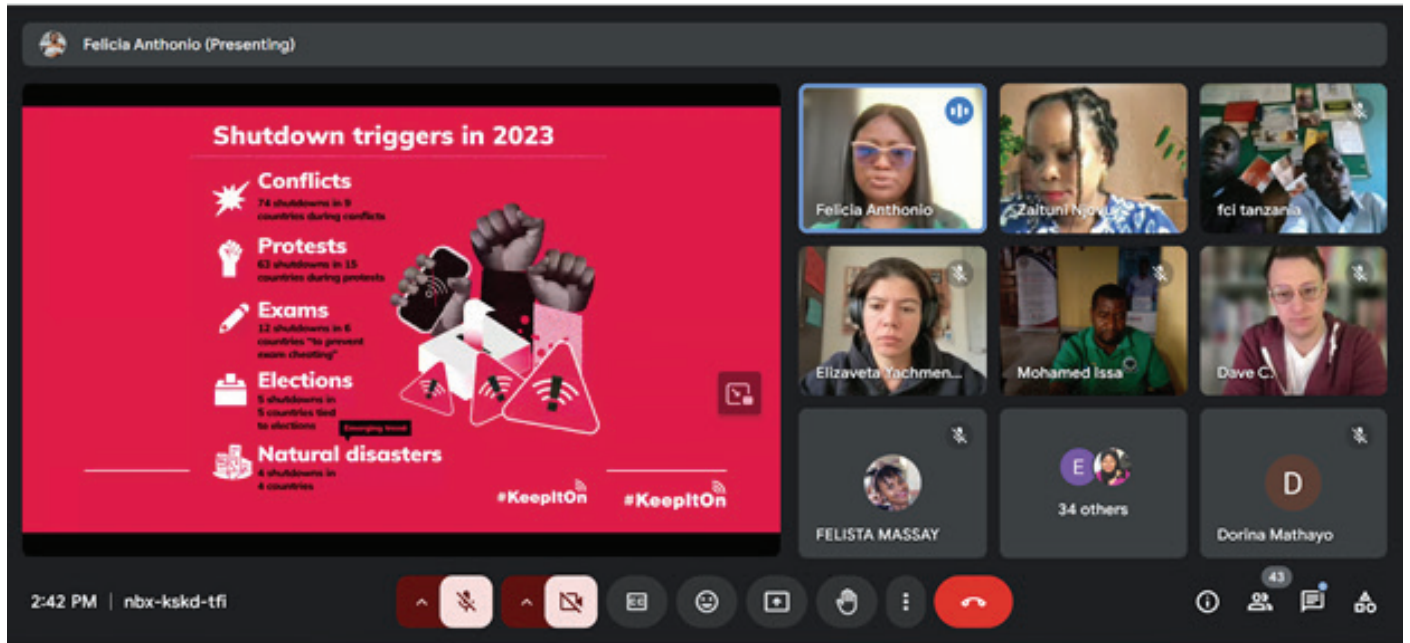

Cross-section of participants doing a table-top exercise for drafting an online safety plan

On November 5, 2024, Access Now in collaboration with #KeepItOn coalition partners in Tanzania, Zaina Foundation and Tech & Media Convergency (TMC) conducted a virtual workshop focused on increasing awareness on understanding about internet shutdowns, network measurements and use of circumvention technology to journalists, activists and election observers from Tanzania Digital Rights Coalition under Zaina Foundation. The workshop engaged more than 50 participants in identifying, monitoring and reporting internet shutdowns ahead of local government elections on November 27, 2024.

With increasing incidents of internet shutdowns in Tanzania and around the world during critical periods like elections, protests, political instability, and during national examinations. The workshop was intended to strengthen digital rights coalition members with skills and capacity to advocate for internet freedom during upcoming elections, document censorship and bypass shutdown in case it happens in Tanzania. This workshop is an impact of Zaina Foundation's project on predicting, preparing and responding to Internet Shutdowns in Tanzania.

Participants engaging during the online meeting

3. DIGITAL RIGHTS CLUBS

Zaina Foundation continues implementations of Digital Rights Clubs program in Tanzania since January 2024. Until November the foundation reached 820 from 5 schools in Dar es salaam and Arusha regions. In these clubs' students were empowered with knowledge and skills to address online gender-based violence (OGBV), Emerging Technologies including Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and online safety.

Students participating in Q & A session

- Also, Zaina Foundation conducted a session on the importance of internet and internet safety at Pwani Primary School in Dar es salaam region. We empowered 50 young people aged between 10 and 17 with the knowledge necessary for responsible internet use including understanding privacy, identifying online risks, and practicing ethical behavior online. Moreover, we emphasized the role of parents in keeping children's online experiences positive and safe by emphasizing the children to use the internet under the guidance of the parents or guardians. These efforts aim to ensure that children enjoy the positive impacts of the internet while staying safe online.

- In November 2024, Zaina Foundation hosted a digital rights club session at Kondo Secondary School that empowered 60 students between the ages of 12 and 18 with the knowledge and skills on integration of IT in learning. In a world where the internet has become an infrastructure in daily activities including education and learning, it is crucial to prepare these young people with the skills to navigate the internet safely and responsibly. The session focused on three key areas including the benefits of the internet in learning; the internet resources that can be used in learning and the challenges of using the internet in learning. Through this initiative, Zaina Foundation envisions to build a generation of knowledgeable and responsible digital citizens who can stand up for their rights and the rights of others, thereby contributing to a healthier and more inclusive digital society.

4. POLICY ADVOCACY

- In 2024 Zaina Foundation conducted policy workshops which focused on analyzing the legal frameworks regulating freedom of expression and rights to privacy in Tanzania including Data Protection Act No. 11 of 2022, Cyber Crime Act, 2015 and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2022, enhancing understanding of digital rights advocacy. Policy Advocacy is a priority area at Zaina Foundation

- As a result of the Media Policy Advocacy Workshop, Zaina Foundation consolidated the recommendations for key reforms to the Media Services Act No. 5 of 2016 as amended in 2023. These recommendations were presented by Zaina Foundation to the policy makers along with other ongoing efforts to advocate for recommended reforms.

- In October, 2024, Zaina Foundation in partnership with Paradigm Initiative and Amnesty Kenya organized a Digital Policy Engagement Series (DiPES) workshop held at Hyatt Regency, the Kilimanjaro Hotel in Dar es Salaam region. This workshop engaged the digital rights coalition members to foster their understanding about the Tanzania Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) No. 11 of 2022 and its Regulations; The Data Protection (Collecting and Processing of of Personal Data) Regulations GN; 349 of 2023 and the Data Protection (Complaints Handling Procedure) Regulations GN; 350 of 2023. The workshop intended also to empower the Tanzania digital rights coalition with the knowledge and skills to advocate for the necessary reforms needed on personal data protection laws in Tanzania as per global standards and good practice.

Mr. Tito Magoti doing an online presentation about the high court ruling on the Personal Data Protection Act No. 11 of 2022

5. MEDIA OUTREACH

On May 08, 2024, Zaina Foundation participated in a media session at Uhuru FM Radio and Wasafi Media and shared insights about advocacy initiative work on internet freedom and policy reform to improve digital rights environment in Tanzania where discussion centered around the critical role of media in advocating for internet freedom and solutions in ensuring digital rights are protected in Tanzania. These media sessions provided an opportunity to raise awareness among the Tanzania audience about the importance of preserving Internet freedom as a fundamental human right and the need for collaborative efforts to address issues such as internet shutdowns, policy gaps, and Online Gender Based Violence in Tanzania.

More importantly, Zaina Foundation has been engaging in social media/online campaign to advocate for internet freedom using and secure online communication for human rights defenders and at-risk communities using hashtags #DigitalRightstz and #KeepItOn. The campaign has reached over 10,000 people across platforms such as X, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and has also engaged over 2,000 individuals through blogs and websites.

6. COLLABORATIONS

The foundation continues collaborations with its strategic partners in Tanzania and outside Tanzania. Below are collaborations events involving Zaina Foundation:

- Zaina Foundation participated in the International Women's Day 2024 event organized by Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders (CWHRD) Tanzania in March 2024.

- Zaina Foundation met with the Program Manager from Jamii Forums (Ziada) to strategize on how we can collaborate in upcoming projects from both organizations. Zaina Foundation and Jamii Forums plan to apply for joint funding to strengthen digital rights coalition members from both sides.

- Another collaboration with the Independent National Electoral Committee (INEC) in providing voters education in Tanzania.

- ZF collaborated with Tech and Media Convergency to write an open letter to the government of the United Republic of Tanzania not to shut down the Internet during upcoming elections in Tanzania.

- Zaina Foundation collaborated with the United Nation office in Tanzania to conduct Peace and Security Training in Tanzania and ZF contributed on roles on Digital technology to enhance peace in Tanzania.

- ZF collaborated with Access Now, Tunnel Bear VPN, OONI and Tor Project to ensure Tanzania community access to the Internet throughout the election period.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS

a) Empowering women journalists: Through the digital security training, 75 women journalists in Kilimanjaro region and Pemba were successfully empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the digital landscape securely. By addressing specific challenges faced by women journalists, the program not only enhanced individual digital security but also contributed to the resilience and professionalism of the journalistic community.

b) Empowering Rural Women: Through the 2024 International Women's Day event, we successfully empowered 30 rural women in Kiromo ward at Bagamoyo District located in Pwani region with knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and effectively. By addressing digital literacy gaps, they gained confidence and capability to access information, services, and opportunities in the digital platforms.

c) Empowering Internet Shutdown Fellows: Zaina Foundation successfully trained 20 female internet shutdown fellows to serve as advocates for internet freedom in Tanzania. The training equipped fellows with practical skills and tools to detect, monitor, report, and circumvent internet shutdowns as well as social media advocacy strategies to raise awareness and advocate for internet freedom.

d) Empowering more than 40 participants who are journalists, activists and election observers in Tanzania on identifying, monitoring and reporting internet shutdowns ahead of local government elections on November 27, 2024. This workshop was a success as a result of Zaina Foundation's work in promoting internet freedom since the 2020 elections in Tanzania.

e) Zaina Foundation has successfully impacted 800+ young people aged between 10 to 18 at Primary School and Secondary School with the digital literacy skills for them to practice and protect their digital rights and those of others in online spaces.

f) Zaina Foundation successfully conducted an analysis of Media Services Act Act No. 5 of 2016; identifying critical sections for further reforms. This analysis has formed part of Zaina Foundation's advocacy tool for promoting media freedom in Tanzania. The tool is used to engage key policy makers to show the need for necessary reforms for improving freedom of expression and digital rights in Tanzania.

g) Zaina Foundation analysis of the Personal Data Protection Act No. 11 of 2022 and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2020 identified the key legal gaps with the laws. This analysis has formed part of Zaina Foundation's advocacy tool for reforms. Zaina Foundation will use the analysis to engage law makers to solicit reforms.

h) Zaina Foundation successfully conducted a social media advocacy campaign on internet freedom using and secure online communication and reached over 10,000 people across X, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and 2,000 people via blogs and websites.

i) Zaina Foundation was among 152 civil society organizations accredited by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to provide Voters Education during Biometric Voters Registration in Tanzania.

8. AWARDS

Zaina Foundation received the Award as the best NGO of the year 2023/2024. This award comes after great performance and good relations with other stakeholders around Tanzania. ZF received this award from Phide Entertainment and Tour Arusha.

9. CHALLENGES

(i) Inadequate resources to implement projects in a wider audience.

(ii) Draconian policies which infringe digital rights in Tanzania.

(iii) Lack of awareness on digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

(i)   Mobilize more resources to expand Zaina Foundation work in
         both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar.
(ii)   Continue to raise awareness on digital rights and inclusion in
         Tanzania.
(iii)   Formulate new partnerships and collaborations both at the local
         and international level.
(iv)   Build internal capacity building on fund raising skills.

11. CONCLUSION

Year 2024 has been marked by significant achievements in advancing Zaina Foundation's mission of promoting digital rights and inclusion in Tanzania. Through our programs and initiatives, we have empowered at risk women, enhanced organizations security, and dismantled barriers to digital inclusion in Tanzania. Our advocacy efforts have also been instrumental in raising awareness about digital rights issues, fostering dialogue, and driving policy reforms. From spearheading social media advocacy campaigns on internet freedom to organizing media policy advocacy meetings, digital policy engagement series and internet shutdown workshops, we have actively engaged with stakeholders to advocate for laws and practices that protect online freedoms and combat digital rights violations.

We thank all our partners, supporters and stakeholders in making sure we continue this work of defending Digital Rights and Inclusion in Tanzania.

Thank you.