Digital Inclusion:

Addressing the needs of Rural Communities in Malawi through the Digital Skills for All Approach

Presented by:
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Speaker profile

Wangiwe is a communication practitioner and business development professional. Through her passion towards youth and community development, she founded Mzuzu E-Hub currently working as the Managing Director. She was recognized as one of 2019s Meaningful Business 100 for successfully combining profit and purpose to help achieve the UN SDGs, SASA/Global Startup Awards 2019 Female Role Model of the year Malawi and 2018 Community Builder awardee under the Social Impact Incubator Malawi. She supported the 2019 Youth Decide Malawi Campaign as a Youth Manifesto Champion and was one of Malawi's youth delegates at the 2019 Model African Union and the World Youth Forum.

Wangiwe is a SEED BDS Advisor, African Women Entrepreneurship Cooperative (AWEC) alumni, #DOTYOUTH Street Team-Girls in ICT Alumni, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship Accelerator Program Alumni and Segal Family Foundation 2021/22 African Visionary Fellow. Wangiwe brings a pool of knowledge and expertise in organizational development from both corporate and development sectors towards enhancing socio-economic development.

Today's conversation…

- Digital Inclusion: What's the fuss about it?

- Why do we need digitalization?

- How can we make tech-driven change long lasting?

- How can we better collaborate towards effective digitalization?

- About the Digital Skills For All Project approach

- Case Study: Rumphi, Likoma and Chizumulu

- It's not always rosy: Gaps encountered

- Lessons Learnt

- Recommendations

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Digital Inclusion- Whats the fuss about it?
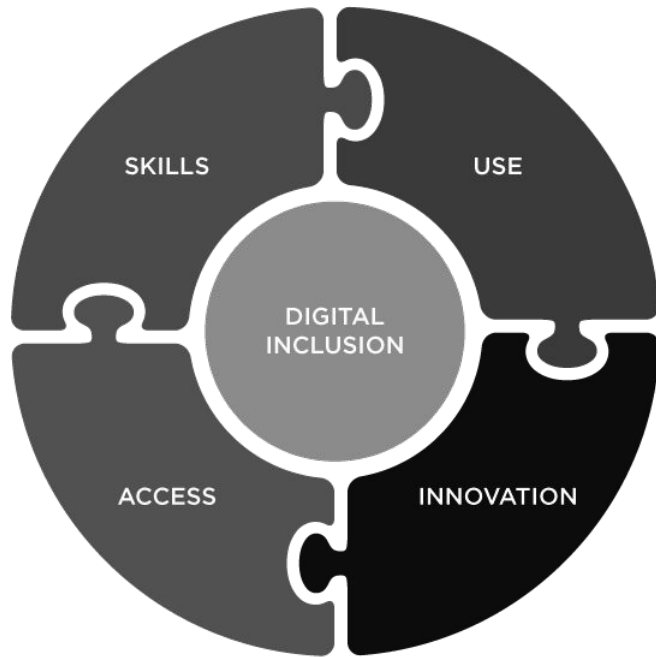
Digital Inclusion is defined as "equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere.

Why do we need digitalisation?

New "literacy"
The world and speed of economy/business change anyway

Scale
Wider reach/opportunities without physical boundaries

Optimization
Delivering the impacts to the right people, at the right time

It's not my area.
But we do need an expert
to catch up on the trends.

How can we make tech driven change long lasting?

Dynamics

Technology changes rapidly, at an exponentially pace

Adaptability

Continuous, iterative effort is key, going beyond one-shot resource/activity

Long-term perspective

Not just *NOW* but also for future generations

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We successfully completed an activity. Period.

How can we better collaborate towards effective digitalization?

Collaboration

    Learn and grow efficiently and effectively

Localization

    "Best practices" are context-dependent, so we need

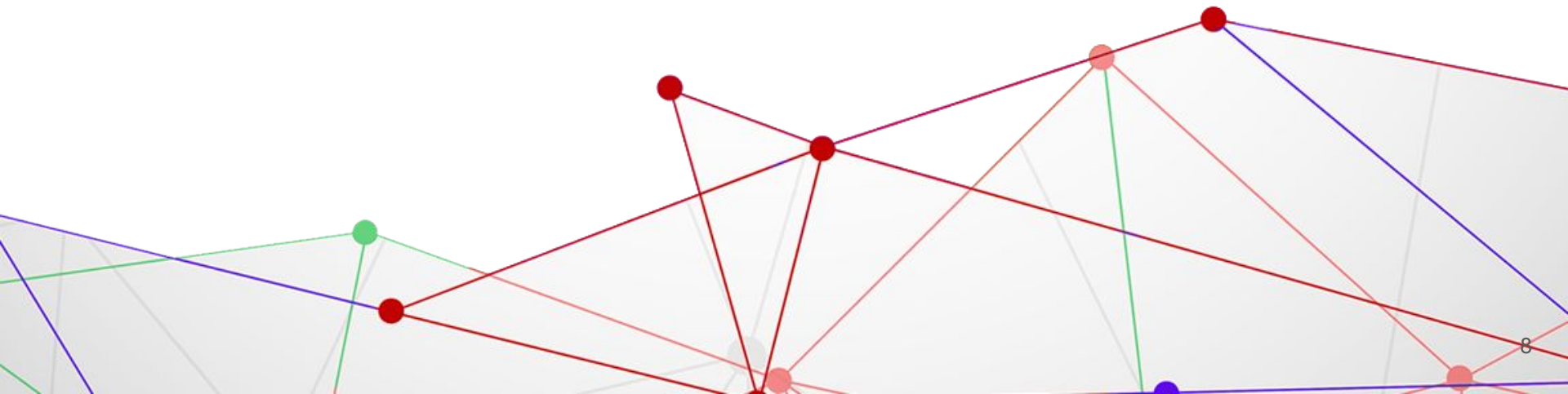   collective knowledge

Synergy

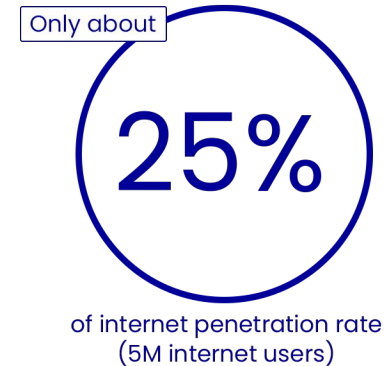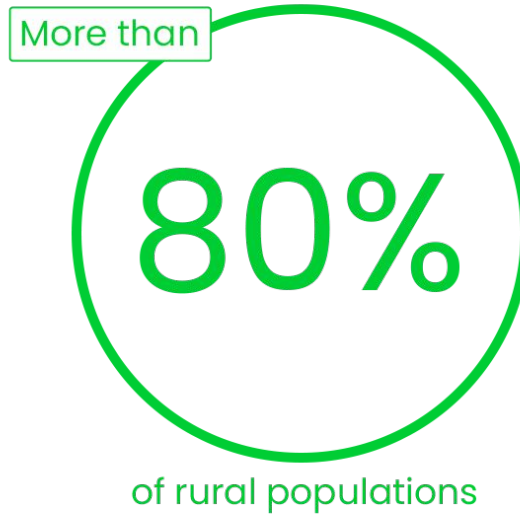   Amplify the impacts by scaling the work together
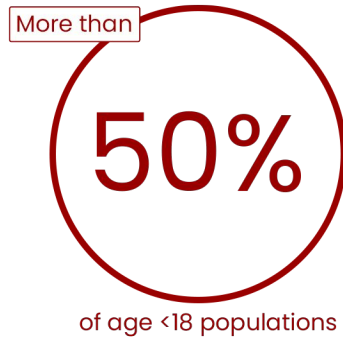
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Our organization itself has enough talented people.

CREATING A DIGITAL SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM

INNOVATION

Here in Malawi, innovation for *WHAT?*

More than

50%

of age <18 populations

More than

80%

of rural populations

Only about

25%

of internet penetration rate
(5M internet users)

Sources: Population Pyramid.net, The World Bank - Data, Digital 2023: Malawi

About the Digital Skills For All Project

Established in November 2020 by the Mzuzu E-Hub with an aim to enhance youth and women's participation in the digital economy through skills development, enterprise support and access to emerging digital technologies in Malawi.

Target Beneficiaries:
2060 youth and women across Northern Malawi

Investment Support:
To date, it has attracted up to USD700,000.00 through various partners towards implementation

The Digital Skills for all approach

Digital Skills Training → Awareness and Sensitization (Mass ICT Literacy) → Business Incubation- ICT Enterprise Support → Youth and Women in Biz Challenge-Investment Support → Innovation events-Ecosystem engagement

Partners:

Digital Skills Training and job placements

Innovation Events i.e. Hackathons, Ideathons

Mass ICT Literacy - Awareness Campaigns
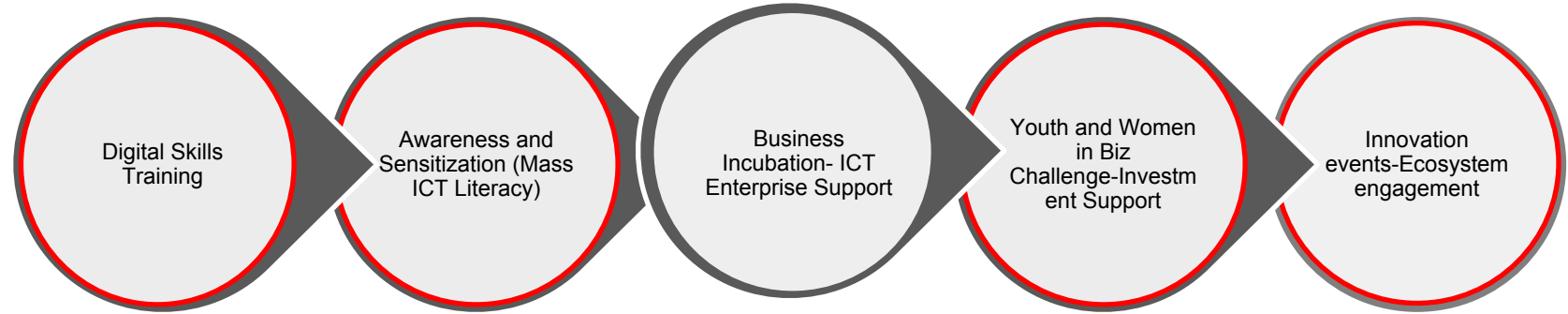
Digital Skills Training Curriculum

End User Computing (Computer Basics)

Graphic Design

Digital Marketing

Computer Programming

Photography and Videography
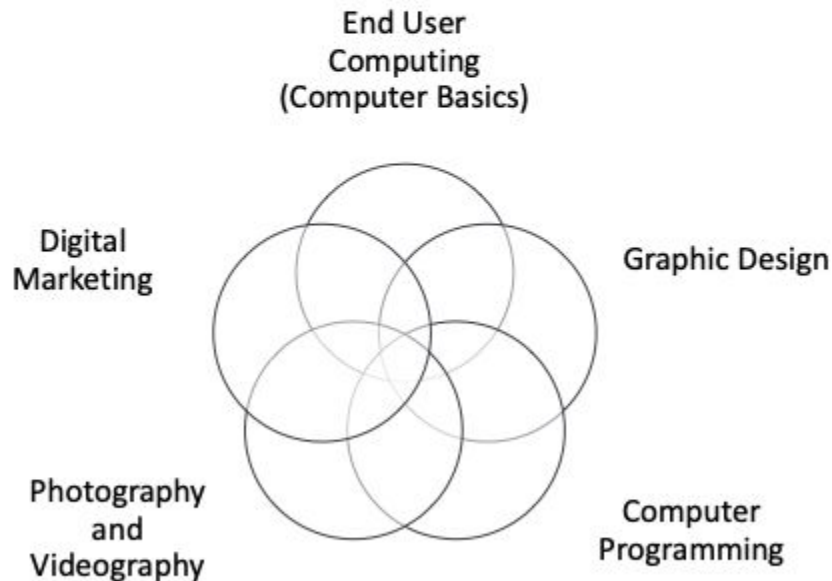
Duration: 12 weeks
Assessment and certification currently supported by TEVETA

Bizcubation

Selection
(One month)

50 incubates

Pre-Incubation
(One month)

50 incubates

Application
(One month)

50 incubates

Incubation
(Three months)

30 incubates

Investment
support
(One month)

12 incubates
financed

| Learning labs Masterclasses | Mentoring and coaching | Exchange and learning visits | Networking events | Capital financing Investment linkages |
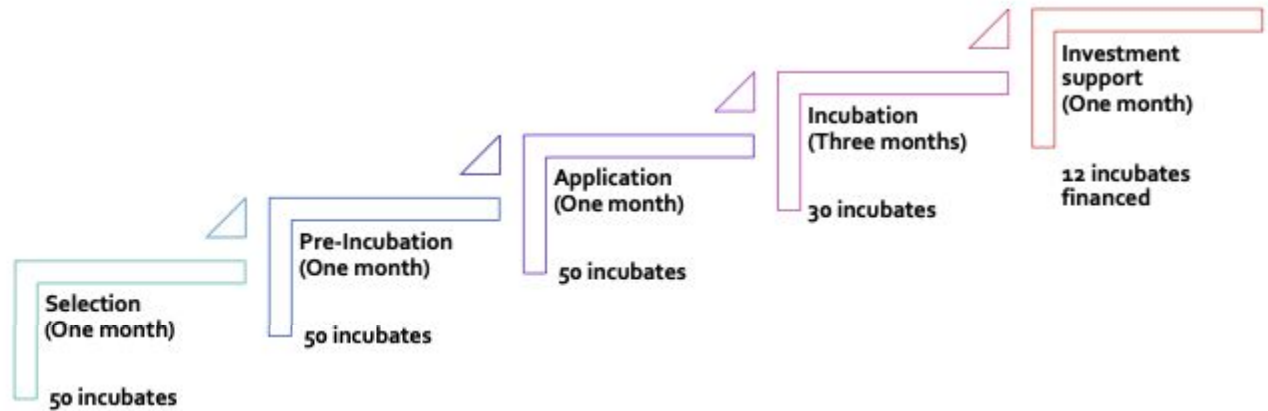
All incubates have access to Post incubation support upon completion of the program

DS4All Impact Analysis- 2020-2023

•Young men and women amplified their digital literacy

840

•Individuals reached with information on emerging technologies

1291

•Emerging enterprises supported

135

•Emerging enterprises financed

34
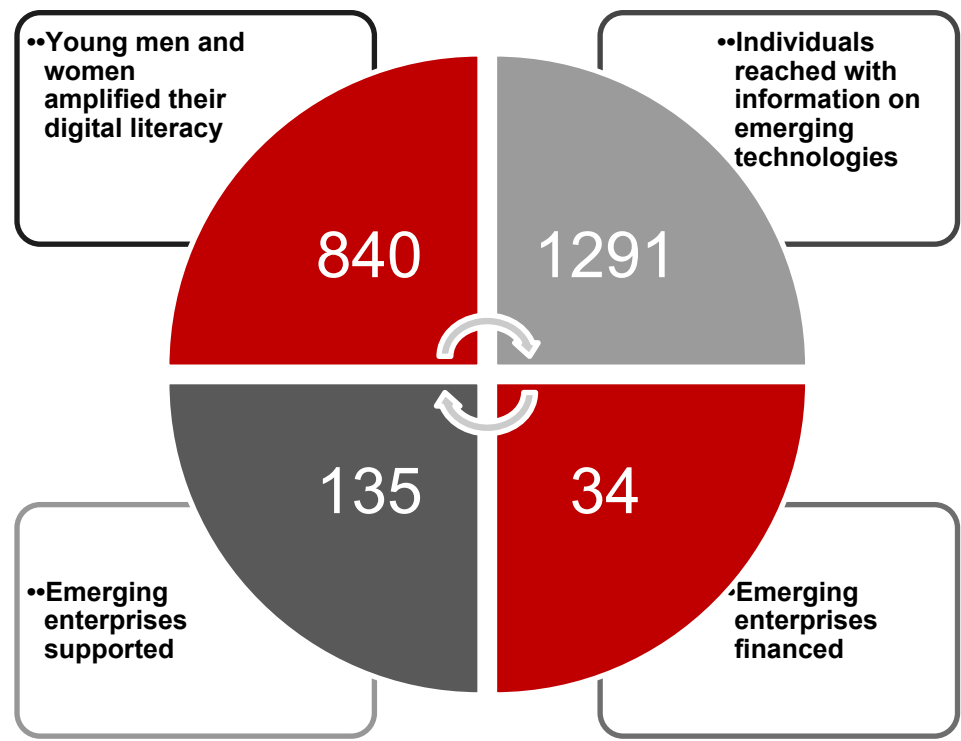
● **USD50,000 dispersed as seed capital**

Digital skills training in Likoma

Visit: https://youtu.be/0AZT_zvM9pU?si=oJInHmLNtCdKyz_9

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It's not always rosy: Gaps encountered

Digital Access and Infrastructure

Having worked across all districts in Northern Malawi, lack of digital access and available infrastructure ie resource hubs where they can access information and skills posed a big challenge

Affordability of digital technologies

Rural community dwellers mostly live in poverty and the cost of maintaining digital technologies for their household is way out of reach. Some are able to buy a cheap cell phone but mostly not able to afford mobile data

Logistics can get chaotic

One encounter in Likoma whilst disembarking the computers, one fell and broke. Not exactly what we needed at the time!

Digital Motivation and Interest

Adoption and participation in the digital realm required adopting different approaches that would motivate and interest the rural community dwellers. If it's not interesting, we do not need it!

Key lessons learnt

Collaboration is vital at different levels of implementation - Design to Implementation

Follow up program activities are an added value to beneficiaries- Think Sustainability!

Industry linkages ie apprenticeships, internships, learning visits contributed a lot towards exposure to the beneficiaries

Certification through TEVETA provided a level of recognition

Recommendations

Access to digital literacy training through resource hubs, schools

Affordability-robust internet service, equipment

Participation- Digital exclusion should be a topic of discussion

Internet enabled devices or services that meet the needs of the user

Quality technical support to emerging startups/enterprises

Anyone can support a digitally inclusive community – including you; it's easy!

"To thrive within our communities, I believe we need enhanced leadership development amongst people. We need communities that are able to embrace creativity and innovation. To advance our development agenda, we need to approach the way we do things from a different point of view. Different makes a difference."

THANK YOU