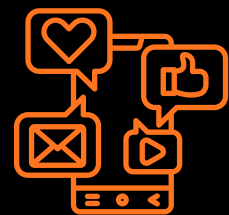




# GIRL+ SPEAK



HRFS AWARDS



POST



Digital Space





# CTRL+ SPEAK MOMENTS

OUR MEMORIES  
2024



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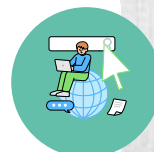
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# INTRODUCTION

According to UNICEF, globally, one third of children are online, but this rapid uptake and development of digital technologies have not been accompanied by the legislation, services, and education required to ensure their safe and empowering use.

Think of "Ctrl" like the control button on your keyboard. Holding it down lets you do new things. Ctrl+Speak is like holding down the control button for your VOICE online. It's about using the internet to speak up, fight for what's right, and make the digital world a better place for everyone. So welcome to the 2025 edition of CTRL+Speak!

CTRL+Speak is a magazine produced courtesy of the Technology and Human Rights team at Amnesty International Kenya. It is a magazine designed to teach children and young people about human rights in the digital space- Why they matter and why everyone should care about human rights. We believe in youth-led collective power and action that challenge existing inequalities and strengthen our common human need to safeguard human rights, even in the digital space.



Why is this magazine important?

Because this magazine is about you. Here, it is a collation of stories, of opinions, of art and a powerful piece of advocacy by young people and for young people, to learn and advocate best for human rights online.

Therefore, the world's digital future must be defined, designed, and decided for, with and by those to be most impacted by it: children, youth and future generations. We must ensure that we amplify the voices of influence for children and youth as well as assure their rights, interests and opportunities are promoted and protected now and into the future.

Through this magazine, we want to empower you, to become leaders in the digital rights movement. By building your capacity, supporting advocacy efforts, and amplifying young people's voices, we seek to create a more just, equitable, and inclusive digital space for all. We hope you enjoy reading it, as much as we enjoyed creating it!

## FOREWORD BY VICTOR NDEDE

It is with immense gratitude and optimism that we present this second edition of CTRL+Speak Magazine. This publication is more than just a collection of reflections; it is a powerful articulation of a vision central to Amnesty International Kenya's work:

a world where online platforms and other digital technologies are safe, supportive spaces for all children and young people to thrive, enjoy their health and wellbeing, and fully realise their human rights.

The digital landscape, while offering unprecedented opportunities, also presents complex challenges. Our program is dedicated to navigating this complexity, ensuring that the next generation can engage with technology fearlessly and constructively. This magazine serves as a vibrant testament to that commitment.

We are delighted to use this platform to celebrate the brilliant minds who participated in the 2025 Digital Rights Essay Competition. The sheer talent, critical thinking, and passion displayed in the entries were truly inspiring.

To every student who participated: thank you. Your essays represent a commitment to intellectual engagement and a readiness to tackle the crucial issues surrounding digital rights. You are the digital citizens and rights advocates of tomorrow, and your voices, showcased within these pages, are already shaping the conversation.



This magazine would not be possible without the unwavering support of several dedicated groups:

- To the Human Rights Friendly Schools Program Patrons: Your dedication is the bedrock of this initiative. You inspire, guide, and nurture the talent of these young people every day, fostering environments where critical thinking and human rights are valued.
- To our incredible pool of volunteer judges: We extend our deepest gratitude for your invaluable work. Your meticulous attention and tireless effort in assessing these brilliant essays ensured that the most thoughtful and compelling arguments were recognized.

As you turn the pages of CTRL+Speak Magazine, we invite you to reflect on the insights, challenges, and hopes articulated by Kenya's children and youth. Their perspectives offer a vital roadmap for achieving a truly human rights-centred digital future.



# MBOGI YETU- THE INTERNET WE WANT

IN THE HEART OF MATHARE, LIVED JEFF, A 16-YEAR OLD WHO WAS A MEME LORD AND INFLUENCER



AT SCHOOL, JEFF WAS A QUIET, NERDY GUY WHO DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH



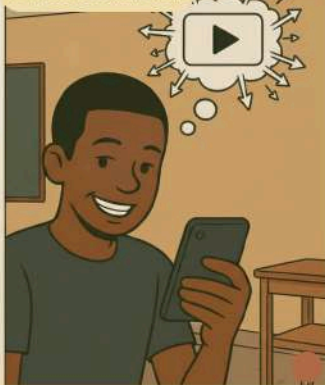
BUT ONLINE, HE WAS THE KING! WITH OVER 100K FOLLOWERS ON ALL PLATFORMS



ONE DAY, JEFF CAUGHT HIS CLASSMATE TAMARA, DANCING, AND SECRETLY RECORDED HER



AND THOUGHT IT WOULD GET HIM MORE FOLLOWERS ONLINE



HE POSTED IT, AND IT WENT VIRAL...FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS



BUT TAMARA SAW THE VIDEO...AND WAS BULLIED BY JEFF'S FOLLOWERS ONLINE



HOW COULD YOU DO THAT JEFF? THIS IS ANOTHER HUMAN BEING YOU BULLIED ONLINE, IT'S NOT JUST A VIDEO



AND EVERYONE OSTRACIZED JEFF IN SCHOOL FOR THAT VIDEO



A FEW DAYS LATER, THE SCHOOL ORGANISED A DIGITAL RIGHTS WORKSHOP







# 2025 Digital Rights Essay Competition: The Internet We Want

The internet shutdown on June 25th, 2024, left millions of Kenyans, cut off from essential online services. This action directly violated Kenya's commitment to international human rights law, which affirms the right to access information. Such violations disproportionately affect young people, who rely on the internet for educational resources, social interaction, and activism.

Moreover, threats by the government to shut down social media further underscore the fragility of digital rights in Kenya. These actions highlight the urgent need for robust legal frameworks that protect digital rights and ensure that the state upholds its obligations to respect, protect, and promote these rights for all.

Kenya's youth, many of whom are digital natives, are particularly vulnerable to these infringements. As future leaders, they must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to defend their digital rights and hold their government accountable.

Instead of this, this year we aimed to explore these issues through a creative essay competition under the theme *The Internet We Want*. The competition invited young people across Kenya to express their vision for a safe, open, and inclusive internet where their rights are respected and protected. Through essay writing, participants will explore how governments, technology companies, and global communities can collaborate to create a better digital environment for all.

Key themes we explored this year:

- What role should the Kenyan government and technology companies play in promoting a safe, inclusive, and open internet that respects the rights of children and young people?
- How can children, young people, and HRDs hold governments and technology companies accountable for violations of digital rights?
- What can we do to ensure that the internet promotes well-being, mental health, and a sense of community among young people?
- How can young people be empowered to actively participate in human rights work online while prioritizing their well-being and feeling valued and respected?





This competition encourages young people to envision the future of the internet through the lens of these four key outcomes:

- Technology companies' accountability: Participants can reflect on how technology companies can be held accountable when they fail to respect the digital rights of children and young people. What measures should be in place to ensure that platforms protect privacy, prevent online abuse, and uphold freedom of expression?
- 2. Government responsibility: Students are encouraged to explore the role of the government in creating policies that promote, protect, and respect the digital rights of young people, including HRDs. How can the government be held accountable when it fails to meet these obligations?
- A connected global community: With the internet as a powerful tool for connection, participants can consider how young people, including HRDs, can engage with international communities, realize their digital rights, and promote their health and well-being. How can the internet foster a sense of global solidarity while also providing a safe space for self-expression?
- Active participation in human rights work: Finally, participants can envision how children and young people can actively contribute to human rights work while ensuring their digital spaces prioritize their well-being, mental health, and play. How can young people balance activism and self-care, and how can Amnesty International Kenya support them in this journey?

The internet holds great potential for empowering children, young people, and HRDs to realize their rights, connect globally, and participate in social justice movements. However, it also presents risks when governments and technology companies fail to uphold their responsibilities. This competition provides a platform for young people to share their vision of The Internet We Want: an internet that is safe, inclusive, and centered on human rights. Through their creative expressions, we can gain insights into how we can collectively hold governments and companies accountable while fostering a digital environment where children and young people thrive.

This year's edition of our student competition set out with one dream: to create an open and inclusive platform where young people could express their views through storytelling, poetry, and essays. That dream came to life in ways that exceeded our expectations. We received more than 1,000 submissions from 45 schools across seven regions, which is a remarkable leap from the 200 essays we received last year.

For that, the Amnesty team extends heartfelt thanks to every student and school club patron whose time, creativity, and dedication made this achievement possible.

Despite facing funding challenges that made it impossible to host our annual Digital Rights Festival, we were thrilled to organize a mini-festival in Nairobi, bringing together patrons from the winning schools and the top two students for our traditional Amnesty excursion and annual winners' dinner.



# HRFS AWARDS

OUR MEMORIES  
2025



# Human Rights Friendly Schools in 2025

I would like to thank the Almighty God, Amnesty Kenya, our heads of institutions in the Human Rights Friendly Schools Network, our dedicated patrons, and the over one thousand students who participated in this year's essay competition.

This year's competition attracted even more learners across our network, not only from senior secondary schools but also from junior schools, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity. The students' reflections on "The Internet We Want"

were not only thought-provoking but also offered valuable insights into the theme. All participating schools, patrons, and students received certificates of participation. For teachers, these certificates contribute to career progression, while for students, they serve as an important milestone in their educational journey.

We were particularly proud of the recognition of exemplary performance at the regional level, where the best school in each region received a trophy. Nationally, the best male and female students were given a special treat by Amnesty Kenya: a flight experience and a shopping voucher, which greatly motivated our learners.

Although we were unable to conclude this year's essay competition with our usual national festival, we remain hopeful that in the near future, it will return. The festival has always been the highlight of our program, offering learners a platform to express themselves not only through essays but also through other creative forms.

Once again, sincere thanks to Amnesty Kenya, our esteemed judges, heads of institutions, patrons, and, most importantly, our learners. We look forward to even more successful and impactful essay competitions in the years ahead.

Joshua Akumu  
National Coordinator  
Human Rights Friendly Schools Network



# THANK YOU TO THE FINAL JUDGE PANEL FOR THE 2025 DREC:

Michael Juma- Founder and Lead Consultant,  
Tunza Safeguarding  
Collins Orono- Child Online safety and Digital Literacy Expert  
Celine Chiveli- Former Digital Rights Champion, Amnesty International  
Belinda Njeri- Privacy First Campaigner, Amnesty International Kenya  
Lilian Kariuki- Executive Director, Watoto Watch Network



# THANK YOU TO THE 45 SCHOOLS THAT JOINED THE 2025 DIGITAL RIGHTS ESSAY COMPETITION!

Homabay High School  
Lake Junior School  
Ober Secondary School  
Gendia High School  
Danis Obara Secondary  
Magare Girls Secondary School  
Oridi Girls School  
Agoro Sare School  
Mawego Girls High School  
Noonkiprir Girls Secondary School  
Senior Chief Koinange High School  
Rwambiti School  
Karucho School  
Kiburia Sec. School  
Ngiriambu School  
Ikonge Boys High School  
Bobaracho Mixed Secondary School  
Nyaura Secondary School  
Senior Chief Musa Nyandusi  
Kiogo Mixed Secondary School  
Kisii School  
Suneka Girls1

Kereri Girls School  
Masongo Secondary School  
Mobamba High School  
Sinyolo Girls School  
Bar Korumba School  
Bishop Okoth Ojolla  
Kisumu Day High School  
Koru Girls  
Lions High School  
St Johns Masawa Junior  
Menara Boys School  
Sigoti Girls School  
Nyabondo Boys School  
Alara Girls School  
Nyabururu Girls High School  
Sironga Girls School  
Nyakongo School  
Geta Junior School  
Kabianga School  
Kericho High School  
Kipsigis Girls High School



# THE INTERNET

# WE WANT

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# MUST READ ESSAYS



# The Internet We Want: Jeff's Story



In the densely populated Mathare settlement in Nairobi, a teenager found comfort behind a screen. It was more than just entertainment or a pastime; It was an escape from reality. The source of memes, a force to reckon with global trends, a voice on social media, no one would imagine he was just a boy drifting between the realms of lonely, quiet, and unremarkable.

As time flew by, his two persons began to blur. To the world, he was Jeff, the form four student with average grades, but on the internet, he was a meme-lord whose opinions were the trend, and he was valued and accepted; it was his second home. The boy who dissolved into shadows in the real world became a star on the internet. But attention, much like fire, burns when handled carelessly.

It was a simple scenario, only much too familiar. He happened to attend a party, things got heated, and logic left the room, leaving a trail of bad decisions in its wake. He took out his phone to capture the antics of a young Tamara who was getting lost in the moment. All he saw was a meme, a way to get more of the validation he had long come to crave. Little did he know that his frustration, driven by a desire for clout, would drive him into a digital storm.

He posted the video of the young girl with no regard for her thoughts, mocking her with his social alias. Within an hour, the video went viral, and within a day, it was on TikTok, WhatsApp groups, and even a local blog. A rush of power took over; he was on top of the world.

Tamara broke down, and the school launched an investigation. Things started falling apart. Classmates who had liked and shared the post deserted him. The situation was escalating rapidly, and Jeff was trapped. Tamara was a mess, anxiety and loneliness fueled her depression, pushing her towards the brink. Authorities were tracing the source of the leak.

As Jeff watched the digital fire he had sparked, he realized how fragile digital rights were, not just his but others. Tamara's dignity was shattered. His fellow students now faced random phone checks and restricted internet use. The school's attempts to protect students were limited. Though Kenya had a Data Protection Act and laws against cyberbullying, most students had no idea how to report a digital violation. Teachers lacked training in handling such cases. Even when students reported abuse, response times were slow or non-existent. Jeff began attending workshops hosted by human rights defenders. In one session, they asked: "What would the internet look like if it were built to protect you?"

For the first time, Jeff imagined a digital world where mental health was prioritized. Harmful content could be taken down within minutes, where social media platforms had trained moderators for Kiswahili and Sheng, where children were educated on their rights online from an early age, where governments held companies accountable, not just for data privacy, but for emotional safety.

He wrote these ideas in a notebook, over and over, like a prayer. What started as a joke became an example of what happens when technology companies



# The Internet We Want: Jeff's Story

, like the platform he used, refuse to act fast enough to stop harmful content. The video had been flagged hundreds of times, yet it remained live for days. Technology companies often ignore reports from Africa. Content moderation is outsourced to algorithms trained in Europe or North America, with little knowledge of local languages, slang, or context. But guilt stuck to Jeff's chest like wet clothes. Every time someone mentioned the video, his stomach turned. When students speculated who could be behind it, he stayed silent. What started as a joke now felt like a wound that kept reopening. "Why didn't they have faster ways to remove these things? Did the app not care about who got hurt?" Jeff asked himself. He had never thought about platform responsibility before, but now it was more than a theory-It was personal.

One week later, word spread that Tamara had been hospitalized after a panic attack. Rumors swirled, fueled by screenshots and reposts. And then, Amnesty International Kenya released a statement condemning the spread of harmful content targeting young people, demanding better protection by social media platforms and faster intervention from authorities. Jeff read the statement online. He clicked "like." He cried.

When the school invited a lawyer from Amnesty International, Jeff paid attention. He heard about Kenya's Data Protection Act for the first time, as well as how slowly it was being enforced. There were supposed to be policies protecting children's privacy online, but companies weren't being punished for violating them. Even government cyberbully helplines were not functional.

Jeff learned that harmful videos, like the one he had uploaded, often remained visible for days, even when flagged, simply because the systems weren't built to protect users like Tamara. He also learned that platforms profit from outrage. The more people watched, shared, and argued, the more engagement they got. The system was broken-and it was working exactly as it was designed. But what hurt the most was realizing that by uploading that video, Jeff had played into it. He had become part of a system that fed on other people's pain.

Jeff began to see a gap-a void where the law should have protected Tamara, where accountability should have started long before the meme went viral. "Who protects us when the system doesn't?" he wondered. One night, Jeff stumbled into a global youth forum on digital rights. He met teens from Brazil, Europe, India, and Haiti: all with stories like his-they had misused or been misused online. One girl was leading a campaign backed by her friends, and they created a webcomic at school teaching kids how to spot misinformation online. A story from Mathare could resonate with someone in Mumbai or Rio de Janeiro. This realization fostered a spirit of global solidarity, youth standing together to demand a safer, more inclusive internet.

Jeff was no longer alone. He now saw how the internet could be more than just memes or likes. It could be a bridge. A place to learn, to grow, to hold systems accountable, not just to mock them. Eventually, Jeff came forward. He confessed anonymously through the Human Rights Club, and while his name was not made public, the school knew. Tamara's parents were informed. The counsellor arranged for Jeff to write an apology letter, not only to Tamara, but to every student harmed by the culture of online cruelty. But Jeff didn't stop there.

# The Internet We Want: Jeff's Story

They joined the #RestoreDigitalDignity project. It began with a simple idea: every post, every comment, every share echoes, some louder than others. They created posters, held listening circles, and invited students to write letters to the “version of themselves online.” The letters were pinned to a wall in the library, fluttering like little digital ghosts, each one a confession or a cry for change. Jeff also wrote a guide, “How to Report Harm Online in Kenya”, and shared it with local NGOs, who helped distribute it across schools in the county.

The movement grew. Students from other towns wrote in, sharing their stories. Some had faced doxxing, others had been mocked for stuttering or wearing old uniforms. For the first time, they realized they weren't alone. A connected global community of youth, hurting, healing, and hoping, was forming. They hosted online events with young activists from Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa, all working toward the same vision: a safer, more compassionate internet. At the heart of the transformation was the understanding that young people could contribute meaningfully to human rights work in the digital space. Activism didn't always look like protests or public speeches; sometimes, it looked like rebuilding trust, creating safe spaces, and ensuring no one else repeated the same mistakes. Through this work, Jeff came to understand something deeper.

The internet we want isn't just about safety. It's about dignity. It's about creating space for pain without ridicule. It's about using technology to elevate, not exploit. It's about knowing that digital rights are human rights, and that silence, even online, can be violence. Jeff never asked for forgiveness. After returning to school, Tamara attended one of the #RestoreDigitalDignity events. She stood quietly, listened, and then wrote her own letter to the wall. “The pain didn't end with the post. But neither did the story.”

Jeff's journey, once marked by shame, became a beacon for change. Through self-reflection and collective action, his story showed how a single misstep online could become a catalyst for broader conversations about accountability, justice, and reform.

The internet of today holds immense power to connect, educate, and empower. But without accountability from technology companies, responsibility from governments, and active participation from youth, it risks becoming a space of harm and exclusion. Jeff's experience underscores the urgent need for inclusive digital policies, faster response mechanisms, and youth-driven initiatives.

The internet we want is not just safe and inclusive, it is human, built on dignity, fairness, and the voices of those who use it most: young people. The internet, like fire, can destroy or warm. In the hands of young people who choose empathy over ego, it becomes something else entirely, a spark not of shame, but of change. And that is the internet they built—the internet they want.

**Written By:**  
**Geoffrey Anyoda,**  
**Kisii School**  
**(Overall 2025 DREC Winner)**



# Advocating for Digital Rights for Children and Young People

Globally, today, the Internet has supported how people communicate, work, learn, and entertain themselves. The Internet has also given young people in our society opportunities to grow and learn various skills. However, this digital space has promoted many risks to their privacy, safety, and well-being. Therefore, there is a need to advocate for digital rights that respect their privacy, safety, and support their well-being.



The Internet contains personal information of individuals, and children and young people are vulnerable to privacy violations.

Young people have a right to control their data and decide which information they share and with whom.

Since many online platforms collect and exploit data from young users without a clear understanding of the implications, there is a need to ensure young users' privacy. To provide a safe internet that respects the rights of children and young people, both the government and technology companies must work together to enforce age-appropriate laws that require online platforms to implement age-verification systems. And these laws must evolve alongside technology, not play catch-up.

In Kenya, where access to smartphones is widespread and getting younger by the day, such protections are urgent. Imagine a primary school child in Machakos being exposed to gambling ads during a simple mobile game. Or a curious teen in Dandora stumbling onto harmful content while searching for school projects. We must ask ourselves: Is this the Internet we want for them?

Tech companies must do more. They should implement strong privacy standards, such as end-to-end encryption, limit behavioural tracking on children's accounts, and create default settings that prioritise safety. For instance, a platform like YouTube should not autoplay videos that expose minors to violent or sexual content. Simple design choices can mean the difference between safety and harm.

But safety is not only about protection, it's also about empowerment. Digital literacy should be part of every child's education. Kenyan students should learn not just how to open a browser, but also how to question the content they consume, spot scams, understand data privacy, and engage online respectfully.

Think of 14-year-old Mercy in Bungoma, who helped her peers report a cyberbully using tips she learned from a digital literacy session. Or Kevin, a secondary school student in Kisii, who now teaches his younger siblings about the importance of strong passwords. These are the digital defenders of tomorrow if we give them the tools today.

Finally, let's not talk about children without including them. Their voices matter. When shaping the future of digital policies and online platforms, young people must be at the table. They understand the Internet in ways adults often don't. Engaging them is not only fair, it's smart.

# Advocating for Digital Rights for Children and Young People

The Internet has the power to ignite creativity, spread knowledge, and build global connections. But to truly benefit the next generation, we must create a digital ecosystem that values children not as consumers, but as citizens with rights.

**Written By**  
**Sheryl Awuor,**  
**St. John's Masawa Junior Secondary School**



## THE GOLD MINE

Standing by the side, center, and beyond, watching the mining process,

On site are miners young, adult, and old

I stand to understand the minor miners

Minors in age, stamina, mind, and stature

Very young and inexperienced

Minority minor miner

There I belong

The teen is my age

Hey, internet, the gold mine

Where each and every one yearns to get into,

Finding the ores but away, out of difficulty to access them

many carrying large mineral ores, making those of us not yet in envious, seducing us

to enter the depths to obtain the ore

taken the hearts of many

The most careful ones, only may?

As I watch from the center

I see young ones of tender age

Being the most affected-swallowed by the gold mine

Physically and mentally the they yearn and regret

The young ones know a lot than they deserve

Competing with competent adults with experience in mining

Only to realize themselves through cartoons and Netflix movies

Hidden in adult programs

To forget about the gold mine

The inequality experience on the site

On the internet, they bury their heads without caution or direction

All because of the parents' ignorance

Time lapses, and the children are irresistibly drawn to internet access

Oh, the mining process emits poisonous gas

Masks need to be put on.

To reduce the health risk associated with the poisonous gases

Otherwise, no mask, the internet is contagious

Diffused freely to everyone

Many forced to work on the gold mine  
To acquire phones  
Risking their lives and enter the tunnels  
To come out with the minerals  
Then sell  
To acquire the gadget

I was one of those who risked  
But came out unhurt  
Safely reached the surface  
Reason being the knowledge gained through AIK  
My friends were buried by the mines  
In moments of mourning, they  
Realized how the government forgot its role long ago

Long ago, public education was a must.  
Now no campaigns or syllabi to teach children about safety in every aspect of life  
Feeling sad and betrayed  
I blamed the policies made and in place  
But implementation has never kicked off

My friends died prematurely, wishing.....  
They perished before their time.  
Parents spend more time.  
To serve and surf the internet all day and night

No time scheduled for the young and enthusiastic beings. None is around to guide—only www.  
The World Web has been given the parental role  
I am among the affected

Drawn in with addiction with no reverse  
Having no further hope to regain myself, all because of www.

Technology companies  
Happy and smiling all the way to the banks  
New apps day in and out, no age considerations



They sell indiscriminately  
Can't they consider the customers' age and needs  
It remains  
Everyone for himself and God for all of us. It shocks and irritates.

Health complications associated with the long time spent online  
Similar to those in gold mines

From CNS\* to the physical posture  
Don't forget death

**LESLEY,  
NYABURURU GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL**

# ENOCK KIPYEGON ROTICH- KABIANGA SCHOOL, RIFT VALLEY

The internet has become one of the defining forces shaping our generation — transforming how we communicate, learn, and express ourselves. For children and young people, it offers extraordinary opportunities for education, creativity, and global connection. However, alongside these benefits come significant risks, including exposure to harmful content, data exploitation, and cyberbullying. To make the digital world a safe, inclusive, and empowering place.

Governments must take the lead in drafting comprehensive legislation to protect children and young people online. This can be achieved through laws and regulations requiring large platforms to promptly remove illegal content and misinformation while ensuring users' safety and safeguarding freedom of expression. Strong, balanced policies should uphold both safety and digital rights.

Public awareness campaigns are also essential. For instance, Kenya's Ajira Digital Program teaches citizens about safe internet use, helping young people navigate online spaces responsibly. Expanding such initiatives can help parents and children understand their digital rights, recognize online risks, and learn practical steps to protect their online safety and privacy.

Technology companies must uphold high standards of transparency and accountability. They should adopt clear data policies and introduce privacy-focused features to protect children from exploitation. Tools like Apple's App Tracking Transparency allow users to opt out of cross-app tracking and should be adapted for younger users, with explanations in simple, accessible language.

Ensuring accountability is crucial. Both governments and technology companies must be held responsible for protecting digital rights. When these institutions fail, young people can use the internet itself as a tool for advocacy and accountability. Youth-led online campaigns have shown immense power in mobilizing people worldwide for meaningful causes.

A notable example is the Stop Hate for Profit campaign, which gained massive youth support and pressured major companies like Meta to take more decisive action against hate speech and misinformation. By generating widespread online conversations and coordinated boycotts, the campaign successfully pushed platforms to reassess their policies.

Partnerships with organizations such as Amnesty International can further strengthen advocacy. These organizations offer training, mentorship, and resources that empower young activists to turn local digital rights issues into global campaigns.

Technology also supports grassroots activism. Platforms like Twitter (now X) and online petition sites allow young people to mobilize communities, raise awareness, and influence policy. In Kenya, for example, youth-led digital campaigns have addressed issues such as high data costs, sparking public debate and government response.



# ENOCK KIPYEGON ROTICH- KABIANGA SCHOOL, RIFT VALLEY

Digital literacy initiatives such as the Global Kids Online project equip young people with the knowledge and skills to understand privacy, data protection, and online rights. Learning how to interpret privacy policies, use encryption, and report violations empowers young users to demand accountability and advocate for their safety.

## Supporting Wellbeing and Community Online

Beyond safety, the internet has vast potential to support mental health, foster creativity, and build communities. Platforms offering free and confidential mental health support demonstrate how digital spaces can become safe havens for vulnerable children and teens.

Social media companies are also recognizing their impact on mental well-being. For example, Instagram's decision to remove public "like" counts in some regions helped reduce social comparison and anxiety — particularly among young users who are more vulnerable to online pressure. Campaigns that encourage sharing personal stories and connecting with peers can also promote healing, empathy, and inclusion.

Online communities provide young people with spaces to find belonging and support. Digital forums, youth servers, and advocacy groups allow members to connect over shared interests, discuss challenges, and find solidarity — even in societies where they may face discrimination offline.

To make these spaces truly supportive, digital literacy must be prioritized. Teaching young people to think critically about online content, to respect others, and to respond responsibly to conflict can reduce cyberbullying and foster a culture of empathy and respect. Kenya's Digital Literacy Curriculum is a strong example of how education can shape responsible digital citizens.

## Engaging in Online Human Rights Advocacy

Young people are at the forefront of global digital activism. Movements like Fridays for Future demonstrate how youth have used online platforms to mobilize millions across continents to demand climate action. Similarly, the Malala Fund uses digital campaigns to advocate for girls' education and raise funds to overcome the barriers young women worldwide face.

While online activism is powerful, it also comes with challenges such as harassment, burnout, and digital surveillance. Young activists must learn to protect their well-being by using secure communication tools like Signal, enabling privacy settings, setting screen-time limits, and taking breaks from social media.

Governments and technology companies can support digital activism by providing safe online spaces free from harassment and censorship. Platforms should strengthen anti-harassment policies and improve reporting systems to protect activists. Collaborations with organizations like UNICEF can also offer mentorship and psychological support.

# ENOCK KIPYEGON ROTICH- KABIANGA SCHOOL, RIFT VALLEY

Recognition and mentorship programs can further motivate youth advocates. Partnerships between non-profit organizations, international institutions, and digital platforms can amplify young voices and inspire broader civic engagement.

## Conclusion

The internet has extraordinary potential to empower young people — but this potential can only be realized when digital spaces are safe, inclusive, and rights-respecting. Governments must enforce strong laws to protect children online, while technology companies must prioritize privacy, transparency, and ethical design.

At the same time, young people must continue to advocate for their digital rights, holding those in power accountable through creative, impactful campaigns. By fostering wellbeing, promoting digital literacy, and supporting youth-led advocacy, we can build an online world where children and young people feel safe, valued, and inspired to create change.

The internet we envision is one that uplifts, respects, and empowers the next generation — ensuring their voices are heard, their rights are protected, and their future is bright.

# FRAZIER ACHIENG OBARA- LAKE JUNIOR SCHOOL, HOMABAY

In today's generation, young people are very familiar with the internet. Many know how to use it well, but some misuse it by hacking other people's accounts, posting harmful content, or writing negative and abusive comments online. These actions can deeply hurt others, lower their self-esteem, and cause emotional pain. To make the internet a safer place that respects the rights of children and young people, both the government and technology companies need to take action.

First, technology companies should create more child-friendly apps like Messenger Kids, which is designed for those under eighteen. This app allows parents to monitor their children's online activities, know who their friends are, and ensure they are interacting safely.

Technology companies should also track and identify people who violate the rights of children and young people online. Once identified, such users' accounts should be permanently shut down to prevent them from causing harm again. Afterward, the government should follow up to find and arrest these individuals so they can face justice.

Both the government and technology companies should teach children and young people to avoid unsafe websites and online spaces that could expose them to danger. Children should be guided to use the internet responsibly — for example, to do homework, play safe games, and learn new things — rather than for harmful content like pornography.



## **FRAZIER ACHIENG OBARA- LAKE JUNIOR SCHOOL, HOMABAY**

Children must also avoid chatting with strangers online, as this can be risky. Strangers may try to find personal information, kidnap children, or demand ransom from their parents, leading to emotional distress and financial strain.

The government should also run education programs nationwide to raise awareness of human rights, digital rights, and online safety. Young people should be encouraged to protect their rights and report any violations of digital rights. They should also learn how to use strong passwords and share any threatening or frightening messages they receive with a trusted adult, friend, or teacher.

The government should further discourage children from spending too much time online. Excessive use of the internet, especially for gaming or social media, can lead to addiction and poor academic performance. Online harassment is another growing concern. When people are bullied or insulted online, it can lower their self-esteem and cause stress. Children and young people must be careful when chatting or meeting strangers online, as some may influence them negatively or introduce them to harmful behaviors like drug or substance abuse. Additionally, betting games such as Aviator can lead children to steal from their parents to buy more data or gamble. Children should avoid such risky behaviors and stay away from inappropriate websites and groups.

The government and technology companies must work together to reduce cases of cyberbullying and exposure to pornography among children. Such experiences can make children feel afraid, insecure, or lose confidence in themselves.

In conclusion, both the government and technology companies play an essential role in protecting the digital rights of children and young people. They must ensure that online spaces are safe and that those who violate others' rights are held accountable. At the same time, children and young people should be encouraged to join clubs and community groups that promote human rights, kindness, and respect — helping everyone feel valued, loved, and protected.

## **ARIANA MILDRED- NOONKOPIR, KAJIADO COUNTY**

As young people, we tend to use the internet a lot, knowing very well that it can either shape our lives or completely destroy them, depending on how we use it. The internet provides opportunities for learning, interactions, and entertainment. However, without good safety measures, the internet may expose users, especially young ones, to cyberbullying, social harassment, and a lack of privacy in their lives.

Nowadays, the use of technology is almost essential, or rather a want, especially amongst teenagers and youths. Today, you are likely to find even children less than five years old owning phones. These young ones tend to use phones for many activities, which align with the competency-based curriculum (CBC). Governments and technology companies have a responsibility to make the internet safer for young users.

# ARIANA MILDRED- NOONKOPIR, KAJIADO COUNTY

The government and technology companies should develop and enforce policies that prioritize the digital safety of young people. These laws should emphasize policy. Like every app, this app must have access to an office where one can easily report any case of rights violation or harassment. Technology companies are expected to design platforms with child safety in mind.

The government should introduce legislation to enable digital activities in schools, especially in junior schools, such as computer classes and coding, because this equips young people with the skills to use and explore the internet safely. These children should also be taught about responsible online behavior and how to protect their privacy.

Young people have the right to access the internet and social media platforms. These rights should not be violated, as children and young people often learn a lot from these platforms. Apart from entertainment, these young people can participate in online studies with people from various parts of the country or even outside the country, and be positively impacted, for example, learning different skills and innovations from them.

Nowadays, some young people tend to be faced with challenges, of which they at times find it hard to choose who to trust and feel insecure about their problems, which may at times lead to depression. Technology companies should work to create an internet that fosters and supports young people's well-being and mental health. These particular features promote positive interactions and minimize harm.

Have you ever thought about how you could develop a medicine that, when taken, prevents a person from growing old and keeps them alive forever? Have you ever thought of innovating a teleporting machine that everyone could have, so that in case of an emergency or anything, one could easily teleport to the place at any time, in whichever part of the country? Young ones should be taught to develop innovations that will have a positive impact in the future.

Most young people have a strong urge to protect human rights and use online platforms to support them. When the young ones become too exposed, they may be exposed to online harassment, cyberbullying, and even emotional distress. These young people should take several precautions when managing these particular platforms. They should maintain digital security by using passwords, PINs, and other measures to protect privacy.

These young ones should, at times, ensure they have two accounts: one kept private and the other for social media activities, such as showcasing their talents in dancing, singing, and acting. These young people should also engage with trusted mentors and mental health professionals who can provide guidance and emotional support in case of any problems or violations.

Young people should come together to promote digital activism to support their digital rights, without feeling isolated. Despite their active participation in the online world, young people should practice self-care. This is by taking breaks from social media, setting boundaries on their engagements, and prioritizing other productive offline activities. This is because too much social media may make one an addict, and it will definitely be hard to restrain oneself from it, which may affect one academically or in any way.



# ARIANA MILDRED- NOONKOPIR, KAJIADO COUNTY

The government should pursue policies that safeguard the rights of young people. The government and the technological companies should ensure that the internet is safe and respects digital rights. At the same time, young people must continue to support accountability and demand ethical practices from those in power. Let us work together to create an internet that not only protects but also benefits young users, enabling the young ones to learn and strive for a better future, protecting their well-being.

## KWAMBOKA JOAN- SUNEKA GIRLS, KISII

Today, many young people spend a lot of time on social media. While it helps them learn new things and stay connected, it also exposes them to challenges that can affect their well-being, relationships, and education. The internet has made life easier in many ways. Still, excessive or unsafe social media use can have harmful effects, especially for children and young people whose minds and bodies are still developing.

People today are often so busy online that they forget about real-life routines, friendships, and responsibilities. Even adults are heavily influenced by social media, so children and young people are, too. Below are six negative effects of social media use on young people, along with why responsible digital habits are essential.

### 1. Weakening of Eyesight

Spending long hours staring at screens can harm a child's eyesight at an early age. The strong light from devices can cause eyestrain, dryness, and headaches. Over time, children may need to wear glasses or seek medical help. Parents may end up spending a lot of money on treatment for issues that could have been avoided with proper screen breaks and moderation.

### 2. Exposure to Harmful Content and Online Risks

Social media can expose children to inappropriate content, misinformation, or even harmful behavior such as cyberbullying. Although there is debate around the effects of screen radiation, it is clear that excessive use of digital devices and video games can negatively affect children's concentration and well-being. Children need to be protected from harmful online environments and guided to use technology safely and responsibly.

### 3. Sleeping Problems

Children who use social media late into the night often struggle to fall asleep. The light from screens and constant notifications disrupt their natural sleep cycle, making it difficult for them to sleep well. Parents and guardians should help children establish healthy boundaries — such as no screen time before bed — to ensure they get enough rest.

## ARIANA MILDRED- NOONKOPIR, KAJIADO COUNTY

### 4. Dependence on Technology

When children spend too much time online, they miss out on critical real-life experiences that build physical, emotional, and social skills. Playing outdoors, interacting with friends, and engaging in creative activities help develop strong bodies and healthy minds. Relying too much on social media for answers and entertainment can limit curiosity and problem-solving skills.

### 5. Posture and Physical Health Problems

Poor posture from long hours on screens can affect children's growing bones and spines. Bending the neck or sitting for long periods can cause pain and long-term strain on the body. Some children even skip meals or physical activities because they are so focused on being online, leading to poor nutrition and lower energy levels. Parents should encourage breaks, exercise, and balanced daily routines.

### 6. Neglect of Studies

Social media can be highly addictive and distracting. Instead of studying or reading, many children spend hours scrolling or chatting. While it's true that the internet can help with schoolwork, excessive reliance on it can undermine creativity and critical thinking. When children rely on social media for every answer, they lose the ability to think deeply or solve problems independently.

### A Thought to Reflect On

It's worth noting that many technology experts — even those who create social media platforms — limit their own children's screen time until they are older. This should remind us that while technology is robust and valuable, balance and discipline are key.

Parents and guardians should spend time with their children, guide them in using social media safely, and teach them about digital rights and responsibilities. Together, we can make the internet a safer and healthier space for all children and young people.

## CARILUS AKEDE- ST JOHNS MASAWA JUNIOR

In the modern world, the internet has become an integral part of daily life, especially for children and young people. With the proliferation of social media, online learning platforms, and digital entertainment, the online world offers tremendous opportunities. However, alongside these benefits come significant risks, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and the erosion of privacy. As digital natives, children and young people are often more vulnerable to these risks, which makes advocating for their digital rights a crucial endeavor. This essay explores the importance of protecting the digital rights of children and young people, the challenges they face in the online environment, and the steps needed to safeguard their rights.

# CARILUS AKEDE- ST JOHNS MASAWA JUNIOR

Digital rights refer to the rights and freedoms individuals should have in the digital space, much as human rights function in the physical world. For children and young people, this includes the right to access information, to express themselves online, to privacy, and to protection from harm. These rights are essential because the internet is not just a tool for communication and entertainment; it is also a space where individuals, particularly children and young people, form their identities, interact with others, and learn. Ensuring that these rights are respected is necessary to create a safe, inclusive, and empowering online environment for the next generation.

While the internet provides vast opportunities, it also presents unique challenges that disproportionately affect children and young people. One of the most significant concerns is privacy. Children and young people often share personal information online without fully understanding the potential consequences. They may post photos, locations, and other personal information online that malicious actors can exploit or misuse. Furthermore, many digital platforms collect data from young people, often without their informed consent, which raises ethical concerns about data privacy and security.

Another pressing issue is cyberbullying. With the advent of social media, young people are more exposed to online harassment and bullying, which can have severe psychological effects. Cyberbullying can occur anytime, making it difficult for victims to escape the emotional and mental toll. The anonymity that the internet provides can encourage harmful behaviours, and many young people may not have the tools to protect themselves or seek help when necessary.

In addition to cyberbullying, children and young people are exposed to inappropriate content, including violent images, hate speech, and pornography. Despite the existence of content moderation tools, much harmful material remains accessible online, and children may inadvertently encounter it.

While exploring the internet. This exposure can lead to a range of adverse outcomes, such as desensitization to violence or the development of unrealistic body standards. There is the issue of digital addiction. Many young people spend excessive amounts of time online, often at the expense of their physical health, social relationships, and academic performance. This digital dependency can be exacerbated by the design of many online platforms, which are intentionally addictive, using algorithms that encourage prolonged engagement. The constant exposure to social media and gaming can also contribute to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety among young people, particularly when they compare themselves to curated online personas.

Advocating for digital rights is essential to mitigate the risk and challenges faced by children and young people in the digital scale age. Government educators, parents, and tech companies must work together to ensure that digital platforms are safe, accessible, and respectful of young people's rights. Advocacy efforts should focus on three key areas: privacy protection, online safety, and digital literacy.



## CARILUS AKEDE- ST JOHNS MASAWA JUNIOR

Digital literacy is crucial for empowering children and young people to navigate the online world. Digital literacy goes beyond teaching technical skills; it encompasses evaluating the credibility of online information, recognizing the signs of online abuse, and developing critical thinking skills to protect oneself from manipulation and exploitation. Digital literacy programs should be incorporated into school curricula from an early age, helping young people develop the skills they need to thrive in the digital world.

As the internet continues to evolve, so too must our approach to protecting the digital rights of children and young people. Ensuring that young users have access to a safe, inclusive, and empowering online environment requires a collective effort from governments, tech companies, educators, and families. By advocating for digital rights, we can help safeguard children and young people's privacy, protect them from online harm, and equip them with the skills they need to navigate the digital world responsibly. In doing so, we can ensure that the internet remains a space where young people can learn, grow, and connect without fear of exploitation or abuse.

## DEKEL BARAKA OKELLO- GENDIA HIGH SCHOOL

The Constitution of Kenya places great emphasis on access to justice for all, specifically providing extensively for children's rights in Article 53 and reiterating the importance of children's best-interest considerations in every matter concerning children. Access to justice, as it pertains to children, remains a critical tool for enhancing safeguards for children's rights, as advocated in various legal instruments. Article 59 of the Constitution and Section 8 of the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights Act of 2011 mandate the following: to receive complaints, investigate, redress, monitor, and report on the observance of human rights in all spheres of life, both public and private.

Exercise of the commission's mandate also includes the protection and promotion of children, noting that children are first humans, notwithstanding the characteristics of human rights that recognize rights as inherent, indivisible, interdependent, and universal. Acknowledging that the Kenyan National Children's Human Rights has designated a specific child rights focal point to enhance the mainstreaming of children's rights programming and ensure swift action to resolve children's rights violations and interference.

Government and technology companies should ensure appropriate awareness is raised and training initiatives created to stop the major challenges. They must take responsibility for creating a safe, rights-respecting online environment. There is a need to ensure the safety of young children on digital platforms, and this requires the state and institutions involved to protect the digital rights of young people. I believe there is a need to integrate children's platforms into the National Child Protection Policy's online protection.

Governments need to enforce strong legislations that protect children's privacy, prohibits online abuse, and holds predators accountable. This includes appropriately aligning international legislation with international human rights standards and designing platforms with robust built-in features, such as strong parental controls and clear reporting tools.

# DEKEL BARAKA OKELLO- GENDIA HIGH SCHOOL

There is also a need for service providers to meet their responsibilities and save children's digital privacy rights by offering preventive measures and also prioritizing transparency that informs users about data collection practices. This means supporting victims of online crime and seeking justice for them.

The United Nations general comment (2) of 2002 speaks of the importance of the role of national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of a child. This comment directed specific recommendations to the Kenya national commission of human rights to put in place strategies and structures for the practical realization of child rights in a more prominent way rather than generalizing this under the human rights umbrella.

Young people must hold government and technology companies accountable for digital rights violations. We are not passive recipients of the digital world but active agents of change. While using online platforms like social media, we as young people can raise awareness about issues like data privacy, online harassment, and cyberbullying by just combining activism and advocacy. With the help of organizations and the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights, we can create and sign online petitions that demand change from governments and technology companies. We can also participate in public discussions and seminars that teach laws and digital policies and encourage digital transparency.

Amnesty can help make the internet support young people's well-being, mental health, and community by simply safeguarding children's digital privacy rights. This means that they must appropriately address all forms of online crimes or violence against children. Organizations should recognize the serious challenges young people face in accessing justice in the digital environment, resulting from a lack of legislation imposing sanctions for relevant violations of children's rights.

The state must ensure that the investigations of online crimes against children are shown human dignity and provision of remedies and holistic support for child victims who are in combat against digital perpetrators is received, hence enforce robust legislations that protect children's privacy. They should work with service providers and tech giants in cyberspace to develop technological solutions to stop exploitation and abuse, even if it means creating or enhancing biometric analysis systems and age verification mechanisms as part of preventive measures. They should reinforce the need to work constructively to identify and implement swift, effective detection, blocking, removal, and permanent blocking measures.

Organizations should also recognize that the digital world can be a source of isolation and anxiety, particularly under the pressures of social media and online comparison. Sadly, this is where the world is. Technology companies and other organizations can powerfully counter this by prioritizing features that promote positive interactions. This includes implementing tools that fight the major challenges like cyberbullying, data breaches, and hate speech, and partnering with mental health organizations to provide online support. This will help in promoting inclusive online spaces where young people feel safe, seen, and valued.

## DEKEL BARAKA OKELLO- GENDIA HIGH SCHOOL

The ability to learn is a skill, the capability to learn is a gift, but the willingness to learn is a choice. Technology companies need to invest more in digital literacy programs that empower young people to move through the online world safely and responsibly. For example, hosting regular seminars that focus on responsible online behavior, bringing together like-minded adolescents who are willing to advocate for digital safety, and reimagine a safer digital world for children. These workshops will empower young people with more knowledge and skills to stay safe online. Amnesty International should also organize town walks or runs, like the Matter Heart run on heart disease awareness, that advocate for digital rights, pressuring tech gurus to make wise decisions when developing websites or apps, and to observe digital rights.

Young people can engage in human rights work while safeguarding their digital well-being and feeling valued. We can participate in public forums that demand transparency and accountability from technology companies. We can amplify our voices and push for systemic change by forming youth-led organizations, advocacy groups, and group chats. We can also document and report violations, creating a powerful record of injustice and demanding action. Collaborative action and unity are potent weapons against digital injustice. However, many young activists who advocate for digital rights do not prioritize self-care and often give up after a crash-out. If young people can set healthy boundaries during online engagement, take breaks from social media, and seek support from trusted adults, the disease of digital injustice can come to an end. Not only recognizing but also celebrating the contributions of young activists is core to fostering a sense of value and motivation.

To conclude, achieving is not exceeding, nor is it the limit. The internet I personally want is not a fiction but a goal that can be achieved through serious collaborative action. I believe that vision without execution is hallucination! This is not just about protecting us young people; it is more of investing in the future and ensuring that the digital world becomes a safe space for good. Acknowledging the fluctuations that do take place in the internet, this is what I want.

## VISION KWAMA- LIONS HIGH SCHOOL, KISUMU

The internet has become an integral part of life, especially for children and young people. It offers vast opportunities for learning, connection, and creativity. However, it also presents significant risks. To build “the internet we want,” a safe space that truly respects the rights of young people, we must address critical issues of safety, accountability, and well-being.

To ensure a safe internet, the government and tech companies must play specific roles. The government and technology companies have a shared responsibility to create a safe online environment. In doing so, the government of Kenya must ensure that it enacts and enforces robust laws that protect children’s privacy and safety and respect their fundamental rights and freedoms. These should include strict regulations and data collection, age-appropriate content, measures to address online harassment, and the development of applications that strengthen online safety for children and young people. They should invest in digital literacy programs to educate young people about online risks and responsible behavior.



# VISION KWAMA- LIONS HIGH SCHOOL, KISUMU

The technology companies, which also play important roles in digital development, must prioritize a safe internet in their design and operations. This means implementing strong age verification systems, providing clear and accessible reporting mechanism for abuse, actively moderating harmful content and protecting personal data. They should also be transparent and accountable about their data practices and avoid exploiting children's data for commercial gain.

There is need for collaboration between government and tech companies when developing crucial and effective solutions such as enacting laws that protects young people and preventing cyberbullying. Tech companies should design robust, comprehensive age verification, content filtering, parental controls, and mechanisms to remove harmful content, and address emerging threats that could affect our children and young people. We should remember that young people should not be passive consumers of technology but advocates of positive technology that empowers them as they use the internet to access information and platforms for positive development, knowledge-gaining, and sharing.

To hold the government and tech companies accountable, young people should raise awareness through platforms such as social media, form youth-led groups, and run online campaigns to advocate for policy changes. Young people should also participate in dialogues through public consultations and forums to voice their concerns and push for change and solutions.

Advocating for human rights can indeed be emotionally challenging and demanding, and young people can protect their well-being by engaging with like-minded individuals and organizations and by building supportive groups to share their experiences and provide mutual support. Young people need to limit their exposure to disturbing content, prioritize self-care through activities that promote mental and physical well-being, such as exercise, mindfulness, and creative expression, and support their mental health.

Young people's engagement in human rights work is essential for creating a better future. By prioritizing their well-being and feeling valued, they can sustain their efforts and make a lasting impact. The digital world offers young people unprecedented opportunities to champion human rights; however, this engagement must be balanced, and if not handled correctly, it can expose them to graphic and disturbing content.

To mitigate this, young activist should take it seriously to limit their exposure by managing screen time to avoid burnout and emotional fatigue. Joining online human rights groups allows for shared experiences and mutual support. Seeking mentorship from the experienced human rights advocates provides valuable guidance, offering strategies for navigating the difficulties of online activism while safeguarding mental health.

Young people can use digital platforms to empower themselves and gain recognition through action. Feeling valued is a cornerstone of sustainable activism. Young people can cultivate this sense of worth by actively participating in online initiatives.

# VISION KWAMA- LIONS HIGH SCHOOL, KISUMU

Contributing their skills and taking positive action can also be empowering for young people. Educating others about digital rights violations to demand change and also engage in impactful digital campaigns can foster a sense of accomplishment. These actions can only contribute to meaningful self-preservation; young people can effectively champion human rights online while nurturing their well-being and a sense of value.

In conclusion, the internet we want is one where children and young people can thrive, learn, and express themselves safely and freely. Achieving this vision requires a collective effort from the government, technology companies, and young people themselves. By working together, we can create a digital world that upholds the rights and dignity of all.

## JOSHUA ODHIAMBO- KISII SCHOOL

Over the years, digital rights, especially those of children, have been violated in diverse ways. It is estimated that about two-thirds (67%) of internet users under 18 lack knowledge of their digital rights. Risks to rights arise when governments and technology companies fail to uphold their responsibilities. The internet we genuinely want is a safe place, a haven of peace and liberty, inclusive and centered on human rights.

Children are potential sitting targets for online abuse since most are unaware of their digital rights. Such rights include freedom of expression, the right to privacy, the right to protection from online harm, and so on. The issue of ignorance of such rights has led to frivolity over time. Children suffer cyberbullying, breaches to their online privacy, and overexposure by the very people supposed to protect them: their parents. Yet in all this suffering they undergo, a dreadful estimation of two out of ten choose to suffer in silence.

Technological companies have also played a substantial role in the dynamic growth of the internet. The companies are responsible for producing services and even social media. The companies, however, can duly be held responsible when their platform users are susceptible to privacy breaches and even online abuse. On these platforms, freedom of expression is severely curtailed, as children and young people live in constant fear of public criticism. Companies can reduce privacy breaches by implementing end-to-end encryption. This is the process of ensuring that any information solely remains the property of the persons involved in the communication. The companies should also allow users to report cases of online abuse by providing reporting spaces on their platforms. They can also require user verification every time a user logs in to their account. Also, they ought to liaise with higher authorities to ensure strict and adaptive penalties for violators of children's digital rights and any person involved in security breaches.

The government also has a crucial role to play in ensuring a successful, flawless, and conducive internet environment for the young. By formulating laws and policies that govern the internet, the government ensures the protection of children's digital rights. As aforementioned, the government liaises with technological companies to protect the rights from violation.

# JOSHUA ODHIAMBO- KISII SCHOOL

Nonetheless, the government can be held accountable when it fails to execute this duty in a commendable way. Such cases are often directed towards children and the young. To counter this, it is the joint responsibility of international organizations and human rights advocates to assert the necessary pressure on any government that neglects this duty.

Their intervention is seen to remind the government of its role in this divine cause: to protect, promote, and respect the digital rights of the young. Organizations such as the United Nations and the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission hold the government in check, just in case it strays from the right path. If legal action fails, that is, if instances of violation of human rights are ignored and ushered out of court, they ought to take up the mantle and do the necessary.

The internet is a potent tool for connection. The internet, they say, has reduced the world into a single global village. Through social platforms such as Instagram, Telegram, or X, young users can connect with peers who are responsible or share their interests. These simple interactions contribute to the creation of larger and broader online societies that sensitize users to their digital rights. The issue of user health degradation has become incredibly rampant, though temporarily. On these platforms, users can recognize the importance of taking good care of their personal health by avoiding excessive time on the internet, which can lead to eye problems, frequent headaches, and concentration issues.

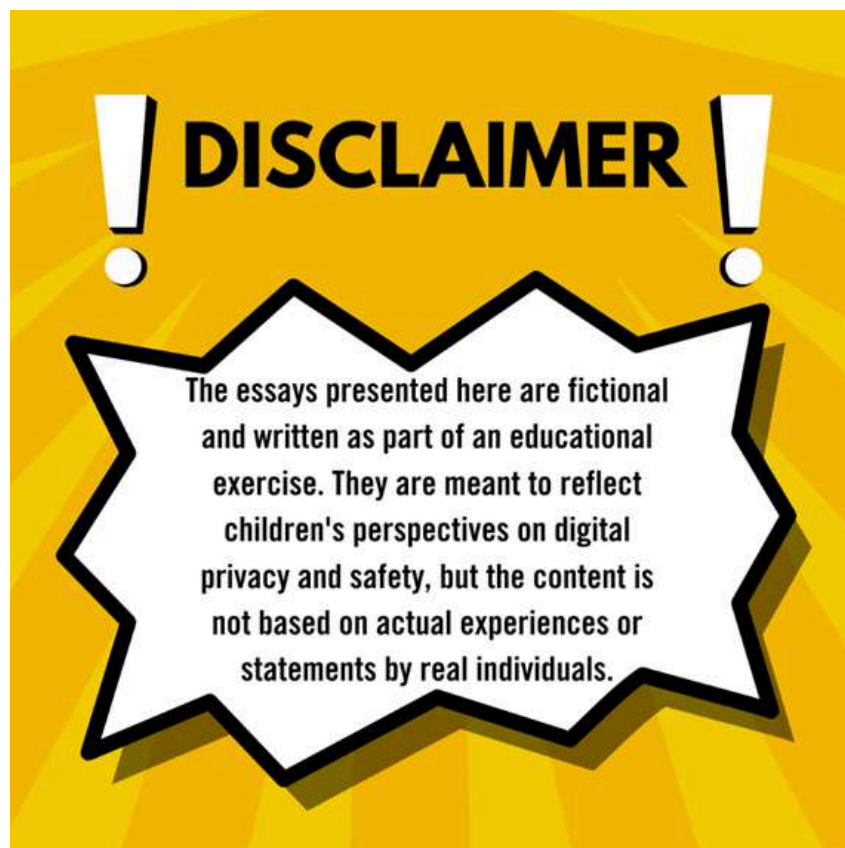
The internet also inspires a sense of global unity through cultural interaction of people of diverse cultures, possibly from different regions of the world. Through the internet, the young have been able to learn about other cultures and civilizations, both ancient and contemporary, thereby satiating their curiosity and fostering a sense of global solidarity. Also, I've provided platforms that are safe and conducive to young people freely expressing their opinions on the broad life topics discussed within the social groups mentioned above. This clearly prevents any form of abuse or criticism based on the views expressed.

Finally, the young themselves can also help promote their own digital rights. Children and young people should stand their ground to resist the over-exploitative tendencies of adults, including kidfluencing, where parents use their kids to gain followers or subscribers for their various internet accounts. In the same action, the young should also prioritize their own well-being, mental health, and play, as some see the primary purpose of the internet as entertainment and leisure, disregarding their own physical, physiological, and psychological well-being. They can also learn to balance activism and self-care by allocating adequate time to both. As the young are the main beneficiaries of these digital rights, they should be at the very forefront of this epic encounter.

Amnesty International Kenya can also support this worthy cause by providing funds and all necessary paraphernalia to spread this gospel countrywide, and organizing conferences and essay competitions to facilitate a continuous influx of ideas for the betterment of our internet.



In order to create the internet that we want, the intervention of all groups, regardless of gender, background or opinion, is required. An internet that is safe and protects people's rights without violation, with appropriate action being taken to counter any threat whatsoever.





# Safeguard Digital Rights For All

## #Digital RightsKE



For more Information Contact:  
Victor Ndede,  
Head of Programmes,  
Email: [victor.ndede@amnesty.or.ke](mailto:victor.ndede@amnesty.or.ke)

Sharlene Muthuri  
Technology & Human Rights Campaigns Officer,  
Email: [sharlene.muthuri@amnesty.or.ke](mailto:sharlene.muthuri@amnesty.or.ke)

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