

Rising to the Challenge

2021 Annual
Report

POLICY



Acknowledgements

This publication is an annual report summarising Pollicy's work and achievements in the last working year. Its production has been supervised under the technical guidance of Neema Iyer, the Executive Director.

We are most grateful to all our staff, Advisory Board and partners who have shared their experiences featured in this report.

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present an update on Pollicy's achievements and progress towards achieving our commitments in our areas of focus.

The report provides a snapshot of our identity – our vision, mission, objectives and areas of focus in line with our Strategic Plan. It is divided into the following three sections:

Our governance structure (the Board of Directors) and the secretariat (staff and fellows)

Furthermore, it highlights our achievements in 2021 across the three intervention areas:

- a) Research;
- b) Trainings and Events; and
- c) Development and Media.

Lastly, it provides a financial update on total funds raised in 2021, how they were spent and the amount in our reserves.

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01



Who we are

We are a feminist collective of technologists, data scientists, creatives and academics working at the intersection of data, design and technology to craft better life experiences by harnessing improved data. Our work focuses on influencing a culture of responsible data use, promoting appropriate data governance practices and advocating for policies that support an enabling data ecosystem.

Our mission

To advance how data is conceptualised, used and reproduced for the development of just societies.

Our vision

The efficient, ethical and equitable use of data by all.

Our values

Our values guide our work and are shared by all staff. These values also define our growth strategy as well as how and who we work with.

Feminism: We strongly believe that all genders should have equal rights and opportunities to thrive and flourish.

Creativity: Data issues can be complex and jargon-ridden. We use creative means and media to make content accessible, comprehensible, relatable and engaging.

Openness: We are open in how we interact with our partners, in how we share our data, in how we build our projects.

Responsive: We are constantly looking at the present and future to proactively respond to the existing and emerging challenges of our time.

Collaboration: True impact comes from working together. We are committed to working together with a broad range of partners interested in strengthening our data ecosystem.

Shared Leadership: We believe that all our colleagues are experts in their respective domains and aim to empower each other to be leaders through our shared purpose.

Intersectionality: We understand how institutions, systems and categorizations intersect to produce discrimination and oppression, and through this lens, work to promote social justice in our communities.

Inclusivity: We embrace the differences between ourselves and strive to create a welcoming space where everyone feels welcome and safe to bring their full, authentic selves to their work.

03



Letter from the Board

Pollicy is a unique organisation in the African tech, data and feminism development. The organisation continues to pioneer innovative programming approaches changing the lives of the ordinary Africans and how technology influences their day to day lives.

Our approach to work with governments, civil societies, academia and more, is connecting us to all different key people in our space. Through research, we continue to show how we can positively influence the way we look at technology in the African context, especially women and girls.

As a result of these successes, we are increasingly sought out by global development actors that are seeking to respond better to the priorities and perspectives of southern-led organisations. The role of Pollicy within the global tech and data space is to provide a unique approach to the way tech affects women, girls and all genders across Africa. We continue to work together with other partners to ensure that we do more.

During the year under review, Pollicy conducted cut edging research on the impact of artificial intelligence on African women, data extractivism, afro-feminist data and more. I would like to thank our committed funding partners, who have worked with us through this challenging period as well as everyone that continues to interact with our work.

I am also glad that the team has continued to grow to have remote workers and fellows spread out across Africa. This is enabling Pollicy to stamp its feet in all strategic areas across the continent and respond to timely engagements with onground partners.

We have therefore focused over the past year on accelerating the diversification of our research as well as our partners, building new relationships with bilateral and foundation funders across Africa, Europe, and the Americas. We are also looking forward to ensuring that we showcase our work with organisations such as the African Union to influence policy at the continental level. We are encouraged by the new relationships emerging and hope to further develop and extend these in 2022.

I would like to thank the Pollicy Fellows, Staff (which continues to grow), fellow board members for always doing great work towards improving and showcasing the work that Pollicy does.

Thank you and cheers!

Neil Blazevic
On behalf of the Board

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Letter from the Executive Director

Looking back at 2021, I'm immensely proud of the growth and resiliency of the entire team at Pollicy. We were all deep into the second year of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and Uganda was hit particularly hard by the second wave. Our team lost loved ones, friends and dear colleagues. As an organisation, we continued to improve how we worked remotely and how we supported one another during these, now very precedent, times.

In 2021, we launched more research than in any year prior, tackling a myriad of topics at the intersection of technology and society, such as speculating on our Afrofeminist digital futures, understanding the gendered impact of artificial intelligence on African women, exploring extractive digital practices on the African continent, investigating how to increase access to digital tools amongst Persons with Disabilities and largely, on how to conduct feminist internet research in the pursuit of social justice and equity. We solidified our work in communities by working with students, artists, activists, academics and local leaders. We stretched the boundaries

of creativity in how we reach out to hard-to-reach audiences by developing interactive games, co-creating murals and making our content as well as events more accessible.

We also grew our team and the number of countries we work in. From just an idea in 2017, Pollicy has grown to 25 team members spread across 7 countries on 2 continents. This has all been an incredible learning experience, not just in growing the team, but in watching the growth of each individual team member. We have also successfully expanded the depth and breadth of our work, deepened our networks and connections, and are actively challenging embedded power structures and inequalities that persist in our world today.

Today, we are actively partnering with organisations across the world and conducting research in ever-increasing contexts. As a testament of the quality of our work, I was delighted when Pollicy won the global Equals in Tech 2021 award in the research category. I firmly believe that the future is tremendously bright for Pollicy, and I can't wait to see what 2022 holds for us.

I would like to thank our partners for their fervent support, in working with us to create impactful research to steer our own digital futures. I invite you to learn more about our work in this annual report for 2021 and hope that you will continue to join us on our journey.

All my best,
Neema

Our Governance Structure

Our Board of Directors is a mix of digital experts and technologists collectively directing and providing technical oversight for Pollicy. They are responsible for the policy and strategic direction of the organisation. The Board meets regularly to discuss key issues and provide strategic direction and support to the organisation. It also discusses the progress made on previous decisions and resolutions. The current members of the Pollicy Board of Directors and their profiles are shown below:



Suzane Muhereza

Suzane works as the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager at the Internet Society Foundation where she is leading the development of the results framework for the Foundation. Prior to this, she led Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning efforts for the International Republican Institute's programs in East and Southern Africa. Suzane holds a Master of Science from the University of Edinburgh Center of African Studies and a BA Honours degree from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.



Chenai Chair

Chenai is the Special Advisor on Africa Mradi Innovation at Mozilla Foundation. She is an expert on the intersection of digital technology and gender. She has built her expertise with extensive experience in work that is focused on understanding the impact of technology in society through research and public policy assessment. Her work draws on principles of feminism in assessing digital technology. She has developed projects focused on privacy, data protection, and AI as Mozilla 2019/2020 fellow - available on mydatarights.africa. She also led the research on Women's Rights Online as the Web Foundation's gender and digital rights research manager.



Neil Blazevic

Neil is a technologist working with civil society in East Africa since 2008. Currently Organisational Security Officer at Internews. He established the technology program at DefendDefenders, a Uganda-based human rights defender protection, and support organisation. Through this program, he has designed and delivered programs to offer digital security education and support and to foster a vibrant community of digital security practitioners in the region. Neil is a co-founder of the safesisters.net women's digital safety fellowship and is a board member of Pollicy.org. He holds an MA in International Development Studies from York University as well as CompTIA S+, ITIL Foundation, PMI-ACP certifications and is studying for his CISSP.



Joseph Kaizzi

Kaizzi, a Ugandan digital entrepreneur, is the founder of ThinVoid (U) Ltd, which utilises cutting-edge solutions based on global standards while recognizing and adapting to the local environment, markets, and tech-space. Tambula, their flagship product, combines location awareness, micro-credit, and indirect insurance services to offer a cost-effective solution for small companies that promotes financial security. Joseph is a tech enthusiast, seasoned marketer, developer, and aspiring superhero who enjoys a good challenge.



Neema Iyer (Ex-Officio)

Neema is an artist and a technologist. She is the founder and director of Pollicy, a civic technology organisation based in Kampala, Uganda. Pollicy employs data, design, and technology to improve how citizens and government engage around public service delivery. She holds a Master of Public Health from Emory University and has worked on large-scale mobile and digital programs in Africa with TTC Mobile (formerly Text to Change) and Viamo (previously VOTO Mobile). She leads a team at Pollicy that designs a number of projects focused on building data skills, fostering conversations on data privacy and digital security, and innovating around policy. She co-hosts the Terms & Conditions podcast with Berhan Taye.

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The 2021 Staff & Fellows

This is the backbone of Pollicy. These are responsible for the organisation’s day-to-day operations, and their main objective is ensuring that Pollicy continues to function smoothly. The Staff (and fellows) are also tasked with ensuring the adherence to our mission and goals and that it continues to meet the needs of the target audiences it was created to serve. This critical component provides the organisation with the necessary tools and resources to carry out its operations.



Neema Iyer,
Executive Director



Gilbert Beyamba,
Head of Programs



Irene Mwendwa,
Program Manager,
Advocacy & Movement
Building



Bonnita Nyamwire,
Research Manager



Juliet Acom Koluo,
Finance Manager, Grants



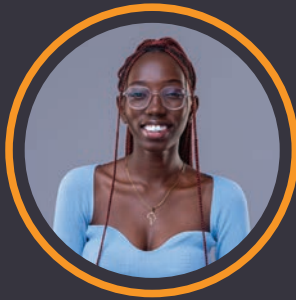
Rebecca Namatovu,
Finance Manager, Operations



Phillip Ayazika,
Programs Manager



Favour Borokini,
Researcher, Data &
Digital Rights



Garnett Achieng,
Researcher, Data &
Digital Rights



Bonaventure Saturday,
Research Assistant



Sandra Nabulega,
Junior Researcher



Arthur Kakande,
Data Products Lead



Bridget Nabachwa,
Administration Lead



Navina Mutabazi,
Program Coordinator



Wilson Lukwago,
Design Lead



Uri Ludger,
Fellow



**Sylvester Egumire
Nyombi,** Fellow



Marion Apio,
Fellow

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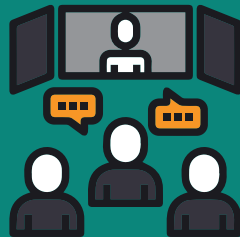


Our Approach & Work

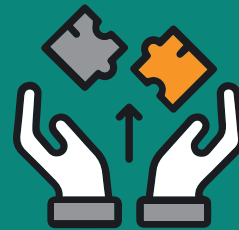
In 2021, we delivered impact to our communities and stakeholders in the following three areas:



Research

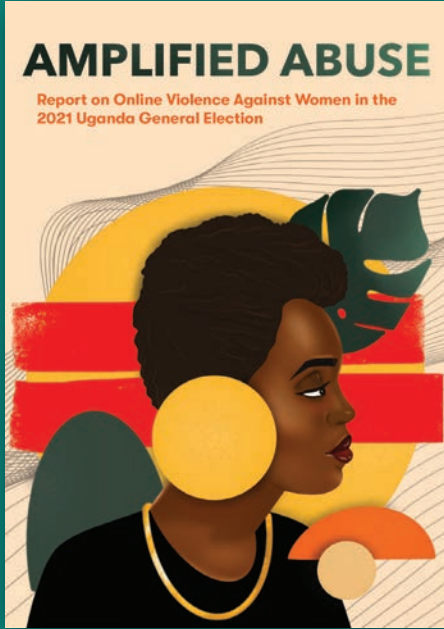


**Training
& Events**



**Development
& Media**

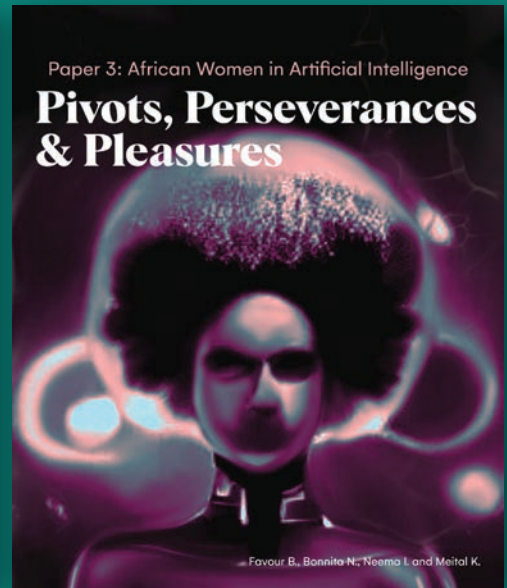
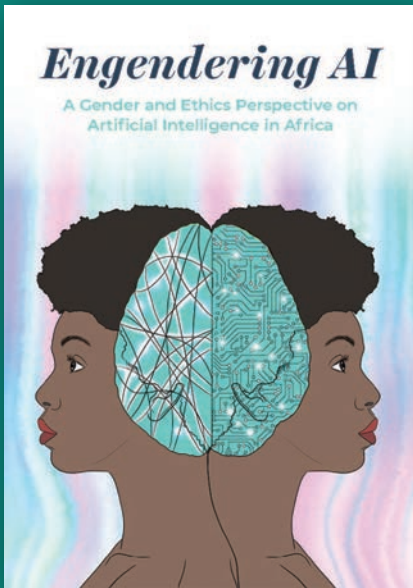
Amplified Abuse



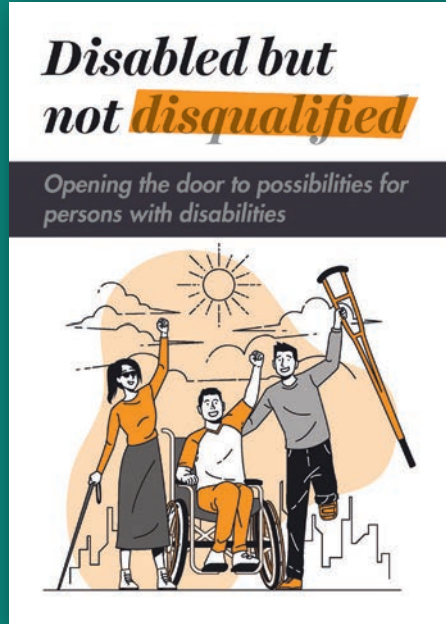
Afrofeminist Data Futures



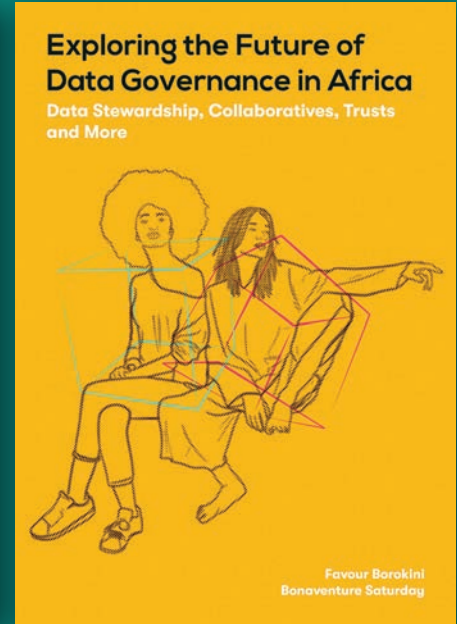
African Women in Artificial Intelligence



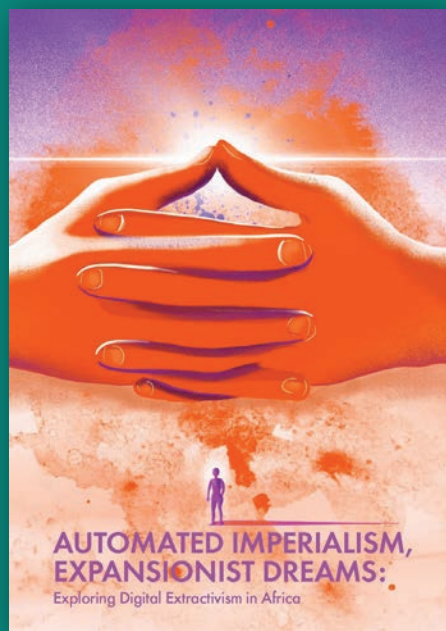
Disabled but not disqualified



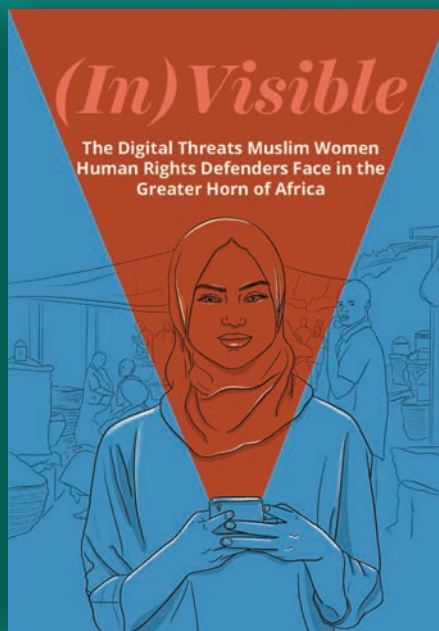
Exploring the Future of Data Governance in Africa



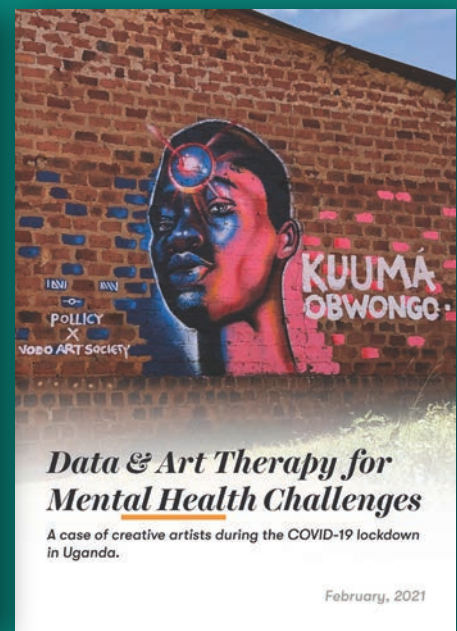
Digital Extractivism



(In)visible



Data Artistry for Mental Health



Research

Amplified Abuse

With support from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), we conducted a research study aimed at identifying and analysing the scale of online violence targeted at political candidates and high-profile individuals in Uganda. This study also sought to determine how this online harassment might impact usage, expression, and participation in the elections by those individuals. Researchers identified and monitored the accounts of 152 nominated candidates and 50 high-profile individuals during the campaign and election period on the most widely used public platforms, Facebook and Twitter. These accounts were monitored between December 2020 and January 2021, coinciding with public campaigns and multiple elections across several leadership categories and the entire country.

Key findings from the study:

The findings from this study revealed that;

- Although women generally experience online violence, the violence was more amplified among women leaders and high-profile individuals with at least one in two women experiencing online violence.
- This study also emphasised the growing need to address online violence because its amplification towards vocal women affects their participation in politics and impacts democracy.

All these and more findings were published in the report along with several recommendations from women actors and CSO representatives, for political organizations, the Uganda Electoral Commission (EC), parliamentary bodies such as Uganda Parliamentary Women's Association (UWOPA), women's groups, media and civil society to implement. This study also laid a foundation for the Pollicy Vote Women programme.

Afrofeminist Data Futures

This is a study we conducted to understand how feminist organizations across the African continent access and make use of data in their work. For this Meta-funded study, we talked to 50 women from 25 African anglophone, francophone and lusophone countries. As we conducted this study in the middle of the pandemic, we managed to run all our interviews and focus group discussions over Zoom. As a result, we were able to develop a robust report that shed light into different data environments on the continent, and the unique experiences that feminist and women's rights organizations had in these contexts.

Key findings from the study:

Through this research, we identified challenges such as;

- The lack of gender disaggregated data, the high cost of accessing data and the lack of data in issues that feminist organizations work on.
- However, we also identified initiatives that social media companies like Meta could start to make it easier for such organizations to access data.

Some of these suggestions include strengthening women's safety online, incorporating feminist data governance frameworks, and funding African feminist research. This study has since been impactful and won the 2021 EQUALS in Tech award for research. We hope that this study continues to inspire more work at the intersection of gender, data and technology on the African continent.

Digital Extractivism

With support from Omidyar Network and Stanford PACS Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, we released the research that explores digital extractivism in Africa. It showcases case studies of how extraction happens, and provides existing or potential policy responses to these practices. The paper concludes with brief recommendations for citizens, governments, civil society, technology companies, and regional/continental bodies on addressing this outflow of resources, data, and labour. This paper is intended to promote conversation among practitioners and researchers to develop appropriate policies that support digital sovereignty in a deliberate and constructive manner.

Key recommendations:

1. Strengthening of Trade Unions
2. Awareness Raising on Consumer Rights
3. Activism and Civil Society Pressure on Technology Companies
4. National and Regional Regulations, Policies or Agreements
5. Role of the African Union in Developing Convention for Digital Sovereignty
6. Localization of Technology Companies
7. Adoption of Decolonial/Anti-Capitalist Frameworks Grounded in Ethics, Care and Equity.

Disabled but not disqualified

Funded by Future Challenges and Better place Lab under the Digital Human Rights lab, this project explored access and use of ICTs and assistive devices among persons with disabilities. We collaborated with the National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU) to implement this project in Gulu, Omoro, Nwoya and Pader.

Key findings and recommendations

This report reveals key issues that affect access and use of ICTs and assistive technologies among persons with disabilities that include high cost of devices, lack of knowledge on the available devices on the Ugandan market as well the providers of the devices.

The report contains recommendations to improve accessibility and use for both the government and stakeholders that support people with disabilities including creating awareness about the available devices and developing mechanisms to support PWDs financially to access assistive devices.

Despite that the project ended in 2021, some of the stakeholders we worked with like Gulu Disabled Persons Union (GDPU) in implementing one of the recommendations from the research findings; creating awareness on available assistive devices and digital literacy have continued with these activities in a few areas in the region. It is our hope that with available funding these activities will be spread in all districts in Acholi region and neighbouring areas that have a high prevalence of disability.

African Women in AI

The goal of the African Women in AI was to uncover the rarely discussed impact of AI on women in Africa. This project was slated to produce 3 reports exploring a general overview of the enablers and barriers as it relates to AI in Africa, the direct impact of AI on women and the experiences of African women working in AI.

While conversations are growing in Africa and the rest of the world regarding the significance of AI, many of these conversations do not incorporate a gender or feminist lens in these discussions.

Key finding(s) and recommendations

Our research revealed, there are unique ways African women are directly and indirectly impacted by AI and algorithmic systems as Africans and as women and with other aspects of their identities including sexual orientation, age, and ethnicity.

Our reports offer solutions and recommendations for these issues to various categories of stakeholders responsible for regulation, and publicity and mass awareness on the necessary considerations needed in the development and deployment of AI.

Exploring the Future of Data Governance in Africa

The objective of this paper was to broadly investigate data stewardship methods, particularly data collaboratives and data trusts efforts. It also identified the existing challenges, gaps, opportunities and potential recommendations on how to drive forward the discourse on data governance in Africa. It was revealed that data stewardships are faced with challenges including lack of trust, lack of transparency and consumer rights, lack of technical skills, in addition to weak regulatory frameworks and political manipulation. The paper also revealed that there are numerous opportunities for growth evidenced by the growth of digital companies, data architects, technology startups, university programmes, emerging feminist organisations and an overall presence of technology in businesses. It is also of great importance to dismantle structural inequalities by exploring and prioritising various segments of data stewardship through a feminist lens. This includes issues to do with data sovereignty, data localisation and data systems and safeguards to manage the vulnerabilities associated with the use of data.

Moving forward, data stewardship systems like Data collaboratives and Data trusts are a glimpse of what this future might look like.

Unseen Eyes, Unheard Stories

Unseen Eyes, Unheard Stories was a joint project implemented between October 2020 and April 2021 by ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTAnet), and Pollicy, with funding support from The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). We developed and published an in-depth report titled "**Unseen Eyes, Unheard Stories: Surveillance, Data Protection, and Freedom of Expression in Kenya and Uganda, during COVID-19 pandemic.**" The report examined government and private surveillance practices in Kenya and Uganda during the COVID-19 pandemic, documented 11 trends and challenges affecting the rights to privacy, data protection, freedom of expression, and access to information, and provided 10 recommendations to both governments and private entities operating in Kenya and Uganda.

During the project's implementation, partners produced two documentaries that told the stories of Kenyan and Ugandan citizens subjected to contact-tracing initiatives. In addition, the perspectives of various experts and human rights defenders were captured, with key recommendations for various stakeholders highlighted. Two opinion pieces summarising the findings of the report and the documentaries were published in widely read Kenyan and Ugandan dailies. On 2 May 2021, the opinion piece titled '**How state surveillance rose with the pandemic**' was published in Kenya's Star. On May 25, 2021, the Observer in Uganda published an opinion piece titled "**We Need Protection of Collected COVID-19 Data.**" The project partners also presented the report findings and recommendations during a one-hour discussion aired on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) TV show 'Take on Take Tech' on 18 May 2021 at 2200 hours.

Beyond the project's lifespan

There are opportunities to raise public awareness and engage more with relevant stakeholders to ensure that human rights are prioritised. Given the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing deployment of surveillance measures and practices by both private and public actors, the findings in this report may need to be revised to reflect trends as of March 2021.

Training and Events

DataFest Kampala 2021

We host an annual gathering on data and digital literacy with the goal of cultivating a dynamic collaborative and engaging ecosystem, dubbed DataFest Kampala, aimed to demystify, learn about, and celebrate data in the region. We have hosted two editions, the first in 2019 under the theme "changing the way data users see data" and the second in the middle of a pandemic under the theme "Living with Data", tackling issues of data and how it affects human rights, the arts, and discussing new frontiers. DataFest is an international community event in Africa that connects and explores opportunities for collaboration among data scientists, technologists, designers, government, civil society, business, and marketing.'

Over ten partners hosted their sessions at distant locations away from the main site for the 2021 edition, allowing us to connect with some of Uganda's top players in the data field. We had a total of 9 side sessions, including a session on fueling Next Gen Fintechs and also exploring the role of government data at the Laboremus Offices in Bugolobi; a session on data use in decision making as well as an introductory session on using MetaBase at SafeBoda Academy in Kyebando; a session on using data to assess government service delivery by SEMA at the Innovation Village; and a pitch session in which various participants pitched their innovative ideas. We teamed with Zindi Africa and AirQo to host a virtual hackathon competition, which was then expanded to a larger audience, with a cash reward of \$1000 divided among the top three finishers.



521

Participants



46

Speakers



10

Side Events



6

Breakaway Sessions



5

Physical Locations



5

Host Partners



5

Funding Partners



4

Lightning Talks

Digital Human Rights Lab

The Digital Human Rights Lab (DHRLab) was a three-year project that aimed to strengthen digital human rights work in Uganda through innovative digital approaches, continuous collaboration, and fostering a digital mindset. It sought to help Ugandan human rights activists improve their digital skills and tool use. DHRLab was designed as an inclusive and interactive platform where civil society stakeholders could discuss human rights and digital development. This comprised activists, bloggers, NGOs, CBOs, social entrepreneurs, and private sector persons.

Together with the human rights defenders, we built five communities of practice (CoPs) These communities, composed of close to 100 human rights defenders, forming the basis for networking and knowledge exchange among organisations with similar interests while understanding and tackling challenges at the intersection of human rights and digital technologies through the implementation of close to 30 short and long term projects and interventions in the areas of digital inclusion, digital security, cyber laws and legislation, ICT4 Advocacy, and innovations for rural development. These CoPs have gone ahead to transform into solid consortiums working to advance and upload human rights in the digital age.

Through the Innovation Program, the DHRLab ran two phases of innovation to create digital solutions for human rights defenders to work more efficiently and securely. Eight teams were chosen after two rounds and awarded 60,000,000 UGX and a 6-month mentoring program to implement and scale their innovations.



100

**Human Rights
Defenders Empowered**



30

**Short & Long-term
Projects & Interventions
Implemented**



5

**Communities of
Practice (CoPs)
built**

Data Artistry for Mental Health

Through this project, creative communities in Kampala and Jinja were surveyed to determine their perceptions of mental health and behavioural and emotional problems. In addition, the research aimed to determine how creativity and mental health coexisted throughout this global health pandemic, as well as how data artistry could enhance advocacy for community-based social and psychological assistance.

Together with selected creatives, we hosted several community mental health barazas that resulted in the creation of ten permanent and temporary murals in Jinja and Kampala districts by a group of muralists led by Vodo Art Lab and Society in collaboration with the communities. The murals focused on sharing mental health tales, shedding attention on the stigma surrounding mental health disorders, and raising awareness about how to manage, seek professional help, and support one another, particularly during the COVID-19's unprecedented and perilous times. We also collaborated with Bantu Vibes to create a song about mental health. With the help of these data artistry products, we conducted a number of online campaigns, including a virtual exhibition, to raise awareness and encourage citizens to take care of their mental health, as well as to eliminate stigma by providing social and psychological support to those battling mental health issues.



10

Permanent & Temporary murals created in Jinja & Kampala



1

Mental Health Song composed & produced



120

Creatives Reached

Art and Covid Misinformation

With the rise in health-related misinformation and disinformation, particularly on the coronavirus disease, the vaccine, and other virus-related issues, state and non-state actors developed various initiatives and tactics to counteract this infodemic. To supplement these efforts, we collaborated with Paint the Change and Health Studio on a campaign using art and discourse to combat COVID-19-related misinformation in selected Kampala-Kawempe and Mbale-Busano local communities. The initiative targeted local communities, especially low-socioeconomic communities with minimal or no access to information. We held educative and interactive community dialogues with local leaders, cultural leaders, school-aged children, village health teams, teachers, and religious leaders as part of the project, in which these communities interacted with information experts, learning what misinformation is, how it manifests, and sharing how COVID-19 related misinformation has manifested in their community, providing examples that were later fact-checked by an information specialist in collaboration with a scientist. Co-creation sessions with the communities resulted in the joint installation of instructive murals in these areas.

Convening with a Purpose

We hosted several virtual engagement sessions on different digital transformation and internet governance issues from legal frameworks, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and online safety. The vision was to bring diverse groups to engage all of us as internet users in our work. We had the pleasure of engaging journalists, a lawyer, African women in Tech) and a policymaker to share their experiences about building and using the internet.



We need to understand how data is collected, maintained and handled in order to make better arguments if we are going to get good laws and regulations on data privacy. - Rachel Magege, Advocate of the High Court of Tanzania

There have been tremendous efforts to improve the state of internet governance in Africa. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) remains a great reference point for state advocacy as it protects the enjoyment of life for women in Africa in all spheres of life. Specifically, women's online safety is protected under Article 3 and 12 to promote the right to respect as a person and to the free development of her personality and that States are required to promote the education of women and girls, particularly in science and technology, and this includes digital education.

Development and Media

VOTE: Women Empowering Civic Leadership

In 2021, we launched one of our main programmes dubbed VOTE: Women with the aim of engaging the said policymakers-elected officials and government decision makers directly.

VOTE: Women is a leadership springboard for women political aspirants and incumbents that leverage on digital tools to follow their civic leadership ambitions. Less than a quarter of African national parliamentarians are women. Under VOTE: Women present an opportunity to collaborate and co-create emerging, catalytic content that will draw from the expertise of women champions, women politicians and technologists to create an open internet that is easily consumable and user friendly. The learning platform will focus on interactive content, peer learning and networking, mentorship, and fundraising to build digital skills to power successful political campaigns and careers whilst advocating for a safe and open internet.

We are using training as a tool to help policymakers understand internet governance in support of better policy making and in turn women leaders, human rights defenders and journalists advocate for a safer internet.. In 2021 we launched in Uganda and Tanzania and engaged women HRDs, women in media, students and women leaders to understand their experiences when using the internet and why most do or do not engage.

Digital Safetea

In our study of online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) in 5 African countries, we noticed a gap in digital security training targeted at African women. As a response to this, we developed Digital SafeTea, an interactive fiction game that is available in Kiswahili, English, French and Luganda. The game features 3 different characters modeled around African women's uses of the internet, and takes players through a maze of challenges thrown at them. As a player gets through the game, they pick up different tips to keep themselves safe online, and learn about free tools they can make use of for this purpose.

This game has proven useful to people all over the continent, especially to digital security trainers who use it in their training sessions. We were also thrilled to be mentioned as one of the 10 winners of the 2022 Global Science and technology award at the UNESCO-Netexplo Innovation Award. With this game, we hope to attract more partnerships to translate the game into more languages, and introduce more characters that depict more unique digital security challenges African women are facing. In August 2021, we got featured in the QUARTZ Africa Beyond Silicon Valley Series read [here](#)

Hate Speech Classification Model

During this digital age where the information flow is growing rapidly, there is an increase in digital communication along with hate speech. Unfortunately, the manual analysis of such content to moderate it is impossible due to the rapid nature of its growth and circulation. An effective solution to this problem would be to automate this detection process.

In 2021, Policy developed a hate speech classification model that classifies social media comments as one of several forms of online violence (insults, trolling, gendered disinformation, sexual violence, etc). This model was created to help with the **“Amplified Abuse”** study where several social media comments and replies from Facebook and Twitter had been extracted to monitor and identify current forms of online violence visible on these platforms. To explore findings from this research project or test out the hate speech classification model visit vawp.policy.org

Our New Website

We launched a brand new website after many weeks of hard work and dedication. The new website is now available and the URL is www.policcy.org. Our goal with this new website is to provide our visitors an easier way to learn about Pollicy’s work and resources. The new website is easy to navigate and gives easier access to information about the organisation, our work and other valuable resources.



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Resources

Digital Rights are Women's Rights

The Digital Rights are Women's Rights resource guide was created to provide an easy to read handbook and guide on how digital rights may be understood to be an inalienable part of the human rights women are entitled to enjoy.

The resource guide, which has now been translated into Swahili, outlined a number of challenges which impede the ability of women to enjoy these digital rights in Africa, as well as tools through which women could protect themselves online.

A guide to organising successful virtual events

Although virtual events were adopted as a means to minimise costs while reaching wider audiences, the COVID19 pandemic made virtual events the new normal as means to curb the spread of COVID19.

The Pollicy guide to organising successful virtual events introduces virtual events and explores options and tips for carrying out successful virtual events.

Conducting Focus Group Discussions Virtually

This short guide provides actionable steps to conduct participatory research such as focus groups discussions in low-resource settings using easily accessible tools such as Whatsapp.

Webinars and Launches

In 2021, Pollicy ensured that organisations in Uganda were equipped with the necessary digital skills they need to continuously do their work as well as keep safe while doing it. Pollicy conducted a series of digital resilience webinars in which over 250 individuals from different organisations and different backgrounds including young women and students were trained in digital security, data visualisation, digital advocacy, etc. The respective webinars and toolkits are published on the Pollicy website.

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Reflections & Learning

Creating safe and inclusive spaces for discourse and development

Despite being a remote-first organisation, much of 2020 and 2021 was a learning experience in how to continue to engage with our partners and participants through a combination of virtual and hybrid events. We have been grappling with issues of connectivity and exclusion, especially for girls and women in rural areas with low access to connectivity. As part of these efforts in creating safe and inclusive spaces, we have embarked on programming that seeks to build digital skills, work with grassroots movements and extend our work to rural regions, starting in East Africa.

Using creative media to cut through the jargon

Digital technology, and with it, jargon, continues to expand at exponential rates. With it, the gap in awareness and understanding of these new technologies also grows. At Pollicy, we are always

on a quest to demystify and cut through the hype of these advancements by using different creative media approaches. In the past years, we have worked with local communities on collaborative and participatory data murals, we have engaged poets and singers on transforming data into song lyrics, we have created interactive fiction games and chatbots to share information and research findings. Only when we all understand the implications of data within our society can we make informed decisions for what we want our data futures to look like.

Building digital resiliency

Across all spectrums of our stakeholders, we have identified an urgent need to build digital resiliency in the form of digital skills, a practice of digital safety and an awareness of the implications of emerging technology. Through our conversations, engagement and research with young persons, we were surprised to find low interest in taking up technical roles, in understanding how the algorithms could affect their perspectives of the world and participation in digital co-creation. Similarly, we found low use of data and digital platforms among political leaders, amongst civil society organisations and within the media industry. We have now developed several programs at educational institutions, within political groups, in media houses and with civil society aimed at driving discourse on digital transformation and building the digital skills that are needed both today and tomorrow.

Inclusive Internet Governance Policy Making

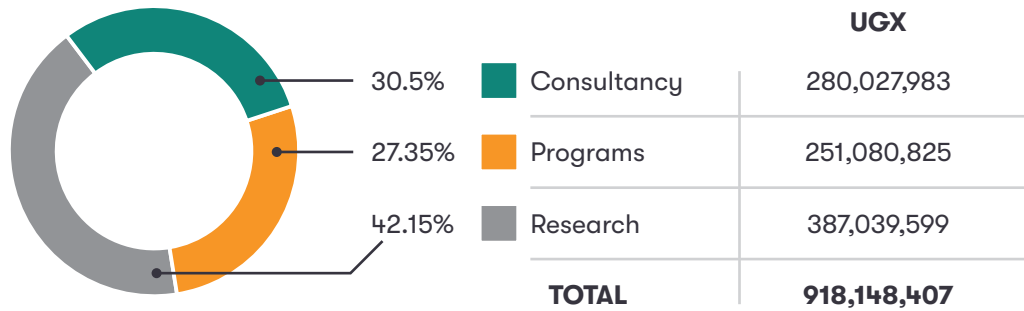
The world is battling sound and reasonable policies and legal frameworks that respect freedom of expression and provide room for innovation. Africa as a continent has been limited in the conversation due to the none inclusiveness. We are working towards ensuring the effective inclusion of Africa in the global internet governance policy making.

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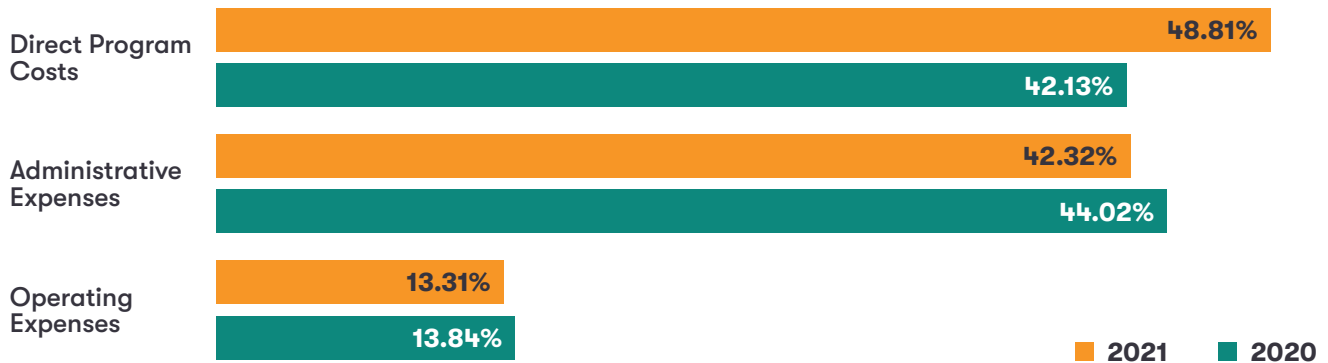


Financials

Income Analysis



Expenditure Analysis



2021 2020

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What's Next

Engaging with young people on the future of technology

Gen Z Research DAP

In 2021, we conceptualised the Digital Ambassador Program (DAP) with the purpose of complimenting government efforts in Uganda and Tanzania to realise a digital future for young people with a higher focus on young women in alignment with their development visions of 2025 and 2040 respectively as well as the sustainable development goal number 4 which calls for quality education. The program is being implemented in higher learning institutions of Tanzania and Uganda with the aim of equipping young people with digital skills necessary to thrive in the current digital world as well as bridging the digital gender gap that is existing at the moment in both countries where only 17% of women exist on the internet compared to 23% of men.

From its official launch on 2nd March 2022 with a press release in honour of the International Day of the Girl Child, DAP has been able to form partnerships with 9 partners in Uganda and

Tanzania namely Fundi Bots, Digital Woman Uganda, ICT Teachers Association of Uganda (ITAU), Success Hands Tanzania Initiative, LaunchPad Tanzania, Tanzania Data Lab and Omuka Hub. To keep track and progress of the program, we conducted a general partners progress meeting in April both in Uganda and Tanzania to share common understanding of the program, to co-create and design activities and way forward with the program in order to have best practices of the program.

Moving forward, DAP has announced the call for application for students in universities both in Uganda and Tanzania and by the end of June students will be selected from a pool of diverse applications to receive digital literacy trainings and will cascade that knowledge to their fellow students as well as engage on a number of activities that will showcase the practicality of their skills. These activities involve digital competitions, digital summit, monthly follow up meetings and lastly ambassadors shall be linked to a number of opportunities necessary for their growth and sustainability of what they have learnt throughout the course.

Building digital resiliency among our women leaders

In 2022, Pollicy will be strengthening the digital resilience of women leaders in East Africa by engaging with local councillors and members of Parliament under our VOTE: Women program. Under the program, we will be presenting an opportunity to collaborate and co-create emerging and catalytic content that maximises the potential of digital skills for African leaders. One of the critical interventions in the programme will include a learning platform. This focuses on interactive content, peer learning and networking, mentorship and fundraising opportunities to build digital skills to power successful political campaigns and careers, as women are still underrepresented on political seats from the lowest level of governance, which is the Local Government level.

Re-thinking data governance and justice

Pollicy is working towards creating a pan-African approach to data governance by bringing together thinkers, influencers and policymakers to exchange ideas. Pollicy is aiming to influence the laws, policies, regulatory authorities, and decision-making frameworks for example Africa Data Governance Hub with NIYEL, AI Policy Frameworks with IDRC and Data protection research with CIPESA, Article19 and KictaNet.

Building a Feminist Internet Movement

'As long as you are using the internet you deserve to know how it works.'

We have upcoming events where we convene different groups to continue to guide us and other technology groups on how to better engage for a better and safer internet for all. Specifically,

- We are curating events and dialogue avenues through one major event happening the last quarter of the year - 2022 under our Fem Tech Events umbrella. The aim of the event is to bring together activists, techies and others to find a reference point for our advocacy for a safer internet. WATCH OUT for more through our newsletters.
- We are also attending several events organised by women rights and feminist organisations to share our research findings in Africa and beyond namely the Kenya Internet Governance Forum (KelGF2022), The Africa Internet Governance Forum (AfiGF), The 360 Open Summit by the Atlantic Council, Datafest Africa.

Acknowledgements

