Impact Report

Empowering Refugee Women and Girls through Digital & Health Literacy (September -December 2024)

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Globally, nearly half the population remains offline, with women in developing countries disproportionately affected (World Wide Web Foundation ,2017; Rajasekhar & Jaishree , 2020), an estimated 3.9 billion individuals lack internet access, highlighting the persistent digital divide. Addressing this gap is crucial for reducing the digital gender disparity, ensuring inclusive growth, and expanding access to essential resources like online health information and education(Violan, Foguet-Boreu, Flores-Mateo et al., 2014; Rajasekhar & Jaishree, 2020).

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

To tackle this challenge AssistArc Foundation , a non-governmental organization dedicated to empowering marginalized communities, launched a pilot project aimed at improving digital and health literacy among 11 underprivileged refugee women and girls. Two baselines assessments using structured questionnaires evaluated participants' Digital Skills and Online Health Literacy

3. Key Findings

Digital Skills Deficiency

- 90% lacked confidence and proficiency in using computer and technology for daily tasks.
- Most participants owned smartphones but used them only for basic functions (calls, WhatsApp, photos, YouTube, and Facebook). Critical areas such as finance, healthcare, education, safety, and security remained largely unexplored, with only 2% familiar with these domains.

Barriers to Internet Use

- Participants avoided internet cafés due to intimidation, lack of support, and privacy concerns.

Health Literacy Challenges

- Strong interest in health-related information but significant barriers included: Poor reading habits, Language limitations; difficulty understanding medical terminology; none could identify trustworthy online health resources.

4. The Need for Targeted Interventions

These findings highlight the urgent need for structured digital and health literacy programs. Research supports the role of digitalization in enhancing health literacy among migrant women, enabling them to access reliable health information and services (Asack,2024).

5. Conclusion & Way Forward

Empowering marginalized communities with digital competencies is key to bridging the digital divide, enhancing participation in essential services, and fostering societal growth. Initiatives like this can create sustainable change by ensuring equitable access to information and opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- TO STRENGTHEN ONE 12 WEEK ACCREDITED BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING BY A QUALIFIED TRAINER FOR 10 UNDERPRIVILEGED REFUGEE/ ASYLUM SEEKING WOMEN; CONCURRENT IT HEALTH LITERACY TRAINING FOR 10 WOMEN& GIRLS
- PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION
- ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING THROUGH REGISTRATION AS AN ACCREDITED COMPUTER TRAINING ENTERPRISE.

Activities

THE PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED FROM SEPTEMBER – MID DECEMBER 2024 IN THE GOODWOOD AREA OF CAPE TOWN. ELEVEN WOMEN WERE TRAINED TWO MORNINGS A WEEK OVER THREE MONTHS (25 SESSIONS) AND EIGHT COMPLETED THE TRAINING. THE COURSE WAS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS:
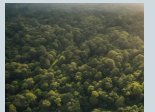
1. **BASIC IT LITTERACY** :

· INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

· NAVIGATING THE DESKTOP AND OPERATING SYSTEM

· INTRODUCTION TO TYPING

· USING THE INTERNET AND BROWSING THE BASICS

· CREATING, SAVING, AND RETRIEVING DOCUMENTS

· INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

· USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

2. BASIC RESEARCH AND DIGITAL SKILLS FOR ONLINE HEALTH LITERACY: THIS ACTIVITY EMPOWERS PARTICIPANTS TO FIND HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION AND TEACHES THEM PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF FOUNDATIONAL DIGITAL SKILLS. ADAPTING THE METHODS BASED ON AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND PARTICIPANT COMFORT LEVEL WILL MAKE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE MORE EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE.
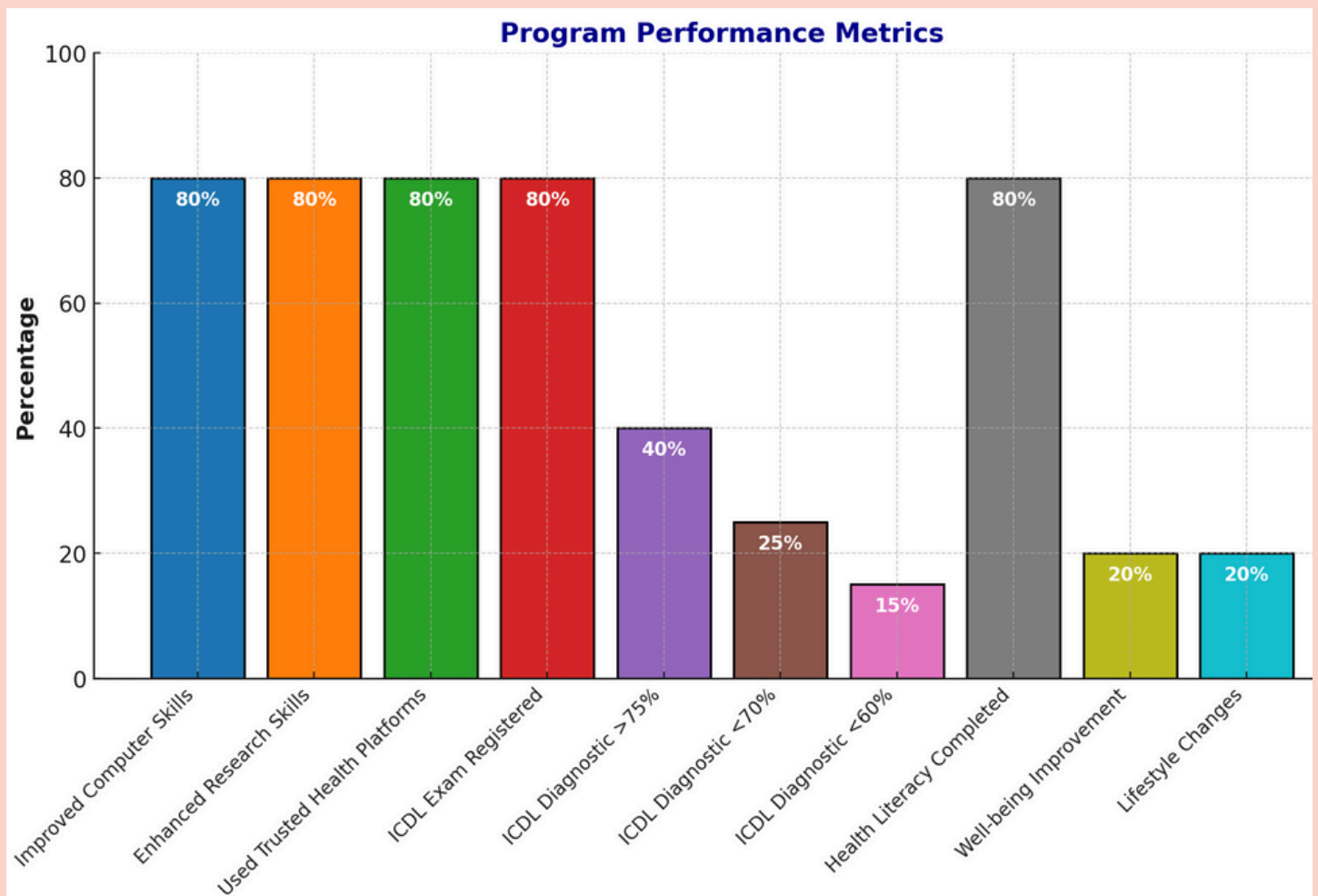
ACTIVITIES OUTLINE

- CHOOSING A SPECIFIC TOPIC HELPS TO FIND INFORMATION FASTER
- SEARCHING FOR PIECES OF INFORMATION
- EXTRACTING, SUMMARISING ,STORING PIECES OF INFORMATION

Results

DIAGRAM: Program Performance
Tracking Key Outcomes and Engagement Metrics

Program Performance Metrics

Metric	Percentage
Improved Computer Skills	80%
Enhanced Research Skills	80%
Used Trusted Health Platforms	80%
ICDL Exam Registered	80%
ICDL Diagnostic >75%	40%
ICDL Diagnostic <70%	25%
ICDL Diagnostic <60%	15%
Health Literacy Completed	80%
Well-being Improvement	20%
Lifestyle Changes	20%

NOTE: Of the 80% of participants who completed the Health Literacy research assignment, 20% were able to provide feedback. However, 60% were unable to do so due to time constraints related to their newly acquired jobs.

The project budjet

THE TOTAL COST OF THE BUDGET WAS ESTIMATED TO R100.000.00 AND WE RECEIVED AN AMOUNT OF R 50.000.00 FROM OUR FUNDER IN CONTRIBUTION.

Table: Budget summary

Category	Adjusted Cost (R)	% of Total
Salaries Costs	15000	30.0
Equipment Costs	6500	13.0
Venue Hire Costs	7000	14.0
Transport Costs	4000	8.0
Printing & Stationery Costs	1200	2.4
Registration & Accreditation	9500	19.0
Additional Accreditation Costs	1800	3.6
Data & Internet Costs	1500	3.0

Adjusted Budget Breakdown Pie Chart
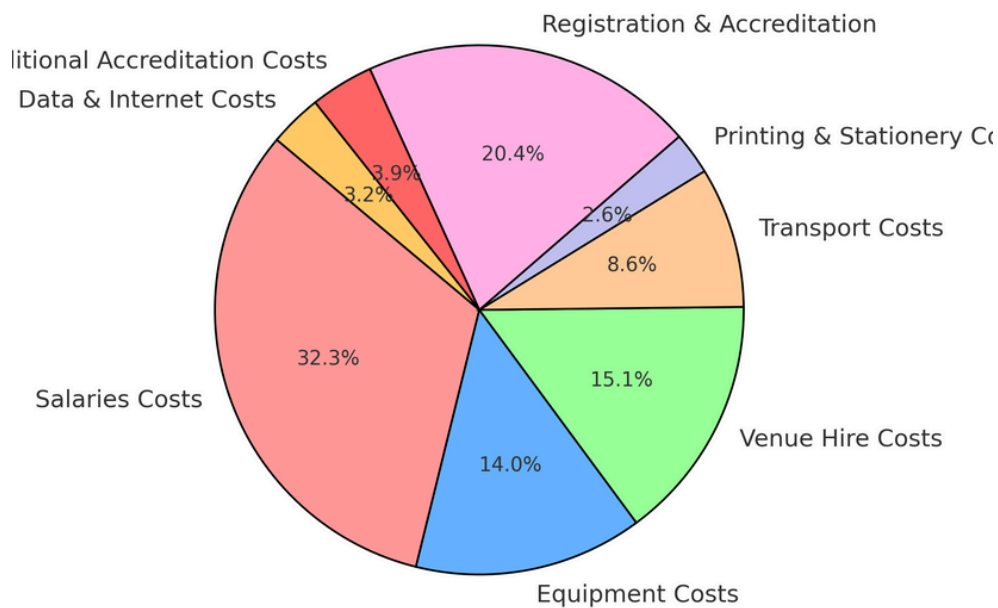
Challenges-Learnings & Recommendations

- Time Constraints: The 25-days training were insufficient for developing strong digital and health literacy skills. A longer program would enhance learning outcomes.
- Population Challenges: Low English literacy required additional support for effective learning.
- Recruitment & Selection: A two-tier system is recommended—beginners start with Digital Citizen, while proficient English speakers progress to higher-level training.
- Testing Discrepancy: The untimed Diagnostic test vs. the timed ICDL final test affected performance. Future programs should simulate timed conditions during practice.
- Learning Journey: Despite challenges, participants experienced personal growth. Mentoring by AMP strengthened leadership, risk mitigation , financial management, and project monitoring skills.
- Sustainability & Income Generation: Integrating hybrid training initiatives could generate income and support program sustainability.
- Gateway to Online Health Literacy: The program empowered participants to confidently access reliable health information, fostering continued learning

PROJECT IMPACT

SHORT TERM IMPACT (STI)

Participants are now able to use both computers and smartphones to access online resources and services, send emails, and perform other tasks. Their improved digital skills have enabled them to confidently navigate the internet and access reliable health information online. Their awareness of the importance of using trustworthy health websites has grown.
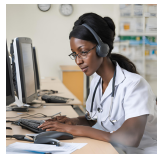
LONG TERM IMPACTS (LTI)

• Empowerment: Participants are now equipped with the skills to continue learning and accessing health information independently.

• Sustainability: The trained women, are now part of an ongoing network that will help others in the community access health information, creating a ripple effect.

• NGO Growth: with a sustainable strategy in place, the ngo can scale the program briging more women and girls in the fold while maintenaing the quality of training

Organisational Impact

The project included organisational capacity-development and mentoring by AMP to strengthen organisational and project management skills. Growth, particularly in leadership, financial management, monitoring and ability to sustain a project were highlighted in the evaluation.

Conclusion & wayfoward

This project successfully equipped 8 women with the basic digital and online health literacy tools necessary to make informed health decisions.

Furthermore, it has established a foundation for a sustainable model that will continue to empower more women in the future.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our donors, as this project would not have been possible without their generous support.

Thank you to our funder and volunteers
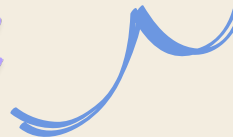
WE DID IT WITH YOUR *support.*

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