

2024: a year in review

Just like that, another year has passed, and we reflect on a year of remarkable achievements and meaningful impact. In 2024, we reached more beneficiaries than ever before, ensuring that more individuals gained access to and knowledge of the internet. Through the unwavering dedication and work of our partners, we have continued to bridge the digital divide, making significant strides toward digital inclusion worldwide. We also celebrated our fifth anniversary of being a foundation, taking a moment together with our partner network to recognize our own growth in the last five years.

Our year in numbers

Throughout the year, we invested €215,307 into various projects, bringing our total funding to €703,621 since our inception. This enabled us to support 24,647 beneficiaries, adding to a total of 62,388 individuals positively impacted by our initiatives. Through 16 projects, we expanded our reach across eight different countries in 2024, increasing our global footprint to 18 countries where we have actively contributed to digital accessibility.

Empowering communities through connectivity

This year's projects we contributed to projects spanning Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Mexico, India, the Netherlands, and Colombia. The projects all aligned with our three core program lines: access to affordable connectivity, higher levels of digital literacy, and online safety awareness. By investing in these areas, we ensured that communities not only gained access to the internet but also developed the necessary skills to navigate the digital world safely and effectively.

Expanding infrastructure

Access to reliable internet is a fundamental necessity, yet many communities remain disconnected. This year, many of our partners have focused their efforts extending access to internet connectivity in a fair and equitable way. This means that they have not only provided communities with the infrastructure, but it is also built by the communities' help and offered at an affordable price. This way they communities will be able to sustain the network themselves.

Here are some examples:

In South Africa, we partnered with Zenzeleni Networks to [expand affordable internet services](#) in Mgcibe and Ntshilini, enabling residents to participate in the digital economy. Similarly, Project Isizwe developed a [sustainable community WiFi network](#) around Loskop Mountain, bringing connectivity to 30 schools and surrounding homes.

In Kenya, Gonline Africa [expanded connectivity](#) to schools, health centers, and vocational training institutes, ensuring broader access to essential digital resources. Additionally, Fantsuam in Nigeria trained 27 individuals, including nine women, as [Wireless Barefoot Engineers](#), equipping them with the skills to plan and deploy wireless technology in their communities.

Our efforts in India focused on the Toto Tribe in Totopara, where the [Digital Empowerment Foundation](#) established a community information resource center to provide internet access and digital education. Meanwhile, unconnected.org made a significant impact along the [Amazon River in Colombia](#), connecting 10 indigenous schools and empowering 1,447 people with new educational opportunities.

Combining infrastructure and digital literacy

We also focused on initiatives that merged connectivity with education. By merging these two initiatives, we're able to make an even greater impact. While access to connectivity, network infrastructure, and computers can be costly, and therefore unobtainable for many, lack of digital knowledge is just as big of a barrier to meaningful access to connectivity. Merging these two not only provides people with physical internet access, but also enables them to use it. [Phase 2](#) of ISOC Kenya's Kijitech project in Ugunja expanded the Kijiji Yeetu community network while ensuring locals received adequate training for sustainable management. Similarly, in Uganda, YFTC's [digital bridges initiative](#) transformed two youth centers into Digital learning hubs, providing refugees and young people with internet access and digital literacy training to improve their job prospects and educational outcomes.

Fostering digital literacy and online safety

Digital literacy is a cornerstone of our mission. Our second program line focuses on facilitating digital literacy, namely enabling people to use computers and the internet. Many people have never sent an email or created and saved a digital document before. Basic digital literacy, or rather lack thereof, is one of the main barriers to internet usage, which is why address this through doing projects that fit within this program line. In Nigeria, [AREAI](#) made digital education more accessible by offering courses in Hausa language, specifically designed for adolescent schoolgirls. Zee Tech Foundation's [AgriConnect Bauchi](#) project introduced farmers to digital tools, helping them diagnose crop diseases using Google Lens. In Uganda, BOSCO Uganda focused on closing the digital gender divide by [training women and elderly](#) individuals in essential ICT skills.

Meanwhile, Hello World's [Digital Safety Training program](#) expanded across six regions in Uganda, equipping communities with knowledge about online safety and cybersecurity. Kenya's Tanda Community Network launched a [fiber infrastructure fellowship](#), empowering local technicians with the expertise to deploy and maintain community-centric fiber networks. Similarly, in Mexico, REDES [trained indigenous technicians](#) in electricity, solar energy, and local community intranet development, ensuring sustainable technological growth.

Our third program line focuses on online safety and security awareness. With growing concerns around cybersecurity, [Webfala's Digital Citizenship and Online Safety Program](#) in Nigeria took a proactive approach in educating students, parents, and teachers about ethical digital engagement. These efforts ensured that individuals not only accessed the internet but did so in a secure and informed manner.

Finalizing our digital inclusion pilot in the Netherlands

Closer to home, we are finalizing our [digital inclusion pilot](#) in the Netherlands. This project has successfully transitioned participants into customers at [Freedom Internet](#), securing affordable subscriptions for them. Researchers from the [University of Twente](#) are currently studying this approach and evaluating its impact, with the goal of assessing its long-term sustainability and scalability at a national level.

Celebrating five years of impact

November marked a significant milestone for us: five years as a non-profit dedicated to digital inclusion. We celebrated this achievement with a hybrid event, bringing together partners and colleagues to reflect on our journey. From our first few collaborations to the expansive network we have today, this event underscored the collective impact we have made over the years.

Connecting our partner network

One of our goals in 2024 was to connect our partner network. We know that our partners are experts in their fields, and oftentimes we see similarities in the challenges they face. It is valuable to have someone within the same field to ask for advice in how they approach a certain challenge. Throughout the year, several of our partners met with each other, and some have even partnered with each other, combining their efforts to make a greater impact.

Looking ahead to 2025

As we step into 2025, we are excited to build upon our successes from last year. We will be sharing new social media themes to raise awareness about the internet and connectivity, while transitioning to quarterly funding sessions to allocate our resources more effectively.

Additionally, through our sustainable funding strategy, we hope to encourage our partners and ourselves to look beyond initial support, inspiring long-term sustainability in each project and initiative that we're involved in.

Our commitment to equitable access to connectivity remains the same. We are inspired by the progress our partners and we have made and look forward to another year of empowering communities worldwide.