ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by

SMART AID TEAM

DECEMBER
2024

ANNUAL
REPORT

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Glossary of Terms

- **CBOs:** Community-Based Organizations
- **CSE:** Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- **CSOs:** Civil Society Organizations
- **DigitAbility:** Digital Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities
- **DigitHer:** Digital Skills for Her Project
- **Digitskills4All:** Digital Skills for All Project
- **FGM:** Female Genital Mutilation
- **ICT:** Information and Communication Technology
- **IDPs:** Internally Displaced Persons
- **NELIS:** Next Leaders Initiative for Sustainability
- **OMLA:** One Million Leaders Africa
- **PWDs:** Persons with Disabilities
- **SAI:** Smart Aid Initiative
- **SAC:** School Advocacy Campaign
- **SGBV:** Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- **SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals
- **UNFPA:** United Nations Population Fund
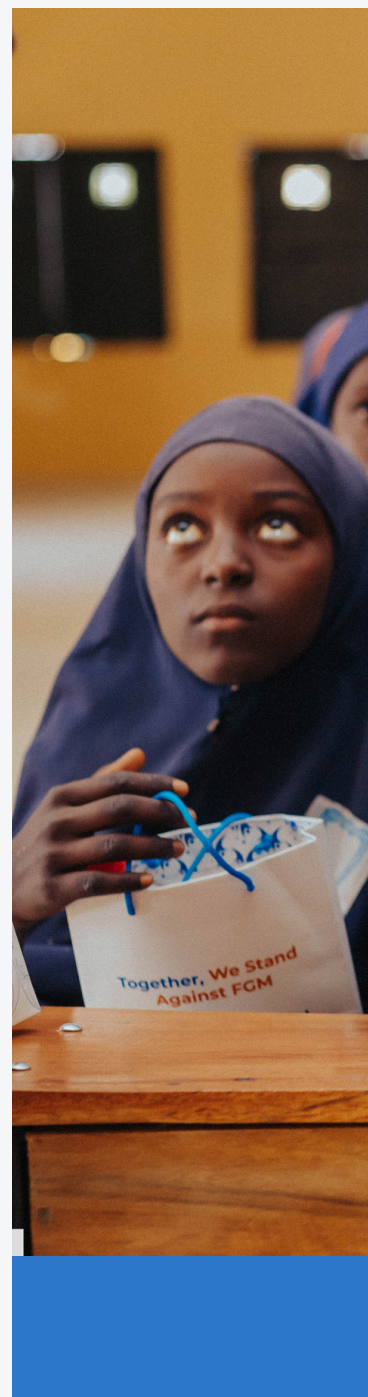
03 **Introduction**

Smart Aid Initiative is a youth-driven non-profit organization founded in 2017, advocating for access to inclusive quality education and opportunities for young people in underserved communities through policy advocacy, capacity building and empowerment.

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Mission, Vision and Core Values

→ **Mission**

To empower underserved communities by advocating for inclusive education, fostering policy reforms, and building young people's capacity for sustainable development.

→ **Vision**

To create a future where every young person, regardless of their background, has equitable access to quality education, opportunities, and the resources needed to become leaders and change-makers in their communities.

→ **Core Value**

Empathy

Accountability

Inclusivity

Sustainability

Partnership

04 Message From The Executive Director

As we close the chapter on 2024 and look toward the future, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible progress Smart Aid Initiative has made this year. This journey has been one of resilience, collaboration, and shared purpose, all aimed at empowering underserved communities, advocating for human rights, creating lasting and positive change.

This year, we expanded our reach and impact through transformative projects to develop the capacities of young people especially women and persons with disabilities through digital skills and opportunities. Our Projects have directly impacted thousands of individuals, providing access to quality education, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering safer environments for women and children.

A cornerstone of our efforts in 2024 was our relentless campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Gender Based Violence. We conducted impactful school awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs across Kaduna State, engaging community leaders, stakeholders, and students. These initiatives have ignited critical conversations about harmful practices, while empowering communities with the knowledge and tools to advocate for change.

Our success this year would not have been possible without the strong partnerships we have cultivated. From local community-based organizations to international development agencies, our allies have helped amplify our impact and provided the resources needed to address systemic issues. Together, we have tackled challenges, such as the prevalence of SGBV, barriers to education, and economic marginalization, with innovative approaches rooted in collaboration and shared vision.

Our organization has grown stronger, thanks to a dedicated team committed to excellence and impact. We have prioritized the professional development of our staff, streamlined our operations, and invested in leveraging technology to enhance our service delivery. These efforts have improved our efficiency and increased our ability to adapt to the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

As we look ahead, we remain deeply committed to scaling our programs, fostering more inclusive policies, and driving sustainable development across Nigeria. In 2025, we plan to expand our digital literacy initiatives, deepen our advocacy efforts, and focus on building stronger networks.

The achievements of 2024 would not have been possible without the dedication and energetic support of our team. Their passion and commitment have been instrumental in turning our vision into reality. I extend my deepest gratitude to our Advisory Board whose expertise and strategic insights have steered us through challenges and helped us seize opportunities for growth.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our donors and partners who have believed in our mission and supported our work. Together, we are creating a future where every child has access to quality education, every woman feels safe and empowered, and every community can thrive. The journey ahead is long, but with your support, it is one we will walk together, creating brighter tomorrows for all.

Fareed Ibrahim
Founder/Executive Director,
Smart Aid Initiative

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2024 Impacts in Numbers

Results from executed Projects in 2 States

1,828

Trained and
Supported
Individuals

23

Communities
Reached

25

Capacities of CBOs, youth-led networks,
and associations enhanced through
training results.

06

Impact Achievments

→ #DigitHer Project

→ Digitskills4All
   Project

→ DigitAbility Project

→ Capacity Building
   for CBOs

→ School Awareness
   Campaigns

→ The School Advocacy
   Campaign

#DigitHer Project

The #DigitHer project is an initiative sponsored by Next Leaders Initiative for Sustainability (NELIS) through their One Million Leaders Africa (OMLA) programme. #DigitHer was implemented in September, 2024 in partnership with Smart Aid Initiative to empower adolescent girls and young women in Kaduna State, Nigeria. It focused on bridging the digital gender divide by equipping participants with essential digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills. Through a five-day intensive training, participants learned to use digital tools such as (Canva, and Capcut) for financial independence, fostering gender equality, and promoting social and economic empowerment. The project directly supported SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality).

The primary audience for the project includes adolescent girls aged 14 to 21 from Kaduna State. The project goal was to address the barriers they face in accessing ICT, such as limited internet awareness and gender bias. Public school students were a key focus group to ensure inclusivity and empowerment for underserved communities.

The #DigitHer project successfully empowered 30 young women in Kaduna State. Participants' digital literacy significantly improved, with proficiency in creating digital content rising from 20% pre-bootcamp to 95% post-bootcamp.

Their entrepreneurial interest was also developed, as 40% of participants expressed enthusiasm for tech-related ventures, supported by resources for freelancing and content creation. Also, 90% demonstrated enhanced understanding of gender equality and online safety, equipping them to navigate digital spaces confidently.

The project also inspired 75% of participants to consider careers in technology, breaking traditional barriers and fostering ambition. Despite challenges such as logistical constraints, and limited school collaboration, adaptive measures ensured the program's success.

#DigitHer not only equipped participants with essential skills but also instilled confidence and ambition, creating a foundation for gender equality and a more inclusive digital future.

To ensure sustainability and scalability, #DigitHer is actively seeking additional funding to replicate the program across Kaduna State and also establish partnerships with youth led networks, schools and tech hubs closer to participants to address logistical challenges. Future plans include mentorship programs and creating sustainable impact pathways to bridge the digital gender gap further.

#DigitHer Project Visual Highlights

Digitskills4All Project:

The Digit4skills Project, organized in Zamfara State, aimed to address the digital divide and empowering young people by improving their capacity with the skills necessary to access modern opportunities.. The program targeted 100 young people, over a period of two days to enhance their educational and professional prospects.

In Zamfara, like many underserved regions in Nigeria, limited access to digital tools and education has left many young people at a disadvantage in the increasingly digital global economy. Recognizing this gap, we developed a program to bridge this divide and create a foundation for digital inclusion. We are committed to building digital literacy, fostering an understanding of online learning platforms, and empowering participants to leverage these skills for personal and community development.

During the intensive training period, participants were introduced to a range of digital tools and the use of online learning platforms. Practical applications of these tools included topics such as the SDGs, civic rights, and digital advocacy..

The impact of the program was profound. Many participants, who had little to no prior experience with computers, left the program confident in their ability to navigate the digital world. They demonstrated a newfound ability to access and utilize online learning resources to improve their education and skill sets. For instance, several participants enrolled in online courses immediately after the training, with some already earning certifications that could enhance their employability.

The program's success can be attributed to its comprehensive approach, which combined practical, hands-on learning with mentorship and guidance. By creating a supportive learning environment, we ensured that participants not only gained technical skills but also built the confidence to apply these skills in real-world contexts.

The Digit4skills Project in Zamfara State has made a significant impact in bridging the digital learning divide, empowering young people with tools to thrive in the digital age. It has laid the groundwork for sustained growth and development, equipping a new generation with the skills to access opportunities and drive change in their communities. Moving forward, we aim to scale this initiative to reach more underserved areas, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital revolution.

Digitskills4All Project Visual Highlights

DigitAbility Program for Persons with Disabilities:

The DigitAbility program was designed to empower Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) by providing them with essential digital skills to foster self-reliance, creativity, and innovation. This initiative reflects our commitment to breaking barriers to access and inclusion, ensuring that PWD students and teachers can actively participate in the digital economy.

In Zamfara State, where educational and economic opportunities for PWDs are often limited, this program targeted 50 PWD students and 25 teachers from schools for special education. The two-day intensive training aimed to build their capacity to utilize digital tools and online resources, enabling them to unlock new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The training focused on foundational digital skills, including basic computer operations, internet navigation, and the use of productivity tools and online learning platforms. Participants were also introduced to creative platforms and basic principles of online freelancing.

For teachers, the training emphasized integrating digital tools into their teaching practices to enhance learning experiences for PWD students.

The impact of this initiative was transformative. Many participants, who previously had limited or no exposure to digital tools, expressed newfound confidence in their ability to use technology for learning, communication, and income generation. PWD students began exploring online learning platforms, while teachers incorporated digital tools into their lesson plans, fostering more inclusive and engaging classroom environments.

The program inspired a shift in perception among participants, as they recognized the potential of technology to transcend physical and societal barriers. This newfound sense of empowerment is expected to create a ripple effect, inspiring participants to share their knowledge within their communities and advocate for greater digital inclusion.

The success of the DigitAbility program underscores the importance of targeted initiatives that address the unique needs of underserved populations. By equipping PWDs with digital skills, we have not only expanded their access to opportunities but also strengthened their ability to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the wider digital economy.

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Smart Aid Initiative remains committed to scaling the DigitAbility program to reach more schools and communities, fostering a more inclusive digital future for all. Through sustained efforts and collaboration with stakeholders, we aim to ensure that no one is left behind in the journey toward digital empowerment.

DigitAbility Program Visual Highlights

Capacity Building for CBOs, Youth-led Networks, and Associations in Kaduna State

In our relentless pursuit to eradicate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and foster community-driven solutions, Smart Aid Initiative spearheaded a capacity-building project for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), youth-led networks, and associations across Kaduna State supported by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Recognizing the significance of collaboration, we issued a call for applications that drew an overwhelming response of 316 applications from various organizations. Through a rigorous selection process, 23 CBOs were chosen. These included women-led groups and representatives from each of the 23 local government areas, ensuring diverse and inclusive representation.

The three-day capacity-building program was designed to provide participants with in-depth knowledge, practical tools, and actionable strategies to amplify grassroots efforts against FGM. Expert facilitators guided sessions on topics such as advocacy, data as a tool for advocacy, stakeholder mapping and engagement, and leveraging technology for change. The training emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts, equipping participants with the skills to design and implement impactful initiatives within their communities.

The program not only enriched participants with enhanced knowledge but also reignited a shared sense of purpose and unified commitment to combating FGM. To support their endeavors, we provided financial resources, enabling the CBOs to take immediate action and sustain their efforts. These resources were earmarked for localized interventions, ranging from community sensitization campaigns to providing support and more commitment to end FGM.

The initiative underscored the transformative power of collective action. Participants left the program empowered, connected, and ready to tackle FGM with renewed vigor. They began forming partnerships within the network, sharing best practices, and pooling resources to enhance their outreach and effectiveness.

Smart Aid Initiative remains steadfast in its commitment to nurturing and expanding this network of CBOs, youth-led organizations, and associations. By fostering collaboration, providing continuous support, and organizing follow-up engagements, we aim to tackle pressing societal issues like FGM with sustained impact.

We envision a future where harmful practices like FGM are eradicated, and communities, especially women and girls, can thrive in a more equitable and inclusive society.

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This project serves as a testament to what is possible when grassroots efforts are empowered with the right tools, resources, and partnerships.

Media Report

School Awareness Campaigns in Maraban Guga, Zabawa, and Rigachikun Communities of Kaduna State

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a deeply harmful practice with profound health and psychological consequences. Despite sustained advocacy, FGM remains pervasive in Nigeria, with a worrying prevalence among young girls. To address this challenge, Smart Aid Initiative, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), launched targeted school awareness campaigns in communities identified as "hotspot areas" with high FGM prevalence in Kaduna State.

Our campaign focused on Igabi and Giwa Local Government Areas, specifically engaging schools and community leaders in Maraban Guga, Zabawa, and Rigachikun communities. The goal was to break the silence and stigma surrounding FGM by educating young people and empowering them alongside community leaders to actively commit to the elimination of this harmful practice

Targeting three schools, Maraban Guga Government Secondary School, Giwa Government Secondary School, and Nasarawa Rigachikun Government Secondary School. the initiative reached over 600 students. Using the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) curriculum, we facilitated sessions on the dangers of FGM, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and the importance of personal hygiene.

These interactive sessions equipped students with critical knowledge about their rights, fostering awareness of the severe implications of FGM and SGBV.

Beyond the classrooms, the campaign actively engaged community leaders to promote dialogue and shared responsibility in creating supportive environments. This collaboration has been instrumental in dismantling the cultural and social norms perpetuating FGM, paving the way for long-term community-driven change.

The school awareness campaign is a testament to the transformative impact of education and grassroots advocacy. By focusing on young people and community leaders, we have sown the seeds for a generation committed to eradicating FGM and SGBV while promoting healthier, safer, and more inclusive communities.

School Awareness Campaigns Visual Highlights

The School Advocacy Campaign

The School Advocacy Campaign (SAC) continues to drive meaningful change in underserved communities across northern Nigeria. By engaging schools to provide career guidance, personal hygiene education, and emphasizing the critical importance of education, the campaign has become a catalyst for transformation among young students.

We extended our activities to four schools in Kaduna and Zamfara states, directly impacting hundreds of students. Among the key outcomes was the support provided to 600 girls, who received sanitary hygiene products as part of our commitment to promoting health, dignity, and consistent school attendance for young women.

The campaign aims to inspire and empower students to envision a brighter future while addressing immediate barriers to their growth. Through interactive sessions, students were encouraged to explore diverse career opportunities, enabling them to set clear goals for their academic and personal lives. These engagements bridged the gap between aspirations and actionable steps, fostering hope and ambition among the participants.

A critical component of the campaign was its focus on personal hygiene education. Recognizing the challenges many girls face due to inadequate knowledge and resources, the initiative provided practical demonstrations and open discussions about menstrual hygiene.

The provision of sanitary products addressed an immediate need while equipping the girls with confidence and awareness to manage their menstrual cycles effectively. This intervention is expected to have a lasting impact, particularly by reducing absenteeism linked to menstruation, which is a significant barrier to education for many girls in the region.

The campaign also underscored the transformative power of education as a tool for breaking cycles of poverty and inequality. By highlighting the importance of regular school attendance and fostering resilience against societal barriers, SAC reaffirmed its role as a champion of equitable education for all. Parents and community leaders who participated in the outreach expressed their appreciation for the initiative, noting its significant contribution to community development and student empowerment.

The success of this outreach program has reinforced Smart Aid Initiative's commitment to scaling the School Advocacy Campaign to reach even more underserved communities. By addressing the interlinked challenges of education and health, SAC remains a beacon of hope for students, inspiring them to dream bigger and achieve more. With sustained efforts, the initiative continues to create a ripple effect of change, transforming lives and building a stronger, more educated generation.

The School Advocacy Campaign Visual Highlights

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Social Media Report

X
SmartAid
Analytics

34	486	12,275	1,557
Posts	Likes	Impression	Engagement

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Analytics

36	556	4,531	4,629
Posts	Likes	Impression	Engagement

in
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19	707	2,075	3,519
Posts	Likes	Reach	Engagement

f
SmartAid
Analytics

31	314	10,600	1,485
Posts	Likes	Reach	Engagement

08 **Our Team**

Fareed Ibrahim
Executive Director
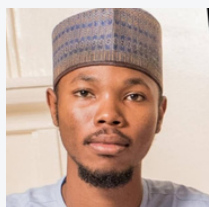
Sadiq Ba'aba
Programs Lead

Favour Diche
Community
Engagement Lead
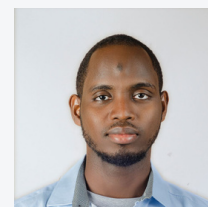
**Musa Alkassim
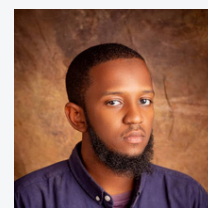Adamu**
Operations Lead
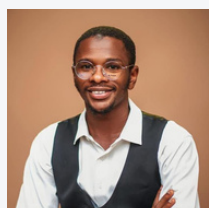
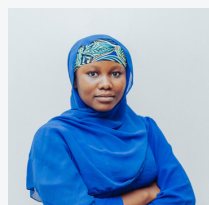**Ibrahim Idris**
Communications
Lead
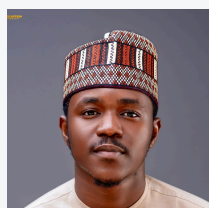
**Abdulmutallab
Shehu Othman**
Programs Associate
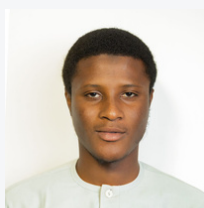
Abubakar Kasim
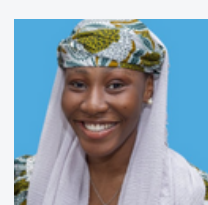Finance Officer

**Aliyu Ahmed
Bello**
M&E Officer

**Fatima imam
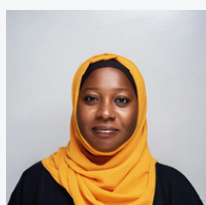Katcha**
Communications
Associate

Yusuf Abdulhadi
IT Manager

**Abdulmalik
Halima Musa**
Communications
Associate

**Ummulkulsum
Uwaisu**
Community
Engagement
Associate

Maryam Jibril
Operations Associate

08 Meet our Donors and Partners

09 **Let's Work Together**

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