

KEY TAKEAWAYS OF WORKSHOP TRAINING



"FROM SCREEN TIME TO REAL LIFE: BALANCING SOCIAL MEDIA AND REAL LIFE"

DATE: APRIL 01-02, 2025 | LOCATION M HOTEL

Protect Children in
Digital era

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Organized by **NOBILIS LAW FIRM**

APRIL 1-2 , 2025

M HOTEL
CENTURY PARK



Me. Sonia Ruton NDASHEJA
Managing Partner
NOBILIS LAW FIRM

Preface

It is with immense pride and heartfelt gratitude that I present this report on our recently concluded two-day workshop, ***"From Screen Time to Real Life: Balancing Social Media and Real Life."*** This initiative was inspired by a simple, yet profound belief: that every child deserves to be safe, informed, and empowered in their digital journey.

I extend my deepest appreciation to our generous sponsors, ISHUSHO TV and RSK Associates, for their invaluable support in making this event possible. Your contributions went far beyond resources, you helped amplify our shared mission to build a safer digital environment for children.

To the parents who joined us with open minds and the children who spoke with courage and creativity, thank you. Your contribution and engagement gave life and purpose to every session, discussion, and activity. The voices of young people, in particular, reminded us why we must continue to work tirelessly to protect and empower them in every digital space they occupy.

This workshop was not just an event, it was a collective promise. A promise to listen, to learn, and to lead with empathy and responsibility. Together, let us continue shaping a digital future where every child can explore safely, express freely, and thrive fully. With gratitude and commitment.



Workshop Objectives



1. Raising awareness of the psychological and social impact of excessive screen time.
2. Providing strategies for digital wellness and mindful social media consumption.
3. Encouraging meaningful face-to-face interactions and offline activities.
4. Promoting the importance of work-life and digital balance in different professional and social settings.
5. Exploring the effects of social media on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, etc.
6. Exploring legal measures taken by Rwanda to protect children

targeted audience

Exclusively children

Panel of discussion

Theme: "Effective Practices for Safeguarding Children in the Digital World"



Day 1- Panel Discussion: "Effective Practices for Safeguarding Children in the Digital World"

A central feature of Day 1 was the powerful panel discussion titled "***Effective Practices for Safeguarding Children in the Digital World***," which brought together diverse voices of legal experts, child rights advocates, and youth participants to reflect on the current realities and strategies for ensuring children's online safety.

Moderated by Felix NDACYAYISENGA, a Junior Associate at Nobilis Law Firm, the panel served as a dynamic and interactive platform for exchanging insights, sharing lived experiences, and offering practical solutions.

Ngabo Kayijuka, a lawyer and parent, opened the session by highlighting the legal and community-based tools available for child protection. He emphasized the importance of digital parenting, advocating for the use of parental controls, open conversations at home, and involving children in offline social activities to foster balance and healthy development.

David Rugaju, passionate advocate for child safeguarding, delved into the emotional and psychological impact of excessive screen time and social media use. He spoke about how platforms can trigger anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy among children, especially when left unchecked. Rugaju stressed that parents must transition from being "reactive disciplinarians" to proactive listeners—offering emotional support and encouraging honest dialogue.

Ariella Ineza Blessing, a young and articulate participant, courageously represented the voice of her peers. She candidly discussed both the positive and negative sides of social media from a child's perspective, drawing attention to the pressures of online validation and the challenge of navigating peer influence. Her testimony highlighted the need to include young voices in conversations about digital safety and mental well-being.

Day 1- Overview:

Afternoon Session – Mental Health and Development

Theme: “The Impact of Social Media on Children’s Mental Health and Development”

The afternoon session offered a critical exploration into how digital spaces are affecting children's emotional and developmental well-being.



Denise AMAHIRWE
UNICEF -Rwanda

A Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF explored the emotional consequences of digital exposure, including anxiety, depression, fear of missing out (FOMO), and cyberbullying. She emphasized the importance of building digital resilience the ability for children to manage and recover from negative experiences online. She encouraged parents to be proactive listeners rather than reactive disciplinarians when supporting their children. Additionally, she showed children various educational videos that advised them to avoid sharing personal information and pictures with strangers online and to always consult their parents when unsure or in uncomfortable situations.



Robert Ford
*a contributor to Rwanda's
Child Online Protection
Policy*

Robert Ford, a contributor to Rwanda’s Child Online Protection Policy, outlined the importance of ensuring that digital policies align with community and family values. Highlights of his presentation included:

- The need to foster digital empathy and resilience among children and youth.
- Promoting safe and age-appropriate online content that is reflective of and tailored to local culture and context.
- Emphasizing the importance of bridging the gap between legal frameworks and real-world challenges, ensuring that policies are both practical and enforceable within everyday family and community settings.



Day 1 Overview – DEBATE

A powerful and respectful debate session unfolded under the motion “Social Media and Child Safety: Protecting Kids or Overprotecting Them?” The event showcased strong reasoning, balanced arguments, and thoughtful engagement from both sides. The Proposition team emerged victorious, effectively promoting the idea of responsible protection without restricting freedom.

The debate was judged by Kevin Ntwali and Jerome Mbanjineza, with Felix Ndacyayisenga serving as the presiding judge. The judges congratulated both teams for their performance and provided constructive feedback, encouraging debaters to avoid reading verbatim, use body language effectively, conduct thorough research, and support their arguments with credible evidence. Winners were awarded by the organizing team, marking the close of an intellectually stimulating and empowering session.

After the debate, participants gathered for a group photo, marking the conclusion of Day One of the event. The photo provided a moment for everyone to come together and commemorate the day's discussions before heading into the next phase of the program.



Day 2 Overview-Empowerment and Practical Application

Day 2 of the workshop was designed to empower children to become confident and informed digital citizens. Building on the insights gained from Day 1, the second day focused on reinforcing the importance of responsible online behavior, digital citizenship, and balancing virtual interactions with real-life experiences. The day featured a series of engaging activities aimed at fostering both learning and practical application of the concepts discussed.

Group Discussions and Reflections on Day 1 Insights

The day began with group discussions, allowing participants to reflect on the key lessons learned from Day 1. These sessions encouraged children to share their personal takeaways from the workshop, particularly in relation to online safety, mental well-being, and digital empowerment. The discussions fostered critical thinking, enabling children to better understand how digital behaviors can impact their lives and how they can use social media responsibly.

Interactive Team Sports and a Social Media Safety Game

The afternoon session blended fun with learning as children participated in interactive team sports and a social media safety game. The activities were designed not only to encourage physical engagement but also to reinforce key concepts around digital safety. The social media safety game, in particular, proved to be a fun and educational way to test the children's knowledge about online threats, privacy settings, and responsible behavior. The teams worked together to answer questions and solve challenges, all while reinforcing the importance of safe and informed digital practices.



Why It Matters

At Nobilis Law Firm, we recognize that digital literacy is more than just understanding how to use technology it's about developing the skills to engage with technology in a thoughtful, safe, and responsible manner. This belief forms the foundation of our workshops, like "From Screen Time to Real Life," which are built around three core principles: education, awareness, and empowerment. These principles serve as pillars that guide children, parents, and communities toward safer and more responsible digital behaviors.

Education is vital because it equips children with the knowledge they need to understand the digital world and the potential risks they may encounter, such as cyberbullying, identity theft, and inappropriate content. Through sessions that explore both the benefits and dangers of digital platforms, children are empowered to make informed decisions when engaging online. This education also extends to teaching children the importance of privacy, how to recognize online dangers, and how to engage with others respectfully and responsibly.

Awareness is about recognizing the various ways in which digital interactions can impact children's lives emotionally, mentally, and socially. Social media platforms, for example, can influence children's self-esteem and mental health, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression, or feelings of inadequacy. By raising awareness about these risks, we encourage children to be mindful of their digital behavior, to reflect on their online interactions, and to be aware of the potential impact on their mental well-being. Parents are also encouraged to be aware of their children's digital activities so they can provide appropriate guidance and support.

Empowerment comes into play when we teach children not only how to be aware of the risks but also how to protect themselves, make safe decisions, and take ownership of their online behavior. Empowered children are more likely to set boundaries for themselves, seek help when they need it, and navigate the digital world with confidence. Empowerment involves instilling in children the belief that they have control over their digital lives and that they can protect their privacy, maintain healthy relationships, and avoid dangerous situations online.



Key Takeaways

- 1. *The Importance of Creating a Balance Between Online and Offline Life is Critical for Children's Well-Being:*** While the digital world offers many opportunities for learning, socializing, and entertainment, children must maintain a healthy balance between their online and offline lives. Excessive screen time can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as reduced physical activity, poor social skills, and sleep disturbances. By encouraging children to engage in offline activities, such as outdoor play, hobbies, and face-to-face interactions, we help them develop well-rounded personalities and preserve their mental and physical well-being. This balance also allows children to cultivate important real-life skills—such as communication, problem-solving, and empathy—that are essential for their overall development.
- 2. *Parents Play an Essential Role in Guiding Their Children's Digital Experiences:*** Parents are the first line of defense regarding online safety and serve as role models in shaping their children's digital habits. It's essential for parents to stay informed about the platforms and apps their children are using, set appropriate screen time limits, and have open conversations about digital safety. By fostering an environment of trust, where children feel comfortable discussing their online experiences, parents can guide their children in making smart decisions online. This proactive engagement helps prevent potential issues and ensures that children can safely navigate the digital space.
- 3. *Interactive Learning Activities, Like Games and Group Discussions Are Powerful Tools for Reinforcing Digital Safety Lessons:*** Children learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Workshops that include interactive activities—such as games, role-playing, and group discussions—make the lessons about online safety more relatable and memorable. These activities give children the chance to apply what they've learned in a fun and supportive environment. For example, a social media safety game might challenge them to recognize potential threats, practice using privacy settings, or demonstrate how to handle inappropriate content. Such activities not only reinforce the key concepts of digital safety but also encourage teamwork and critical thinking, which are valuable skills in the real world.
- 4. *Every Child Has the Potential to Be a Responsible Digital Citizen, and Empowering Them Through Education is Key to Achieving This:*** The goal of digital education is not to restrict children's use of technology but to empower them to use it responsibly. Every child has the capacity to be a responsible digital citizen—someone who understands the importance of respecting others online, protecting their own privacy, and navigating the digital world with integrity. By providing children with the education, awareness, and tools they need to make informed decisions, we help them become responsible, thoughtful users of digital platforms. Empowerment, in this sense, is about equipping children with the confidence and skills to handle both the positive and negative aspects of the digital world.



CONCLUSION

The "From Screen Time to Real Life" workshop was more than a response to the growing concerns around children's digital lives, it was a proactive and transformative experience that placed education, empathy, and empowerment at the forefront of online child protection.

Over the course of two days, participants were not only given the tools to understand the risks and opportunities of social media, but also encouraged to reflect critically on how digital platforms influence their mental health, relationships, and personal identity. Through insightful panel discussions, creative debates, engaging group activities, and direct conversations with experts, the workshop successfully bridged the gap between awareness and action.

One of the most significant outcomes was the realization that protecting children online is not just about shielding them from harm it's about preparing them to face the digital world with confidence, knowledge, and responsibility. Children were taught that their online choices have real-life consequences, and they were empowered to speak up, set boundaries, and seek guidance when needed. Equally, the workshop reinforced the pivotal role of parents and caregivers in guiding children through their digital journeys. Their involvement must go beyond monitoring and restriction; they need to foster open communication, model healthy digital habits, and stay actively engaged in their children's online experiences.

By combining learning with fun, dialogue with action, and theory with practice, the workshop created a space where every child was seen, heard, and supported. The success of this initiative demonstrates that meaningful change in digital behavior begins with inclusive conversations, accessible education, and community-driven efforts.

At Nobilis Law Firm, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting child rights, digital literacy, and safe online environments. As technology continues to evolve, so must our strategies for protecting and empowering the youngest members of our society. This workshop is only the beginning. We envision more collaborative efforts, policy advocacy, and community-based programs aimed at nurturing a generation that is not only digitally active but also digitally wise. We extend our deepest appreciation to our generous sponsors ISHUSHO TV and RSK Associates for their invaluable support in making this event possible. Your commitment to social impact, child protection, and community development went far beyond resources.

Together, we can build a future where children thrive both online and offline.

Organization Team

NOBILIS



Let's shape future together



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