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Blue Sapphire Hub Reporting Year: 2025

Skills to Systems: Catalyzing Inclusive Growth and Innovation in Nigeria

Message from Leadership

2025 has been a remarkable year for Blue Sapphire Hub—a year defined by resilience, growth, and measurable impact. As we reflect on the past twelve months, I am filled with pride at what our team, partners, and communities have achieved together.

This year, we continued to push boundaries in innovation and inclusion, implementing projects that not only addressed pressing social and digital gaps but also created pathways for sustainable change. From empowering hundreds of women and youth with in-demand digital skills to strengthening governance and civic engagement, our work has consistently aimed at bridging the divide between potential and opportunity in Northern Nigeria.

One of our most exciting milestones in 2025 was the production of the first Hausa film series advocating for digital inclusion—"Fasahar Zamani." This culturally resonant series has amplified the conversation around technology and empowerment, reaching underserved communities and inspiring thousands to embrace digital tools for education, livelihoods, and social engagement. It exemplifies the kind of innovative, locally relevant, and high-impact work that defines Blue Sapphire Hub.

As we celebrate these achievements, we remain committed to expanding access, fostering innovation, and nurturing talent across the region. The impact captured in this report is a testament to what is possible when dedication, creativity, and collaboration converge toward a shared vision of progress and inclusion.

Thank you to our partners, participants, and supporters who have been part of this journey. Together, we are turning vision into action and potential into opportunity.

Maryam Lawan Gwadabe

Founder & CEO, Blue Sapphire Hub

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About the Blue Sapphire Hub

Mission

To empower underserved communities through digital inclusion, innovation, and entrepreneurship, creating pathways for sustainable livelihoods, education, and civic engagement.

Vision

To be a leading catalyst for inclusive digital transformation and innovation in Nigeria, where every individual regardless of gender, age, or ability—can access the tools, skills, and opportunities to realize their full potential.

Core Values

- **Inclusion:** Leaving no one behind, especially women, youth, and persons living with disabilities (PLWDs).
- **Innovation:** Applying creative, technology-driven solutions to address local challenges.
- **Integrity:** Upholding transparency, accountability, and ethical practices in all endeavors.
- **Empowerment:** Building skills, knowledge, and confidence to enable self-reliance and leadership.
- **Collaboration:** Partnering with communities, government, private sector, and civil society to amplify impact.

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Brief History and Growth

Founded by Maryam Lawan Gwadabe, Blue Sapphire Hub began as a family-based initiative training friends and local youth in digital skills. Over the years, it has grown into a leading innovation and digital inclusion hub in Northern Nigeria. In 2025, the organization expanded its physical facilities to Jigawa State, establishing a new center to reach more communities and scale its programs. This growth reflects BSH's commitment to regional accessibility and sustainable impact.

Geographic Focus

Blue Sapphire Hub primarily operates in Northern Nigeria, including Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto, and surrounding states, with plans to expand further into underserved areas across the region.
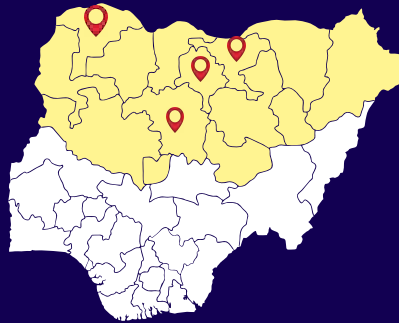
Target Beneficiaries

- Youth (ages 06–35): Providing digital, entrepreneurial, and leadership skills for employability and innovation.
- Women and Girls: Supporting economic empowerment, digital literacy, and inclusion in technology and entrepreneurship.
- Persons Living With Disabilities (PLWDs): Ensuring accessibility, digital inclusion, and tailored capacity-building programs.
- Local Communities and Institutions: Strengthening civic engagement, governance, and digital literacy at community levels.
- Startups and Innovators: Offering mentorship, incubation, and access to resources to scale solutions addressing local and national challenges.

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2025 AT A GLANCE

KEY STATISTICS

13
Projects implemented

7k Total beneficiaries reached
(disaggregated by gender, age, location, disability where applicable)

10M Total reached through radio/Media.

3
States reached

PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Our Theory of Change

Approach / Interventions

- Blue Sapphire Hub addresses these challenges through a multi-pronged, community-driven approach:

- Digital Skills Development: Offering training in software development, data analysis, UI/UX design, digital marketing, and advanced technology (AI, ML, no-code platforms).

- Innovation & Entrepreneurship Support: Running hackathons, incubation programs, pitching events, and mentorship for startups and innovators.

- Civic Engagement & Governance: Facilitating accountability programs, citizen feedback mechanisms, and governance dashboards.

- Policy & Advocacy: Engaging stakeholders through dialogues, policy briefs, and media campaigns to influence inclusive policies and digital rights awareness.

- Media & Awareness Campaigns: Producing culturally relevant media content such as the first Hausa digital inclusion series ("Fasahar Zamani") and radio programs to reach underserved communities.

Problem Statement

Communities in Nigeria faces significant gaps in digital literacy, innovation capacity, and inclusive economic opportunities, particularly among women, youth, and persons living with disabilities (PLWDs). Limited access to technology, skills, and networks restricts employability, entrepreneurship, and civic participation. These gaps perpetuate inequality, social exclusion, and missed opportunities for regional development.

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Outputs, Outcomes, and Long-term Impact

Level	Examples from 2025
Outputs	• 15 major programs implemented (SIDP, ADAN, SLAC, etc.) • 7,500+ participants trained, including women, youth, and PLWDs • 12 episodes of Hausa digital inclusion series produced • 4 million+ radio listeners reached • 20+ startups incubated or accelerated
Outcomes	• Increased digital literacy and employability • Improved entrepreneurship readiness • Strengthened civic engagement and government accountability • Enhanced awareness of digital rights • Expanded innovation ecosystem in Northern Nigeria
Long-term Impact	• Reduced digital inequality across Northern Nigeria • Sustainable access to technology and skills for marginalized communities • Thriving youth and women-led startups contributing to regional economic growth • Institutionalized citizen participation and governance accountability • Integration of digital inclusion into cultural narratives and community practices

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Alignment with SDGs and National Priorities

BSH's programs contribute directly to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Nigerian development priorities:

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality Education – Equipping youth and women with digital and entrepreneurial skills.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Decent Work and Economic Growth – Fostering employability, startups, and innovation-driven economic participation.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality – Empowering women and girls through digital literacy, economic opportunities, and advocacy.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure – Strengthening regional technology and innovation ecosystems.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduced Inequalities – Inclusion of PLWDs and marginalized populations in digital programs.

National Priorities – Supporting the Nigerian digital economy agenda, youth empowerment initiatives, and inclusive development frameworks at state and federal levels.

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Programmatic Impact Summary (2025)

1. SIDP – Education & Skills Development Capacity Building

The Skills for Inclusive Digital Participation (SIDP) project, implemented under the British Council initiative, reached 350 participants across Bichi and Kano Municipal LGAs (180 males, 170 females), including 75 Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs). The project targeted marginalized communities with limited access to digital tools and training

Participants gained foundational digital skills such as computer operation, device usage, and essential digital literacy for modern livelihoods. A defining impact was enabling PLWD participants to operate and own a computer for the first time—significantly improving confidence, dignity, and self-belief. SIDP reduced digital inequality and expanded pathways to education, employability, and social inclusion.

2. Innovate North – Technology, Innovation, Policy & Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Strengthening

Innovate North strengthened the innovation and startup ecosystem across Northwestern Nigeria through hackathons, stakeholder dialogues, pitching events, and policy advocacy. From 200+ startup applications, 30 high-potential startups were selected for the hackathon, engaging 100+ direct participants.

Three startups emerged as winners, with GreenFlames as overall winner. Stakeholder dialogues engaged 80 participants (52 males, 28 females), fostering collaboration between policymakers, innovators, and ecosystem actors. The project also produced a Kano-wide policy brief, positioning Northern Nigeria as an emerging innovation hub.

3. IP Salaye – Technology & Innovation Incubation Program (WIPO)

Implemented in partnership with WIPO, IP Salaye engaged 100 NYSC members (82 males, 18 females) nationwide, organized into 20 startup teams. Over a six-month incubation, participants received training across the full startup lifecycle.

At completion, 10 startups graduated and received certification, transitioning from ideation to viable ventures. The program strengthened youth innovation capacity, entrepreneurship readiness, and intellectual property awareness.

4. PIN-LIFE – Digital Skills for Employability

PIN-LIFE trained 100 participants (60 males, 40 females) in software development, data analysis, and graphic design. Through hands-on, project-based learning, participants developed employable digital skills aligned with labor-market demands.

As the third cohort hosted by Blue Sapphire Hub, the program demonstrated sustainability while improving youth employability, income prospects, and digital resilience in Kano State.

5. SLAC – Strengthened Leaders and Aware Citizens

SLAC engaged 100 participants (80 males, 20 females) across five LGAs through governance dialogues, policy development, and technology innovation. A 12-week radio program reached over 4 million listeners, facilitating live accountability conversations with elected leaders at all levels of government.

The project culminated in the development of a governance dashboard, promoting transparency, citizen feedback, and trust between citizens and government institutions.

6. My Data, My Right – Digital Rights & Data Protection Advocacy

This initiative combined stakeholder dialogues, policy advocacy, and a six-week radio program, directly engaging 75 participants and reaching 4 million listeners statewide. A Kano-wide policy brief strengthened advocacy for responsible data practices.

To ensure sustainability, the project will establish campus digital rights ambassadors across five universities, laying the foundation for youth-led digital rights advocacy.

7. Accelerating Digital Adoption in Northern Nigeria (ADAN)

ADAN reached 3,455 participants across Kano, Katsina, and Jigawa States, including 2,032 females, 1,423 males, and 1,000+ PLWDs. Key activities included 150 Digital Community Champions trained, baseline research with 300 participants, and radio programs reaching 4 million listeners.

A major creative output was "Fasahar Zamani", a 12-episode Hausa film series showcasing technology adoption, premiered in Abuja. ADAN reshaped community perceptions of technology as a tool for empowerment and economic opportunity.

8. Career Fair – Community Employment Linkage Initiative

The Career Fair engaged 167 participants (108 females, 59 males, including 5 PLWDs) and connected jobseekers directly with 10+ hiring companies. On-the-spot interviews and recruitment pipelines reduced employment barriers and strengthened private-sector engagement

9. IDEAS – Digital Skills & Employability Program

IDEAS trained 687 participants (410 males, 277 females, 3 PLWDs) across Bichi, Gaya, and Kano Municipal LGAsin UI/UX design, content creation, and digital marketing. Assessments and a job fair, conducted with CPN, linked training directly to employment and entrepreneurship pathways.

10. TechEmpower 3.0 – Market-Driven Skills Training

TechEmpower 3.0 trained 38 participants (22 males, 16 females) in executive assistance, program management, digital marketing, and content creation. The three-month intensive program improved job readiness for both remote and physical employment opportunities.

11. DeepTech – Advanced Technology Capacity Building

Sponsored by Google and 3MTT, DeepTech trained 162 participants (102 males, 60 females) across advanced tracks including data science, machine learning, computer vision, generative AI, and no-code ML. The program strengthened Nigeria's deep-tech talent pipeline.

12. Women Venture Studio & DSE Training

Women Venture Studio empowered 250 women across Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto, while DSE training reached 69 participants, strengthening women-led enterprises and digital readiness.

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13. AI & Digital Music Economy Hackathon

From 200+ national applications, 41 participants (32 males, 9 females) formed 12 teams in Nigeria's first AI-focused music economy hackathon. Implemented with ACET, FMACCE, and NCAC, the hackathon produced functional AI-driven prototypes.

Team TuneIQ emerged winner, receiving $5,000, with solutions positioned to inform policy, investment, and transparency in Nigeria's creative economy.

14. Online Digital Safety & International Girl Child Day

These initiatives reached 91 participants in Kano Municipal, strengthening digital safety, GBV awareness, and girl-child advocacy.
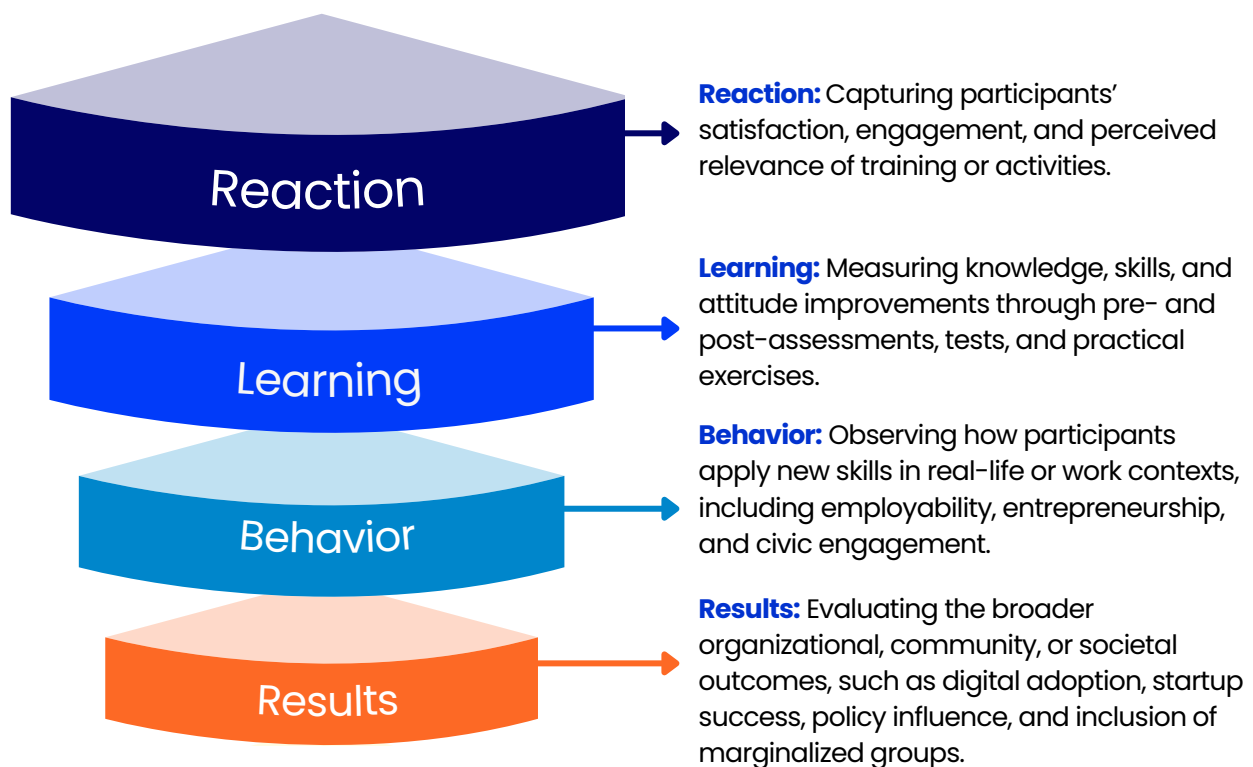

15. 15 Webinar Series & 16 Days of Activism

A series of public engagement activities amplified awareness on gender equality, digital rights, and social justice, extending impact beyond physical participation through online platforms.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL)

Blue Sapphire Hub employs a robust MEAL framework to ensure its programs are effective, evidence-based, and accountable. In 2025, MEAL processes focused on assessing program effectiveness, learning from implementation, and adapting interventions for maximum impact.

Using the Kirkpatrick Model

BSH applied the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Framework, assessing programs across four levels:

Reaction

Learning

Behavior

Results

Reaction: Capturing participants' satisfaction, engagement, and perceived relevance of training or activities.

Learning: Measuring knowledge, skills, and attitude improvements through pre- and post-assessments, tests, and practical exercises.

Behavior: Observing how participants apply new skills in real-life or work contexts, including employability, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement.

Results: Evaluating the broader organizational, community, or societal outcomes, such as digital adoption, startup success, policy influence, and inclusion of marginalized groups.

Data Collection Methods

- **Quantitative:** Pre- and post-training surveys, assessment tests, participant tracking forms, attendance logs, and digital platform analytics.

- **Qualitative:** Focus group discussions, interviews with participants, mentors, and stakeholders, success stories, and case studies.

- **Observational:** Monitoring participants' practical application of skills during mentorship sessions, projects, and workplace settings.

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Tools Used

- Dashboards: Real-time project dashboards capturing participant progress, engagement, and outputs.
- Trackers: Digital and manual trackers for attendance, milestone achievements, and follow-up activities.
- Surveys & Forms: Structured online and offline questionnaires for feedback, learning assessment, and impact measurement.
- Media Analytics: Radio listenership, social media engagement, and Hausa series viewership to assess reach and awareness.

Learning & Adaptation in 2025

- Adjusted training content based on participant feedback to better match local contexts and labor market needs.
- Enhanced inclusion strategies for PLWDs by modifying materials, tools, and mentorship approaches.
- Iteratively improved hackathon and incubation program designs to increase startup graduation rates and entrepreneurial success.
- Used media insights from the Hausa digital inclusion series to inform culturally relevant advocacy strategies.

Key Insights & Evidence of Change

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Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

Blue Sapphire Hub's impact in 2025 was amplified through strong collaborations with diverse stakeholders, ensuring programs are relevant, sustainable, and community-driven.

Strategic Partners

- Collaborated with international organizations including the British Council, UK International development WIPO, Google, Paradigm Initiative, and ACET.
- Engaged local and regional NGOs to co-implement projects, share best practices, and scale impact.
- Leveraged partnerships with research institutions and media organizations to inform evidence-based interventions and amplify reach.

Private Sector & Ecosystem Actors

- Worked with technology companies, startups, and hiring firms to provide mentorship, incubation, and employment opportunities.
- Facilitated hackathons, innovation challenges, and career fairs, bridging gaps between talent and market demand.
- Supported ecosystem growth by connecting innovators with investors, partners, and mentors across Northern Nigeria.

Role of Beneficiaries & Community Leaders

- Beneficiaries played an active role in shaping programs, providing feedback through surveys, focus groups, and community consultations.
- Community leaders acted as champions for inclusion and participation, helping implement programs and sustain impact at the local level.
- Both beneficiaries and leaders contributed to knowledge dissemination, advocacy, and adoption of digital tools and civic practices within their communities.

Government & Community Engagement

- Actively engaged state and local government authorities in Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, and Sokoto States to align programs with policy priorities.
- Partnered with community leaders, traditional authorities, and local councils to mobilize participation, ensure program relevance, and foster local ownership.
- Collaborated on governance programs such as SLAC and digital inclusion initiatives, promoting transparency and citizen accountability.

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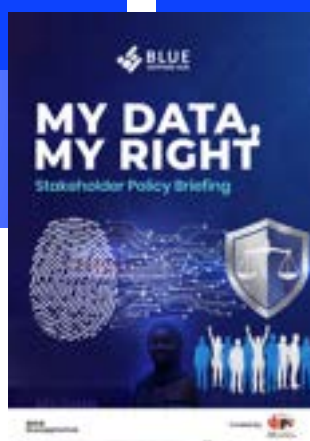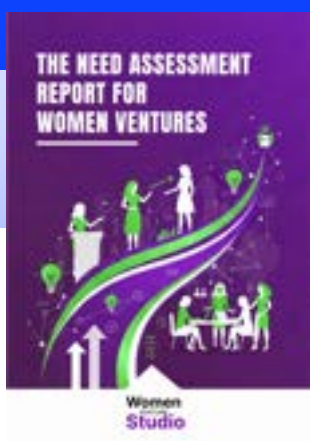
Advocacy, Policy & Systems Change

Blue Sapphire Hub integrates policy engagement, research, and public advocacy as core components of its mission to strengthen ecosystems, influence institutions, and promote inclusive development across Northern Nigeria. In 2025, these efforts focused on shaping policies, amplifying citizen voices, and driving systemic change.

Policy Engagements

- Conducted stakeholder dialogues with government officials, community leaders, and civil society actors across Kano, Katsina, and Jigawa States.
- Developed and submitted policy briefs on digital inclusion, data protection, and civic participation, engaging actors across all Kano LGAs.
- Participated in regional and national policy consultations, ensuring the perspectives of women, youth, and PLWDs are represented in decision-making processes.

Research & Thought Leadership

- Produced evidence-based research reports analyzing digital literacy gaps, technology adoption, and innovation ecosystem needs in Northern Nigeria.
- Shared insights through conferences, webinars, and public fora, establishing BSH as a thought leader in digital inclusion, innovation, and civic engagement.
- Leveraged data from programs such as ADAN, SIDP, and SLAC to inform policy recommendations and systemic interventions.

THE NEED ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR WOMEN VENTURES

Women Studio

MY DATA, MY RIGHT
Stakeholder Policy Briefing

Innovate North

Policy Brief
Advancing Northern Nigeria's Science, Technology, and Innovation Ecosystem

JANUARY 2025

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Media & Public Awareness

- Reached millions of citizens through radio programs, social media campaigns, and the first Hausa digital inclusion film series, "Fasahar Zamani."
- Conducted awareness campaigns on digital rights, civic engagement, entrepreneurship opportunities, and climate-smart practices.
- Created culturally relevant media content to amplify participation and promote behavioral change among underserved communities.

Influence on Ecosystems or Institutions

- Strengthened innovation ecosystems through hackathons, incubation programs, and partnerships with startups, government agencies, and private sector actors.
- Supported the adoption of governance dashboards and digital tools to improve transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.
- Influenced local institutions to integrate digital skills, inclusive practices, and innovation-driven approaches into their policies and programs.

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Organizational Capacity & Governance

Blue Sapphire Hub's success in 2025 is underpinned by a strong, skilled team, effective governance structures, and a commitment to ethical and accountable operations.

Team Overview

The Hub is led by Founder & CEO, Maryam Lawan Gwadabe, supported by a dedicated leadership team overseeing programs, operations, partnerships, and finance.

In 2025, the team expanded to include specialists in digital skills training, innovation incubation, MEAL, policy advocacy, media production, and community engagement.

Staff development was prioritized through training, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing, ensuring team members remain aligned with global best practices in digital inclusion and innovation.

Capacity Strengthening Efforts

- BSH is guided by a Board of Directors providing strategic oversight, fiduciary responsibility, and governance guidance.
- An advisory panel of sector experts supports program design, policy engagement, and innovation initiatives.
- Board and advisory contributions ensure that programs are strategically aligned, evidence-driven, and impact-focused.

Board & Advisory Structure

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Capacity Strengthening Efforts

- BSH maintains strict safeguarding policies to protect participants, particularly children, youth, women, and PLWDs, in all programs.
- Ethics and compliance frameworks guide program implementation, financial management, and partnerships, ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Continuous risk assessments and staff training reinforce compliance with national regulations, donor requirements, and organizational standards.

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Lessons Learned

Early community engagement is critical to program relevance, participation, and impact.

Partnerships with government, private sector, and ecosystem actors are essential for sustainability and scaling.

Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and participant feedback informs real-time adaptation of programs.

Inclusive design must be embedded from the start to avoid marginalization of women, youth, and PLWDs.

Storytelling and media, such as the Hausa digital inclusion series, can amplify program reach and influence behavioral change.

How Learning Informs Future Programming

- Future programs will prioritize inclusive digital infrastructure and accessibility from the outset.
- Training curricula will be continuously refined to match labor market demands and participant feedback.
- Media and advocacy will be expanded to culturally relevant formats, amplifying reach and awareness.
- Scaling strategies will leverage technology, partnerships, and standardized program models to maintain quality while increasing coverage.
- Evidence-based insights will guide policy engagement, innovation support, and community empowerment programs, ensuring long-term impact across Nigeria.

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Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

As Blue Sapphire Hub reflects on the successes and lessons of 2025, we are strategically positioning for greater impact, innovation, and sustainability in the years ahead.

Strategic Priorities

- Scaling Digital Inclusion Activities to More Rural and Underserved Communities: Expanding access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital skills training across Northern Nigeria, with particular focus on PLWDs.
- Strengthening Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ecosystems: Supporting startups, incubators, and innovation programs to create sustainable enterprises that address local and regional challenges.
- Civic Engagement & Governance: Deepening citizen participation, accountability mechanisms, and digital tools to enhance transparent governance and community empowerment.
- Evidence-Based Programming: Leveraging MEAL insights, research, and data to inform adaptive program design and maximize impact.
- Sustainability & Institutional Growth: Enhancing organizational capacity, partnerships, and funding diversification to ensure long-term operational sustainability.
- Angel Investment Network: Establishing a regional angel investment network to provide early-stage funding, mentorship, and strategic support for high-potential startups emerging from BSH programs.

Emerging Opportunities

- Digital Media & Storytelling: Building on the success of the Hausa digital inclusion series ("Fasahar Zamani") to create additional culturally relevant content that drives behavioral change.
- AI & Advanced Technology Integration: Expanding programs in generative AI, data science, and deep tech to prepare youth for high-value technology careers.
- Policy Influence & Thought Leadership: Increasing engagement with national and state-level actors to shape inclusive digital policies and governance frameworks.
- Regional Expansion: Extending programs and innovation hubs to underserved areas in Northern Nigeria, including Jigawa, Sokoto, and Katsina States.

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Innovation Pipeline

- Hackathons & Incubation Programs: Continuously generating and supporting scalable solutions across education, health, climate, and creative economy sectors.
- Digital Skills Bootcamps: Piloting new curriculum models in response to emerging labor market trends.
- Community-Led Technology Solutions: Empowering youth and local leaders to co-create technology interventions that solve real-life community challenges.
- Media & Advocacy Initiatives: Expanding digital campaigns, films, radio, and online platforms to amplify inclusion and social change messages.

Call to Action for Partners & Supporters

Blue Sapphire Hub invites donors, government agencies, private sector actors, and community leaders to join us in advancing digital inclusion, innovation, and equitable development in Northern Nigeria. By collaborating with BSH, partners can:

- Scale impactful programs that empower women, youth, and PLWDs.
- Invest in innovation-driven solutions addressing local and regional challenges.
- Strengthen ecosystems for inclusive growth, civic engagement, and digital transformation.
- Contribute to evidence-based interventions that create sustainable social and economic change

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Blue Sapphire Hub reflects on the successes and lessons of 2025, we are strategically positioning for greater impact, innovation, and sustainability in the years ahead.

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