

Digital education for young people involves leveraging technology to enhance learning experiences. It includes online courses, interactive apps, and virtual classrooms, fostering skills like critical thinking and digital literacy.

Challenges that Young People in Nigeria face in Accessing digital Education:

In Nigeria, several challenges hinder young people, especially those in marginalized and vulnerable situations, from accessing digital education:

1. **Limited Infrastructure:** Many remote areas lack reliable internet access and electricity thereby restricting young people's ability to participate in online learning and in exhibiting skills.
2. **Lack of Devices:** Affordability and accessibility issues contribute to a shortage of digital devices, preventing marginalized youths from engaging in online education. This is link to the vulnerability of those that have acquired those things to loose them theft and other damages like high voltage, and faulty repairs.
3. **Digital Illiteracy:** Some young people, particularly in marginalized communities, lack the necessary digital literacy skills to navigate online platforms and effectively participate in digital learning. Some of them could be be victims of cyberbullying.
4. **Gender Disparities:** Girls in certain regions of the country face cultural and societal barriers, limiting their access to digital education due to gender-based discrimination. Some have fallen victims of sexual exploitation in other to acquire digital gadgets. The space is seen as a tool that can easily pollute the minds of young women thereby inspiring them to be “loose”
5. **Economic Constraints:** Financial constraints make it challenging for marginalized families to afford the costs associated with digital learning, such as internet subscriptions and devices. These gadgets are expensive to be acquired and maintained.
6. **Language Barriers:** The availability of digital educational content in local languages is limited, creating a barrier for those who may not be proficient in the official language used in online education.
7. **Inadequate Training for Educators:** Mostly, Teachers in marginalized areas lack training on how to utilise digital tools for effective teaching, impacting the quality of digital education provided.
8. **Security Concerns:** Vulnerable young people face online threats, including cyberbullying and exploitation, emphasizing the need for comprehensive digital safety education.

Addressing these challenges will require a multifaceted approach, including infrastructure development, targeted financial support, community engagement, and tailored educational programs that consider the specific needs of marginalized and vulnerable youths in Nigeria.

Globally, Africa is home to the largest population of individuals without internet connectivity (88%), with Asia having the highest number of people with access to the internet¹, Nigeria,

¹ ([Google & International Finance Corporation, 2020](#)).

one of Africa's largest economies, has only about 111.6 million internet users, about 46% of its estimated population of 206.1 million people still lack access to internet connectivity².

Solutions

Promoting digital education for young people involves integrating technology in curricula, teaching digital literacy, and fostering responsible online behavior. To ensure protection from online threats:

1. Cybersecurity Education: This Includes cybersecurity awareness in digital education to teach students about online risks and safe practices.
2. Parental Controls: Encourage parents to use parental control tools and set age-appropriate restrictions on devices to monitor and limit online activities
3. training on digital tools and online safety to effectively guide students in navigating the digital landscape.
4. Curriculum Integration: Integrate online safety modules into the school curriculum, addressing topics such as cyberbullying, privacy, and responsible social media use.
5. Community Engagement: Involve parents, teachers, and the community in discussions about digital education and safety to create a supportive environment.
6. Secure Platforms: Ensure the use of secure and age-appropriate online platforms for educational purposes, minimizing exposure to potential threats.
7. Cyberbullying Prevention: Implement programs to address and prevent cyberbullying, fostering a positive and respectful online environment.
8. Regular Updates: Keep educational materials and training programs up-to-date to reflect evolving online threats and technologies.
9. Collaboration with Tech Companies: Collaborate with technology companies to develop tools and resources that promote online safety for young users.

By combining education, awareness, and collaboration, it is possible to create a digital world, safely creating an environment that empowers young people to navigate the digital world.

Government Intervention

The NLP is inclusive enough to bridge the digital divide because of the availability of an offline module that allows for deployment in rural and hard-to-reach environments where there is no access to the internet. To this end, UNICEF has provided 780 schools in hard-to-areas and rural schools with 13,500 tablets, 1,000 smart rechargeable projectors and 780 Airtel internet routers. Connectivity has been enabled for 186 schools through a partnership with IHS towers and data costs removed through the whitelisting of the NLP on an Airtel SIM card.

So far, since its inception, the Nigeria Learning Passport has provided access to quality teaching and learning resources to 280,000 learners, teachers, parents and young people

Gaps:

In Nigeria, there are millions of out of Primary, Secondary and tertiary School children and young people with affected pathway for economic sustainability and good living, much of

² ([Adeleke, 2021](#); [Pontianus & Oruonye, 2021](#)).

this trend is driven by insurgencies and banditry like Boko Haram and Kidnaping, especially in the northern part of the country, among the most vulnerable are; girl child, children living in IDPs and out of school or have lost sense of hope in rural areas.

According to The former Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajiya Sadiya Umar Farouq, about 10 to 12 million children are currently out of school in the country, according to the National Bureau of Statistics 90% of them are in the northern part due to the Boko Haram Crisis.

Also according to the UNICEF

In 2021, there were 25 attacks on schools. 1,440 children were abducted, and 16 children killed. In March 2021, no fewer than 618 schools were closed in six northern states (Sokoto, Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Niger, and Yobe) over the fear of attack and abduction of pupils and members of staff. The closure of schools in these states significantly contributed to learning losses and added to out of School children.

Thenceforth, the government of the day engage most of its activities such as humanitarian assistance, job opportunities, government palliatives and other government Interventions through online platforms, this initiative seems to be catastrophe to these vulnerable areas, even international donors, NGOs contribute their own quarter to those communities through online platforms.

According to NBTE Nigeria has 90 million unemployed youths, out of them 10 million are almajiri from northern Nigeria who have neither formal education nor basic digital literacy.

These barriers left people in vulnerable condition, for lacking basic needs and social amenities like;

Lack of access to basic communities health care

Lack of access to Government Intervention programs

Lack of access to International and Local Support

Lack of Basic formal Education

Lack of Digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills

This phenomena left these vulnerable in harsh conditions having neither basic formal education nor basic digital literacy to access Governmental and Nongovernmental assistance to earn their lives. This gap must be filled up. Link found [here](#)

Furthermore, national data on students' reading and literacy levels revealed all of the northern states fell within the bottom third on reading performance. The lowest attendance rates were in the north, where rates for boys and girls were approximately 45 percent and 35 percent, respectively. According to UNICEF, in the north, for every 10 girls in school, more than 22 boys attended. Approximately 25 percent of young persons between ages 17 and 25 had fewer than two years of education.

Although significant digital divides around gender, geography, and language persist, affordable data services for mobile subscribers have increased internet access. In its 2021 Affordability Report, the Alliance for Affordable Internet ranked Nigeria 19 out of 72 low- and middle-income nations in the implementation of policies leading to affordable internet access.¹⁵ In March 2022, the cost of at least 1.5 gigabytes (GB) of data from MTN, Glo, and Airtel, the country's most widely used internet service providers (ISPs), was \$2, compared to \$3.28 in February 2018.¹⁶

Cost remains a major impediment to internet access for many Nigerians in rural areas. Due to the unreliable electricity supply, those who can afford it often rely on private generators and standby battery-powered inverter systems to remain online during power outages.

Link found [here](#)

No type of bullying is harmless as cyber bullying has the same insidious effects just like any other kind of bullying. Although it does not involve personal contact between an offender and victim, it is psychologically and emotionally damaging to youths (Okoye, Nwoga & Onah, 2015). Many of those who are bullied experience technical knock-out effects throughout their lifespan. They are prone to depression, difficulty with relationships, substance abuse, self-inflicted suicide and school dropout as a result (Padget & Notar, 2013). In addition, Juvonen and Gross (2008) reported that victims of cyber bullying often experience symptoms such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, social exclusion, poor academic performance and some in extreme cases experience suicidal thoughts and attempts (Hindiya & Patchin, 2014). The symptoms are determined by the level of self-efficacy a person has (Bandura, 1997). Victims with a low self-efficacy believe that the potential threats associated with online victimization are unbearable (Bandura, 1997).

There are many strategies that can be employed in helping a victim of cyberbullying or identifying a perpetrator and each one can play an important part in preventing or tackling cyber bullying as quickly as possible. It has been discovered that the majority of those who experience cyber bullying do not report it. So if we are to succeed in preventing bullying, we need to break the silence in which it thrives by empowering children and young people to speak out and seek help. The first step to be adopted:

Cyberbullying prevention is by carrying out awareness campaigns and education because in Nigeria today some people do not know what is called cyber bullying. Through awareness campaigns, people need to understand the problem and understand the technology. If awareness of this issue is raised to such a level among people, people especially the youth will be able to speak up before it is too late, and the problem will come out of mobile phone inboxes, out of computers and into the open.

Secondly, the government should monitor the activities of online service providers and also make sure those policies are fully implemented.

Thirdly, the government should set up clear and simple reporting mechanisms and make available easy access to resources, and help for victims of cyberbullying. In addition they should try to establish and fund non-governmental organisations that help in dealing with cyber bullying with their services such as hotlines and help lines.

Reference

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