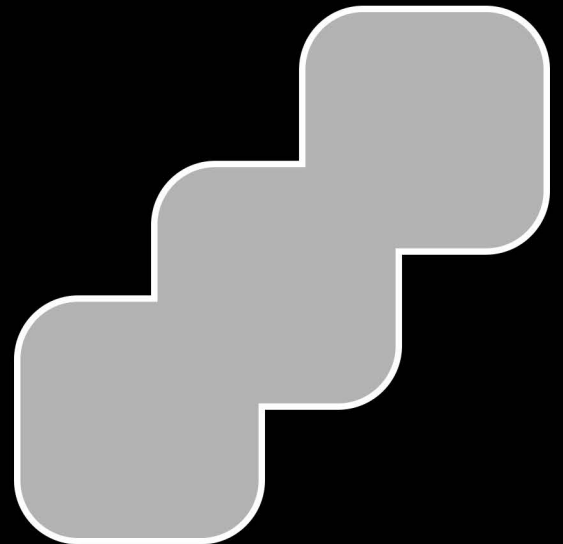


Transforming Innovation Technology And Education for Achieving Gender Equity

Policy Brief



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Overview

This policy brief was made in light of the upcoming CSW67 (Commission on the Status of Women) to address the theme on Innovation, Technological Change, and Education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls. The rise of innovation and technology in Africa has played a significant role in the development agenda; digital technology plays an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We find that despite the immense potential for digital technology to revolutionise the economy and human well-being, it can aggravate the existing inequalities. We identify different groups that have been affected by the current digital divide, including; adolescents, youth, women, persons with disability and refugees, among others. We have clearly diffused the concept of digital inclusion and provided possible recommendations for its implementation. We identified six major challenges facing women and youth agency and voice in innovation and technology discourse: Cultural and Social norms, affordability, digital skills, awareness, infrastructure and language in Africa. This policy brief provides distinctive recommendations for the aforementioned challenges to the governments, UN agencies and private and public institutions.

Introduction

The history of technology in Africa dates back to 1921 when South Africa received its first tabulating technology from the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company, later known as IBM. A couple of decades later, in 1980, the Africa Centre d'Informatique du Rwanda received Africa's first computer. This development cleared the path for widespread internet adoption, with African mobile subscriber statistics now soaring. Sub-Saharan Africa is anticipated to have 615 million mobile service subscribers by 2025. The use of digital technologies, including social media platforms, has accelerated, making a simple smartphone a new tool of empowerment. A study across the African continent indicated that 80% of youth (aged 15–35 years) consider Wifi a fundamental human right (Ichikowitz Family Foundation, 2020).

Current global demographics indicate that 71% of youths between 15–24 years are connected to the internet compared to 48% of the total population, making up one-third of all internet users around the world. In Africa, the rise of digital technology and innovation has rekindled hope among millions of unemployed yet tech-savvy African youths; increased connectivity brings about tremendous opportunities. Young entrepreneurs are tapping into the growing digital revolution by using Information Technology and Communication to boost their own prospects. However, while the economic prospects are high, a large proportion of young people live in rural and hard-to-reach areas with no access to electricity

(IFAD, 2019); over 70% of Africa's youth are, therefore, offline (AU, 2020). Therefore, the narrative that praises technology as a solution to youth challenges varies across countries and may not hold true for everyone.

Digital and technological revolution has enormous potential to spearhead positive change and economic transformation but can also reinforce and magnify pre-existing inequalities and faultlines. The digital gender divide, for instance, has persisted with a significant difference in gender access to devices and the internet. For instance, women generally have less access than men to the internet: as of 2021, 234 million fewer women than men use mobile Internet. Although the situation varies across countries, IUT 2017–2019 data shows that in the world's least developed countries, men are 52 per cent more likely to use the Internet than women.

In terms of 'meaningful connectivity', the gender gaps are even higher. In contexts where there is an equal number of men and women internet subscribers, men are more likely to have better-quality connections, better devices, faster speeds, and more data, thus using the internet more regularly. In this regard, women's contribution to the digital economy is limited. Thus women are less likely to participate as producers of online content such as blogs, videos, commentary on social issues or ads selling products or advertising services.

Categories Missing out on the Innovation and Technology Discussion in Light of CSW67 Priority Theme

I. Women

The ability of young people and women to access and use digital technologies is directly or indirectly influenced by a multitude of factors, including infrastructural limitations, especially in rural areas where investing in and installing infrastructure such as broadband technology and cellphone towers is less economically feasible to most network providers. There is a disproportionate number of women living in rural areas to that of men; more working-age men live in urban areas, while a larger percentage of women live in rural areas where mobile service is unreliable or no service at all.

Existing income disparities between men and women have influenced women's ability to afford handsets

and internet services. Women tend to earn less than men, with an existing wage gap of 50%. Further, women are disadvantaged in terms of access to financial credit and financial products, making it difficult for women and women-headed households to access and afford the Internet. Limited access to mobile phones and Internet connectivity were identified as challenges to accessing care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic. It increased risk factors for gender-based violence as it limited opportunities for victims of domestic violence to reach out for help while in lockdown with the abuser.

Young women and adolescent girls are the most exposed to the risk of online gender-based

violence, such as receiving offensive or obscene content, Internet hoaxes and fake news, bullying, offensive name-calling and even sexual trafficking. Globally, 73% of millennials reported having been exposed to online risk. They also reported the highest levels of stress, pain, loss of online trust, sleep deprivation and depression as a result of online risk exposure. These abuses often cause women to limit their participation in online platforms. Marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities, lesbian, bisexual, queer and transgender women, and those with disabilities are particularly predisposed to online harassment.

(II) Youth and Adolescents

The global emergence of Covid 19 exacerbated the pre-existing inequalities in access to education, especially through digital platforms for young people. Evidence across the globe showed that the impact of covid 19 on young people between the age of 15-24 years ranged

from limited access to education and employment to online misinformation and polarisation. New disparities emerged, especially among young people living in rural and urban areas and women. The impact of the pandemic was particularly acute for young adolescents and

youths. School closures during the Covid-19 pandemic saw over 1.29 billion students (74% of the world's student population), with over 297 million students from across Africa miss school, making them more vulnerable.

According to UNICEF, approximately 500 million learners did not have access to remote learning. Only 25% of institutions provided remote learning. A majority of primary and secondary schools in Africa, for example,

did not have access to connectivity or Information Communication and Technology equipment. In many cases, most youths would travel outside their community to find connections to connect to a network. However, finding

a connection in most cases was impossible due to travel expenses and safety concerns for girls and young women.

(III) Refugees'

Internet connectivity is not only a powerful tool for tracking refugees' protection, food and health needs but also a means to making its operations more efficient, more cost-effective and more successful. It is expected to enhance information sharing and communication and to monitor and plan more effectively. Additionally, refugees are also desperate to access and stay connected to their relatives and the people they left behind. Being connected also provides entertainment

for refugees who are, in most cases, in the cold and desperate for distraction and something to make their lives better. However, as the world strives to stay connected- and dependent upon connectivity, refugees still need more access to devices and connectivity.

Globally, refugees are 50% less likely to access internet-enabled phones compared to the general population. Refugees living in rural areas are more likely to have no access to connectivity, while urban refugees often have access

but cannot afford to get online. In Tanzania, for example, many refugees sacrifice a significant amount of their meal rations to buy internet data. Refugees in Nyarugusu refugee camp in Tanzania, Congo and Burundi have been spotted roaming around with their mobile phones in search of high ground where they might be lucky enough to catch some of the sparse signal wafting in from surrounding host communities.

(IV) Persons Living with Disability

There are concerns about accessibility and the digital inclusion of people with disabilities. People with disabilities globally tend to have much lower mobile and smartphone ownership levels and are less aware of mobile internet or perceive it as

less beneficial than non-disabled persons. Lack of literacy and digital skills among people living with disabilities are deemed as some of the primary barriers to accessing connection (GSMA,2022). Assistive Technology has, however, presented new

opportunities specifically for people with disabilities to use for their daily activities to a greater extent than non-disabled people in general.

Although assistive technology has been designed to ensure people with disability are able to participate in all aspects of life on more equal terms, the cost of the devices

hinders access by the target group. Minority Rights Group International (2020) found that visually impaired persons from indigenous communities want to explore new

technologies but are wary of their unavailability in their own languages and inaccessibility.

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Connecting to the Internet has become an essential tool for everyday functions; accessing information, working, socialising, self-empowerment, and receiving basic services. Online connectivity enables individuals to access basic human services such as health care, economic and personal development opportunities, skills development, and education. These human rights are to be promoted, protected, respected and enjoyed online as they are offline. Individuals' specific needs need to be considered in the digital world so as not to leave anyone behind. Thus Digital Inclusion aims to provide an "equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere". Digital inclusion should further examine the extent to which initiatives foster interactions and possibilities of the marginalised groups and enable them to actively participate and engage in social, economic and political dynamics.

The concept of digital inclusion goes beyond basic access but also discusses

the structural barriers to connecting, as well as the threats and risks that operating online poses, especially to vulnerable populations such as those affected by crisis or conflict. Existing unequal opportunities to access online platforms and services can exacerbate inequalities, and the benefits of accessing online are not always equitably distributed. Digital inclusion should aim towards being equitable and inclusive. Despite efforts to promote digital inclusion, there exist greater risks of magnifying pre-existing digital inequalities if those with fewer opportunities are left behind. Digital equality involves treating everyone equally and fairly while prioritising the need of special groups, for example, making devices and internet connections available to refugees.

Digital inclusion should ensure the basic availability and accessibility of infrastructure required for users to connect to the internet. Limited availability is a great concern to many groups and communities; less connected individuals do not enjoy infrastructure privileges, leaving many people behind. Rural

populations and indigenous people, for example, are more likely to be disconnected due to less enabling infrastructure like electricity. While limited availability in more connected areas remains a concern, there are those who cannot afford to subscribe to private services and are eventually disconnected. Digital inclusion aims at ensuring that available infrastructure is also accessible to everyone. Access should also be affordable, private, safe and provide continuous learning opportunities. Access for everyone means guaranteeing the accessibility of digital communication and services for all people – regardless of gender, age, ability, or location.

Digital inclusion also includes the ability to use technologies efficiently and effectively to benefit oneself and others. Digital technology and literacy skills are, therefore, essential elements for digital inclusion to secure a shared prosperous digital future for everyone. Digital skills play an important role in ensuring digital inclusion and the efficient use, adoption and creation of digital technologies.

Minority groups such as indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and young women are reported to have encountered enormous challenges while interacting with technology. For example, a qualitative study in Nairobi found that the vast majority of

young people did not have sufficient digital skills to access entry-level economic opportunities in the digital economy, with test results averaging 55%, a mark far from the 80% normative framework benchmark. Various entities have launched initiatives

geared towards digital inclusion; The World Bank's Western and Central Africa Regional Education Strategy has proposed a digital inclusion program that will see at least a million more youth trained on digital skills by 2025.

Recommendation for Enhancing Digital Inclusion

I. Multi-stakeholder Engagement

Promoting digital inclusion requires multi-stakeholder engagement and a whole-of-society effort based on evidence and disaggregated data. A holistic approach to achieving digital inclusion is embedded in the efforts

made by human rights-based, intersectional, whole-of-society policies and multi-stakeholder approaches and actions that are keen to overcome barriers that face individuals when accessing

and experiencing digital technologies. It is important to identify and understand the relevant stakeholders and their different capacities in designing and implementing digital inclusion strategies.

II. Desegregated Data

Promoting digital inclusion should be based on evidence and data. Therefore, the first step to digital solutions is to collect data that helps to answer questions on digital inclusions and to design tools for digital inclusion. The desegregated data need to be beyond superficial general characteristics, such as sex and data pertaining to men and women, to data disaggregated

by ability, migration or displacement status, age, location (beyond urban/rural), indigenous identity, education, and income to understand the intersectional nature of exclusion and the exact points of policy intervention to rectify. It is also important to spend time to understand the person for whom the service and technology will directly benefit and who will primarily interact with it.

What are the technological needs, and how are they currently being met, or not. In addition to the beneficiaries' data, it is important also to understand all the stakeholders who would be engaged in designing the solutions. Data collected be open and reusable for transparency, inclusiveness and accountability.

III. Availability of Infrastructure

The availability of basic infrastructure determines the level of connectedness in the region. While most people enjoy internet connections in Africa, it is estimated that about 70% of the population is yet to be connected to infrastructure such as fiber optics cables, mobile, wireless

technologies or other network infrastructure. Many people living in less connected areas do not enjoy the privilege of public services such as public WiFi spots or good network coverage. Digital inclusion should, therefore, rethink integrating connections in easily accessible areas

such as public libraries, markets, community centres and institutions of learning. Governments and private network providers should endeavour to set up satellite cables to rural areas to enhance quality network coverage.

IV. Access to Technology and Innovation

The unavailability of physical infrastructure and connectivity is only one barrier to connectivity. Accessing online services takes into account different elements of connectivity, such as access to digital devices, regularity, the intensity of access, required skills, cultural aspects, and the lack of relevant content in local and relevant languages. Access to the Internet is not sufficient by itself. Access needs to be meaningful, serving the practical online needs individuals have. This also means that access needs to be regular: if people can go online only occasionally, they cannot obtain the full benefits of the online world. For an individual to enjoy the maximum

benefits of online services in their work, education and communication, the connection should be accessed on a daily basis.

Promoting digital literacy is important in enhancing the efficient use of technology and navigating the digital world. Skills to be promoted include

- 1. Digital literacy skills- information and ICT literacy skills**
- 2. learning and innovation skills**
- 3. Digital flexibility and adaptability.**

In addition, access to technology should be made affordable and equitable to all, including persons with disabilities.

Measures should be put in place to eliminate barriers to accessing electronic devices and promote access for marginalised groups (such as refugees, persons with disabilities, youth and women) to new technologies and systems at an early stage and ensure that they are accessible at a minimum cost. Stakeholders, including legislators, policymakers, platform creators and ICT providers, are to ensure that all people's rights to communicate in the connected world are respected.

V. Public Participation

Participation in the digital era refers to creating a safe and conducive environment for all citizens to engage in the digital world. Digital spaces can be exploited and used as tools to exclude youth, adolescents, women and other marginalised groups through online gender-based violence, cyberbullying, online harassment, social media trolling, phishing, data exploitation, surveillance, and internet shutdowns. These risks pose a safety threat to connecting, engaging, and consuming information safely, especially for marginalised and vulnerable populations. Many of these actions have been used to discourage and exclude women and girls from engaging in

online activities. Although the internet can be used as a powerful tool for advocacy and getting voices heard, the lack of inclusive digital governance can limit meaningful participation. It is crucial that online services are made safe; governments, businesses, and organisations should be held accountable for regulating and providing safe online platforms. Technology companies and governments should also ensure to safeguard fundamental online freedoms and rights as well as secure users' data and privacy. Online users should be given a choice about the use of their personal data in order to trust that it is treated

responsibly and that their privacy is protected. Furthermore, marginalised groups and people in vulnerable situations also need to be involved in designing, testing and assessing digital services, policies, and programs. Digital inclusion, therefore, involves integrating inclusive digital designs designed for everyone to meet their needs. Specific groups should be broadly involved as people with different needs require a particular kind of service. For example, a visually impaired person has a different need as compared to an adolescent girl who is visually and physically abled.

Challenges Facing Youth Voice and Agency in Innovation and Technology

I. Social and Cultural Norms

One of the most significant yet underrated barriers to accessing technology and innovation is a community's cultural and social beliefs. Culture tends to define gender roles and capabilities; men are known and encouraged to embrace technology-related courses, unlike women. Overtime research has shown that men are more likely to adopt new

technologies than women. For example, in 2016, 28% of men in South Saharan Africa had access to the internet as compared to 22% of females. However, in many SSA countries, technology usage brings out other gendered blocks than simple access. In Tanzania, for example, internet use is less socially acceptable for adolescent girls due to concerns over

negative influences and cultural restrictions on girls' behaviour compared to boys; therefore. In the rural areas of Malawai, boys are allowed to carry phones freely, while girls carrying phones in public could be labelled as prostitutes because of social beliefs.

II. Infrastructural Barriers

Despite the notable progress in technology and innovation, Africa still experiences a real challenge in accessing technological innovations; about 80% of its almost 1.5 billion people are still unconnected to the Internet. Internet in Africa is very poor, without faster and more available data as compared to the rest of the world. While about 70% of Africa's population lives in rural areas, infrastructure

in these regions remains the greatest challenge. There is limited to no internet connection; in Kenya, for example, the total 4G network coverage is 57%, and only 17% of the rural population has access to connectivity. In addition, rural areas lack access to a power supply vital for digital technology adoption; the absence of power means it is harder for telecom service providers to set up mobile

networks. The absence of mobile networks means that fewer people acquire mobile devices. Young people in rural areas travel long distances to access network coverage or to connect their devices to power. In most cases, it is impossible for adolescents and young women to travel due to security threats; they, therefore, remain digitally excluded.

III. Enhance Affordability

Although inadequate and limited access to digital infrastructure is a major hindrance to digital inclusion, the affordability of digital technology and services is also prevalent. The high cost of internet and data bundles excludes most people, especially young people and those

from lower-income backgrounds. Data costs vary across regions; in 2020, for example, 1GB of data cost up to \$27 in Benin and Malawi, which was less than \$1.5 in Kenya, Egypt, Zambia, and Tunisia (Ang, 2020). Young people and adolescents below income earning

age cannot afford these costs. Young people in urban areas, therefore, rely on public WiFi hotspots, while their counterparts in rural areas are excluded from accessing online connections.

IV. Lack of Digital Literacy skills

Youth are often perceived as the tech-savvy generation and are assumed to possess inherent abilities and skills required to participate in digital societies and economies. However, the digital divide among youth extends beyond needing access to devices or the ability to afford data bundles to a need for adequate digital skills. Many people in Africa lack access to training on crucial digital literacy that they need to navigate and

work in the digital world. Even though some aspects of digital skills require advanced technical acumen, there still exists a steep challenge regarding the fundamental digital skills essential for all young people's preparedness and navigation through the digital space of social and economic life.

Lack of digital skills essentially extends to women; more men than women boast of digital prowess and explore advanced digital

applications and devices. Women mobile owners, for example, use a smaller range of functions than their male counterparts, with women more likely to use less complex mobile phone services such as voice calls and chat messages only. Further, more men than women enrol in STEM courses and acquire digital skills to compete in the digital world and careers.

V. Lack of Awareness

Despite the tremendous growth of digital technology over the years, not everyone understands it and what it can do for them. Not everyone understands the kind of information and services that can be accessed or delivered through mobile phones or the internet or how this

information can be used to improve their daily lives. Some people lack exposure to technology and innovation based on their locality; people living in rural areas, for example, experience limited access to quality connections necessary for them to explore digital services. In

addition, lack of exposure may not be out of ignorance but also due to cultural beliefs; some communities or individuals may also consider the internet a tool that could negatively impact them.

VI. Cybersecurity Threat

The use of technology and innovation among African youths and adolescents has grown significantly over the past years, increasing the rate of cyber security risk. Although cybersecurity threatens the online safety of all populations, youths and adolescents are most affected by online risks, such as receiving offensive or obscene content, Internet hoaxes and fake news, bullying and offensive name-calling. Globally, 73%

of millennials have reported being exposed to online risks, 38% reported having personal experiences with online violence, and another 85% have witnessed digital violence against women. Cyber security threatens online safety and has been reported to cause high-level stress, pain, loss of online trust and depression among youths and adolescents compared to other groups. Online violence against

women has hindered women from public participation and leadership; women are often silenced and discredited. Online Violence Against Women and Girls has resulted in women and girls restricting their online activities and inhibiting their access to the internet despite their immense potential to explore technology for social and economic benefits.

VII. Language Barriers

The current digital technology has been designed and produced for the Western audience, with English as the default language. The lack of technology programmes catering to local contexts and languages hinders local populations, especially in Sub-

Saharan Africa, from fully participating in the digital space. Sub-Saharan Africa has diverse tribal groups whose primary language is the local dialect; most people understand and communicate efficiently in the local dialect, unlike English. In rural areas, for example, women

without basic education must engage the few literate people to interpret technology instructions and programs. Some entirely lose interest in the technology.

Recommendations for Challenges Facing Youth, Adolescent and Women Participation in Innovation and Technology

I. Integrating Cultural Needs in Designing Technology

Organizations and Stakeholders in digital inclusion should implement inclusion programmes that work with individuals or communities holding beliefs that limit their participation

in the digital space. Digital inclusion stakeholders should carefully design implementation strategies and prioritise community-led designs that represent those they seek to serve.

These programmes should also endeavor to create awareness of the importance of technology and its benefits to individuals and communities.

II. Infrastructural Development

Governments should do more to build and sustain the ecosystem within digital spaces. This means focusing on internet connectivity, infrastructure development and suitable regulatory framework to facilitate innovation while managing risks.

The government should also ensure that primary and secondary schools have ICT connectivity and equipment to prevent youth and young girls from travelling long distances to look for connections.

The rural development discourse in Africa should focus on investing in young rural people and their involvement smart economy. Young people

exhibit innovative behaviour and can readily embrace new technology like mechanisation, improved seeds and engaging with value chains that demand higher management levels and quality attention.

Governments should integrate ICT into these activities by providing the necessary ICT tools and equipment for smart rural transformation.

In addition, service network providers should upscale their services to cater to urban populations and rural people with poor or no connections. They should set up network satellites and boosters in central places that cater to larger populations or areas that

are easily accessible.

Most African rural areas need power supplies such as electricity or solar power to utilise digital technology fully. Local governments should strive to ensure their citizens have accessible and regular power supply through rural electrification programs. Agencies dealing with an alternative power supply, such as solar power, should also invest in rural areas by making their equipment affordable to rural people. Alternatively, these agencies could offer to install solar panels in a rent-to-own financial model to households.

III. Enhance Affordability

While investments in digital infrastructure are urgently needed, it is also vital to ensure equal access by all. Equitable access can be achieved by making digital services and devices affordable to everyone. In this regard, government or private organisations can provide either PC or Android gadgets for parents with learners in primary or

secondary schools for free or at “no-interest” grounds. Access to affordable digital devices will enhance digital literacy at an early age for learners from low economic backgrounds. Telecommunication companies should also allow phone users to pay in instalments using innovative pay-as-you-go and rent-to-own financing

model. This model will allow the users to use the device and pay in instalments until they are able to own the device eventually. Government should also lower taxes on data bundles and make them affordable at lower costs to online subscribers.

IV. Digital Literacy Skill

Although there have been a number of initiatives focusing on equipping African youth with the necessary soft skills to maximise their potential in technology and innovation, a lot has still to be done. Governments and institutions should set up more workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs to help young people build the skills they need to thrive in the digital world. These initiatives should integrate the needs of marginalised groups such as young people with disabilities and indigenous communities. Teachers in primary and

secondary schools should undergo digital training programs to increase their technical know-how and improve their ability to teach their learners on the subject. Learning institutions should provide access to resources and mentors in the technology and innovation field. They should connect young people with mentors who have experience in the industry and can help them learn the ropes and provide guidance. A supportive environment should be created for youth and adolescents to experiment with ideas, fail,

and learn from mistakes. There should be established safe spaces and programs where youth can explore their ideas and innovations without fear of failure. Governments and non-profit organisations should encourage youth competitions, hackathons and ideation campaigns to enable digitally savvy youths to contribute to creating innovative solutions. These events should be conducted online to ensure all youth across regions are able to participate.

V. Creating Awareness

Governments and agencies should spread digital knowledge to their citizens. Regular workshops should be held in marginalised areas where digital knowledge is limited. These workshops should be used to showcase digital innovations and how they

can be helpful to individuals and communities. Further, training sessions on how to use digital devices should be held occasionally to eliminate ignorance and trigger interest in the use of technology. Online service providers, for example, online medical

service providers or online product marketers, should pay frequent physical visits to different areas to create awareness of the existence of digital platforms that make service delivery efficient to people.

VI. Curbing Cybersecurity Threats

Digital developers should develop security policies by establishing clear policies and procedures for managing users' accounts and data security. Governments should create policies, regulations, and laws that effectively protect data and networks from cyber threats. These policies should be regularly reviewed and updated to keep up with the changing threat landscape. Governments should create programs and awareness campaigns to educate citizens on cyber security

best practices and how to protect themselves online. Governments should ensure that new technologies are developed within a regulatory framework that prioritises, protects and promotes women's human rights. Women and girls are the primary victims of online Violence; therefore, measures to protect their rights should be prioritised and firmly put in place. Young people should also be educated on the adverse effects of cyberbullying. They should be provided

with information about cyberbullying, its long-term effects, what constitutes cyberbullying and how they should recognise it. Parents and teachers should be trained on how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying and encouraged to monitor the online activities of their adolescents. Victims of cyberbullying should be supported through the provision of services such as counselling and access to resources.

VII. Local Language Intergration

Technology program writers should work with linguists so that technologies can be translated into local languages and expand the

innovation across many communities who cannot read or write in English. It is essential to embed local languages in the digital program systems

by involving local linguists to co-create technology solutions that are tailored to the specific local context.

CONCLUSION

Technology presents a ray of hope for good fortune to young people; when accessed regularly and efficiently utilised. However, adolescents, youth and women are faced with a multitude of barriers that continue to persist and sometimes exacerbate the current digital divide. In order to elevate youth limitations in the digital space, the youth must be empowered to use their digital skills to amplify their voice and have meaningful contributions to the workforce. Efforts should be made to educate all generations to become digitally literate and act on digital misinformation. Integrating appropriate approaches to address the digital divide would go a long way to improve the rising problem of youth unemployment and gender inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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