

Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAi)

Organisational
Brochure

www.areai4africa.org



@areai4africa

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Overview

Founded in 2014, Aid for Rural Education Access Initiative (AREAi) works with and in under-resourced schools and marginalized communities, providing technical and infrastructural support to scale learning outcomes and drive tangible academic achievement for poor and vulnerable children and youth from low-income families. Our vision is to work collaboratively with local stakeholders and governmental agencies to secure equal educational access and high-quality learning opportunities for children in hard-to-reach and rural communities. Over the last few years, we have designed, coordinated, and scaled a series of mass literacy, entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment programs to transform the employability, livelihood and lifelong learning opportunities of over 45,000 beneficiaries in 15 states across Nigeria. Some of our past partners and sponsors include the United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, Malala Fund, the Coca-Cola Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation, Facebook, Teach for Nigeria, MTN Foundation, One Young World London, Queens Commonwealth Trust and many others.

Vision

To improve the access and quality of education available to poor and vulnerable children in rural communities across Africa.

Mission

To organize, mobilize and channel human, material, physical and financial resources towards creating multiple, alternative and informal learning opportunities for marginalized populations to attain self-reliance.

Organisational Mandate

To educate and empower **1,000,000** children, women, and youth by **2030**.

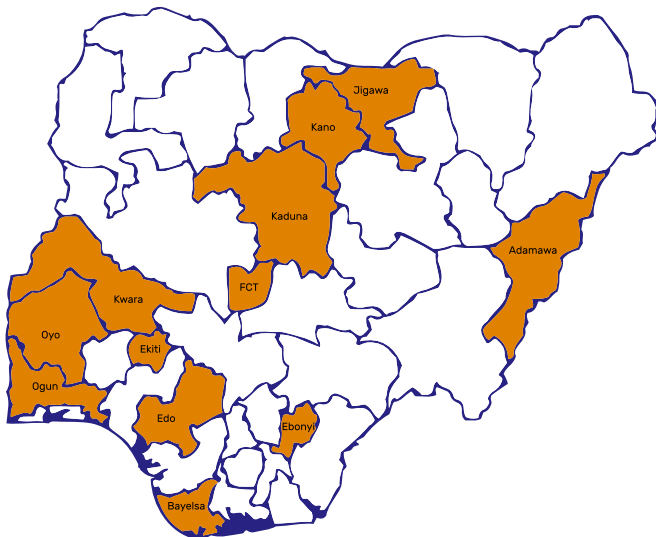




Where We Work

Since inception, our initiatives have been implemented across different and various rural, low resourced and marginalized communities, supporting diverse beneficiary populations including vulnerable children and at-risk youth from low-income backgrounds to access alternative educational opportunities, and develop functional digital and technical skills to attain self reliance.

Across Nigeria, we have worked with different stakeholders in **15 states** including **Kwara, Oyo, Kano, Kaduna, Ogun, Ekiti, Adamawa, Jigawa, Bayelsa, Edo, Ebonyi** and the **FCT**.



Map showing states covered within Nigeria.

Impact & Reach



45,000

Total number of direct beneficiaries



6

Projects



40

Communities



45

Schools



15

States





Thematic Focus Areas

AREAi works across four thematic focus areas leveraging technology, innovation and collaboration to support children, youth and women in rural communities.

Our thematic focus areas include;

01

**Foundational
Learning**

02

**Digital
Equity**

03

**Girls
Education**

04

**Transition from
School-to-work**



Foundational Skills

According to a 2020 UNICEF report, millions of Nigerian children aged between the ages of 5 and 14 are not in school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months are receiving early childhood education in Nigeria. Although literacy is an essential requirement for lifelong learning and a vital means of human development, more than 50% of children in Primary 1 to Primary 3 can not read a word and 60% of grade 3 children can not complete a single-digit addition problem.

If truly literacy leads to empowerment, and the right to education includes the right to literacy, it is imperative that we galvanize efforts to help more children develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. With FastTrack, AREAi aims to equip 1,000,000 out-of-school children in marginalized communities with foundational literacy and numeracy skills to engage in future learning for improved educational, employability and livelihood outcomes by 2036.

Foundational Skills - (FastTrack)

Piloted in 2019, FastTrack is a technology-enabled and self-assisted accelerated foundational skills development program designed to enable out-of-school refugee children to acquire functional literacy and numeracy skills which are vital, indispensable skills needed for virtually any further education and to lead an empowered, self-determined life. Since 2019 till date, we have implemented FastTrack in 6 communities in Nigeria reaching over 3,500 direct beneficiaries.

As an evidence-based programmatic intervention, FastTrack won TheirWorld first innovation in education award in 2021 and subsequently received a scale ready grant of 50,000 to reach 2,500 children.

Foundational Skills (FastTrack) in Pictures









Digital Equity

Digital technologies are now at the forefront of development, offering governments and entrepreneurs a unique chance to boost economic growth, connect citizens to jobs, and strengthen social inclusion. Unfortunately, amid the wave of this digital transformation, many people remain left behind in a chronic digital inequity. The digital divide when viewed through a broader lens of social, economic and cultural factors remains a potent constraint on digital development hence the need to promote effective interventions that seek to put inclusion at the center of digital transformation.

In our effort to promote digital inclusion, we underpin 3 strategic processes including scaling digital skills development among the most marginalized groups, driving conversations that aim to promote building digital essentials in underserved communities, and contributing to the existing body of knowledge aimed at crafting a digital compact for inclusive development.

Digital Equity - (Digital Skills Accelerator)

To bridge the gender digital divide as well as promote women and girls' representation and participation in today's digitally connected world, AREAi is deploying a tailored and curated digital skills development programme under its digital equity focus area. With a firm focus on the most marginalized young women that are NOT in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and adolescent school-aged girls, the Digital Skills Accelerator for Women and Girls has two learning tracks; the Basic Digital Skills for Learning Program for girls between age 13 and 18, and the Advanced Digital Skills for Employability Program for young women between age 18 and 25.

Through our Basic Digital Skills for Learning Program targeted at adolescent girls in secondary school, we have reached 300 girls since launch and currently onboarding another cohort of 300 girls.

Digital Skills Accelerator in Pictures







digiLearn

digiLearn



Girls' Education

In Nigeria, whilst access to school for both boys and girls has increased significantly since 2015, the country still has an estimated over 10.5 million children out of school - more than any other country in the world today. Unfortunately, of this population, out of school girls are the highest with about 5.5million girls not in school. Without access to quality education, girls will be unprepared for the future of work, become threatened by child marriage, and will continue in the cycle of poverty.

As part of our organizational response, we are championing one of Nigeria's most extensive holistic interventions to increase adolescent girls' school enrollment, retention, and transition. Our approach include series of gender-responsive policies and practices training, school consultations, community-level outreaches, stakeholders engagement and local grassroots influencing, focused on promoting girls education across Nigeria.

Girls' Education - (Getting Girls Equal)

Through a 3-year funded initiative, we are partnering with the Malala Fund to strengthen education quality for girls in Oyo State through the development of, and advocacy for the implementation of gender-responsive educational structures and policies across the school, community and state levels, to promote effective service delivery on girls' secondary school education spending and needs-based, transformative infrastructural support for girls and mobilize communal support for girls' education thereby improving learning outcomes, and increasing girls' access to education across 30 schools in all 3 Senatorial Districts. The program objectives include;

- To strengthen the implementation and evaluation of Gender transformative education policies at the state level.
- To highlight and foster the role of families and communities to encourage girls to pursue an education by consulting and mobilizing key gatekeepers including traditional leaders, religious leaders and other stakeholders.
- To enhance learning quality at school levels by providing training to teachers in curriculum delivery and gender responsiveness as well as the use of data for decision making.

A photograph of three young women wearing light-colored hijabs, looking towards the camera. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue overlay on the left side where the title is located.

Getting Girls Equal in Pictures







Access to Education

Poverty, language barriers, gender roles, and perceived benefit of education can all stall progress to provide quality education. For example, the world's most vulnerable children from disadvantaged communities in Nigeria are more likely to miss out on school, and this includes young girls and children from low-income families. If Education is indeed a basic human right, then the rights of millions of children who live in hard-to-reach, low-income, and conflict-stricken communities of Nigeria are being trampled upon.

As one of Nigeria's leading mission driven organizations, one of our strategic mandates is to promote access to quality education for every child through resource mobilization, infrastructural development, and leverage research for policy advocacy to support government led interventions. Over the next 10 years, we plan to develop, deploy and scale digital-based initiatives or low technology-enabled tools to enhance educational access for poor and disadvantaged children across Nigeria.

Access to Education - Exam Bursary Fund

The AREAi Exam Bursary Fund was designed to offer immediate but comprehensive support to academically bright but financially disadvantaged students. In line with the overall goal of universal access to education, financial aids such as the Exam Fees Bursary Fund offer an alternative stream into education transition within limited resource and constricted budgetary environments and represents an opportunity for those that may otherwise be financially excluded from pursuing their educational aspirations. The program was designed to incorporate a series of career mentorship and exam preparation support events. Strategically, the Exam Bursary Fund will be implemented across senior secondary schools where the Basic Digital Skills for Learning is implemented. Every year since 2020, between 100 to 200 students have their exam fees paid, based on varying preferences. Funding for the Exam Bursary Fund are mobilised from across the world, with major support from individuals willing to support these students through this predicament.

Exam Bursary Fund





Special Initiatives

Leveraging strategic partnership and technology for social advancement, we have designed and deployed the following initiatives and now currently building on their success till date:

- Education Digital Equity Initiative (EDEI)
- DigiLearns
- Mission Zero Plastic



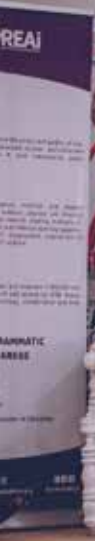
Funded by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office under the Prosperity Fund's Digital Access Programme, the Education Digital Equity Initiative (Phase I & II) is an information-based project that seeks to address digital exclusion by providing an evidence-based, comprehensive education toolkit that lays out simple steps and ideas for rural schools, remote communities, community-based initiatives and low-income families to adopt in accessing remote learning materials, online education resources options and digital learning opportunities during the pandemic.

Building on the success of the pilot phase, the final phase seeks to promote widespread distribution and student engagement with the highly valued Digital Learning Manual, which was repeatedly emphasized during the pilot to play a significant role in equipping students with the fundamental knowledge of identifying, accessing, obtaining, and maximizing the use of remote learning tools and other digital technologies. the project adopted an integrated approach not only to ensure the provision of the Digital Learning Manual but also to facilitate meaningful educational attainment and academic achievement that can be maximized from effectively leveraging all the various tools contained in the manual.



Theme

Education Digital Equity Initiative







EDUCATIONAL DIGITAL EQUITY INITIATIVE

PROJECT



DigiLearns

<https://web.digilearns.ng/>

In Africa, 2 out of 3 students miss out on quality learning experiences because they can't afford textbooks or lack internet access and do not own smartphones. Based on this reality, school-aged children in rural communities across Nigeria where learning poverty is widespread and internet is luxury, have also been left behind in accessing educational resources or various distance learning measures devised to address the learning disruption due to COVID19 pandemic.



While 70% of the 34 million Nigerian children that are currently out-of-school can not afford a radio, a television or a smartphone to learn online, there is overwhelming evidence to show that there are at least 1 to 2 basic feature phones in every home across Nigeria.

This is a massive opportunity to bring inexpensive, relevant and accessible learning content to our host community children at home — during COVID-19 and beyond — through our USSD and SMS learning platform. Hence, we are using zero-tech tools to connect disenfranchised children who are in need of learning resources but do not have access to smartphones or internet, to ensure continued learning throughout school closures.

The DigiLearns solution leverages artificial intelligence to deliver tailored curriculum-aligned content to secondary school learners based on their specific grade, performance and needs, all through text message. Not only are we providing immediate quality virtual learning and exam preparation support for 50,000 users, we are also guaranteeing expanded reach and widespread distribution of quality education for all.









Mission Zero Plastic

<https://missionzeroplastic.ng/>

The Mission Zero Plastic Initiative proudly sponsored by the Coca-Cola Foundation is an initiative of AREAi towards plastic waste management centered on partnership – bringing people together to help turn waste into worth. With a core message that seeks to promote the 5 Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot (Compost), the initiative leverages citizens' engagement and public mobilization to build a movement against plastic pollution across 6 Nigerian states including Oyo, Kaduna, Kwara, Kano, Bauchi and the FCT. Using several plastic recovering strategies such as Women in Action, Zero Plastic Caravan, Plastic for Good, and Zero Plastic Cities among others, the initiative was commissioned to recover and repurpose 600 tons, over 18,000,000 PET Bottles in 12 months.

At the end of the project timeline, AREAi recovered 10,000,000 PET Bottles and reached over 1,000,000 people through public awareness actions, online advocacy efforts, youth engagement activities, behavioral change campaigns and environmental outreaches across 24 communities in 6 states, leveraging a network of 600 recycling champions. Unarguably, the impact of the initiative is a significant representation of the effort of the Coca-Cola Foundation to reduce plastic waste and protect the environment.







Our People



**Prince Gideon
Olanrenwaju**



Charles Falajiki



Mekitmon AwakEssien



Godwin Osama



**Funmilola Ahmadu
Bamidele**



Maureen London



**Bertha Sewuese
Agbendah**



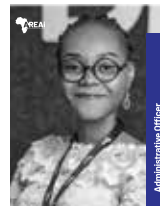
**Edidiong Simeon
Anthony**



Michael Abdullahi



Helen Ojediran



Faith Ginika

Our People **Programme & Impact Fellows**



Organizational Strength

Supported by a growing network of over 50 community based trainers across our project locations, our program team consists of 12 development professionals with expertise in instructional learning design, monitoring and evaluation, media and advocacy, community engagement, and qualitative research and policy evaluation.

Our strength as an organization is rooted in unconventional core values such as;

01

**Ruthless
Execution**

02

**Extensive
Educational
Expertise**

03

**Multicultural
Diversity**

04

**Human-centric
Storytelling**

Partners and Sponsors





Learning
without
barriers

