

# DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES NIGERIA



© 2023 London School of Hygiene & Tropical  
Medicine, Keppel Street, London, WC1E 7HT

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons  
Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International  
License, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>. Any parts of this publication may be  
reproduced without permission for non-profit and  
educational purposes. Please clearly credit the  
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine  
and send us a copy or link.

LSHTM is a charitable institution and an exempt charity, as defined  
by Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011, and is regulated by the Office  
for Students. Our legal name and correspondence address is London  
School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London, WC1E  
7HT.

Photo credits: Bilmor Technical and Vocational Centre,  
Behance/Ayodeji Ogunro, Aishat Babatunde/  
HumAngle, Sightsavers, and Zubaida B. Ibrahim/  
HumAngle.



## About this report

This report was developed by the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and the University of Abuja, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation.

The report aims to inform Mastercard Foundation's disability and inclusion programming and strategy development. It draws on in-depth qualitative interviews with young men and women with disabilities, exploring their lived experiences related to education and employment in Nigeria. This report is a part of a series developed for each of the seven countries for this project *Disability-Inclusive Education & Employment: (1) Country brief: Nigeria; and (2) Understanding the context: Nigeria.*

## Contributors

LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
& TROPICAL  
MEDICINE



The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is a world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health.

[www.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk)



The International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED) provides evidence to improve the wellbeing of people with disabilities globally.

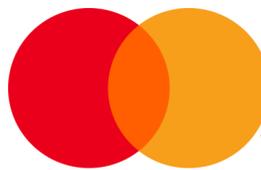
Email: [disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk)

[www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres/international-centre-evidence-disability](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres/international-centre-evidence-disability)



University of Abuja provides instructional, research, and public service programmes that combine academic excellence with the pursuit of unity in Nigeria.

[www.uniabuja.edu.ng](http://www.uniabuja.edu.ng)



mastercard  
foundation

The Mastercard Foundation is a registered Canadian charity and one of the largest foundations in the world. It works with visionary organizations to advance education and financial inclusion to enable young people in Africa and Indigenous youth in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. Established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company, the Foundation is an independent organization separate from the company, with offices in Toronto, Kigali, Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Dakar, and Addis Ababa. Its policies, operations, and program decisions are determined by the Foundation's Board of Directors and leadership.

For more information on the Foundation, please visit [www.mastercardfdn.org](http://www.mastercardfdn.org)

## Publication date

November 2023

## Authors

International Centre for Evidence in Disability  
at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical  
Medicine

Dr Shaffa Hameed  
Casey Lynn Crow  
Dr Sarah Polack  
Professor Tom Shakespeare

## University of Abuja

Dr Fatima Kyari  
Rasak Adekoya  
Omojo Adaji  
Ebuka Okonkwo

## Mastercard Foundation

Mallory Baxter  
Andre Okunzuwa  
Kaylee Stewart  
Dr Xanthe Hunt

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the young people that took part in this research for giving their time and sharing their knowledge and experiences. We also thank the Research Assistants including the sign language interpreters involved in the data collection. Thank you to Jyoti Shah and Sabrina Dogbe for providing project support.

## Suggested citation

International Centre for Evidence in Disability, University of Abuja, and the Mastercard Foundation.  
*Disability-inclusive education and employment: understanding the experiences of young men and women with disabilities in Nigeria*. London, UK: ICED, 2023

## Design

Cover design by Nzilani Simu <https://nzilanisimu.com>  
Report design by Hayaath Waheed



# Contents

---

Executive summary	7
<hr/>	
Introduction	9
<hr/>	
About Disability	9
Disability in Nigeria	9
Disability policy context in Nigeria	9
Education in Nigeria	10
Employment in Nigeria	10
About this study	11
<hr/>	
Findings	12
<hr/>	
Education	12
Access to education	13
Experiences during education	14
Transition to employment	17
Vocational training	17
Good practice example	19
Experiences in the agricultural sector	20
Challenges related to type of impairment	20
Training needs	21
Experiences in the digital sector	23
Accessibility issues	23
Needs	24
Good practice examples	25
Reflections	27
Assistive products	27
Digital skills	30
Stigma	32
Support structures	37
Intersectionality	39
Voice and agency	41

# Contents

---

Aspirations and opportunities	43
Recommendations	45
References	46
Appendix	47



# Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the experiences of young men and women Nigeria

---

## Executive Summary

- This research explored the lived experiences of young men and women with disabilities in Nigeria through in-depth interviews with 30 young persons with disabilities. The study included a mix of participants with various disabilities (including physical, visual, hearing, psychosocial, and intellectual impairments, as well as albinism), aged between 15-35 years, based in urban and rural parts of Nigeria. Participants were purposively selected to reflect varied access to education and vocational training, employment in the agricultural and digital sector.
- Participants reported navigating numerous barriers in accessing education including identifying appropriate schools and managing the costs of education. Although funding support such as scholarships existed, there were eligibility restrictions that many found difficult to meet.
- Experiences of youth with disabilities during education were shaped by infrastructural inaccessibility and lack of accommodations in teaching practices.
- Most young people with disabilities faced challenges securing employment due to limited skills and employability training. Many then undertook vocational training but faced discriminatory attitudes.
- Youth with disabilities engaged in work in the agricultural sector faced challenges including those related to type of impairment and reported needing training in several aspects related to agriculture.
- Youth with disabilities engaged in the digital sector reported accessibility issues in their work environment and emphasised a need for financial support to help with the high cost of assistive products necessary for work in this sector.
- Access to assistive products and to digital skills training were noted as facilitating factors in education and employment. Support from family members, friends, peers, and community members were also strong enablers.
- Many youth participants had experienced stigma including negative attitudes and stereotypes, bullying, violence and abuse, and discrimination and exclusion in education and employment settings. Drivers of stigma included lack of awareness of the capabilities of youth with disabilities, and misconceptions around disability.
- This study also explored the intersectionality of other factors with youth experiences. The visibility of a person's impairment can influence how they are perceived and treated by the community. Women with disabilities experience compounded discrimination as both disability and gender carry forms of marginalisation and stigma.
- The extent of voice and agency among the young people with disabilities varied with the type and severity of their impairment, household factors, and family dynamics.
- The evidence indicates a gap between young people with disabilities' aspirations, and the opportunities available to them. These were mostly influenced by financial barriers.

- Recommendations include strengthening educational institutions and teachers to better deliver inclusive education; improving policy implementation to increase inclusiveness of persons with disabilities in education and employment; improving opportunities for young people with disabilities to access skills trainings; better availability of start-up capital and equipment to help transition to gainful employment; more efforts to sensitise employers and communities to address drivers of stigma; wider availability of assistive products and digital skills; and wider range of interventions and financial support options to better match the aspirations of young people with disabilities with opportunities.

Source: Behance/Ayodeji Ogunro



# Introduction

---

## About disability

According to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) people with disabilities include those who have *“long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”* [1]

Estimates suggest that there are 1 billion people (15%) living with a disability globally [2]. People with disabilities often experience barriers to accessing education and employment and this can lead to an increased risk of poverty [2,3]. Globally, people with disabilities also face marginalisation in other aspects of society [2].

Research in Sub-Saharan Africa shows that with the right support, people with disabilities can achieve economic success. Investing in education and employment for people with disabilities should be part of development efforts, as based on an economic rationale, as well as social justice [4].

## Disability in Nigeria

With a median age of 18.1 years, Nigeria has one of the largest youth populations in the world. About 70% of its estimated 206 million are under the age of 30, and 42% of the country’s population are under the age of 15 [5]. The 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) [6], using the Washington Group Short-Set of questions [7]<sup>1</sup>, reported an all-age disability prevalence of 1% for people aged 5 years and above. This increased to 7% for people reporting at least some difficulty in at least one functioning domain. Note that this is likely to be a low estimate, as the World Report on Disability found that 15% of the population are significantly affected by disability.

According to existing evidence, persons with disabilities in Nigeria face attitudinal, physical, institutional, financial and communication barriers in accessing basic services, including education and employment [8-12]. As a result, people with disabilities are at increased risk of poverty [13]. In addition, social protection schemes do not sufficiently cover persons with disabilities, resulting in high out-of-pocket expenses for health services [14].

## Disability policy context in Nigeria

The Government of Nigeria ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2010. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 makes provisions for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities, including the need for quality inclusive education and a 5% employment quota for people with disabilities in all public organisations [15].

Research done for Phase 1 of this project involving interviews with key stakeholders (including government agencies, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, educators, and employers) revealed that despite the supportive framework, implementation remains weak. This was largely attributed to lack of policy guidance on policy implementation, a broader lack of funding for disability inclusion, and slow progression to a rights-based model of disability [15]. In addition, there was variation in implementation and funding among the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria (see [here](#) for our Phase 1 report).

<sup>1</sup> Disability is complex to measure. Differences in the way disability is measured and defined in different surveys may explain some of the variation in prevalence estimates. This includes the questions used, how they are asked and thresholds applied to define disability for the purposes of disability statistics.

# Introduction

---

## Education in Nigeria

The right to education for all citizens is guaranteed in the Nigerian Constitution. In addition, there are several policy instruments in place supporting the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in education, including the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, the National Policy on Education 2004, and the National Policy on Inclusive Education 2017. However, many of these policies were not accompanied by adequate funding mechanisms nor guidance on implementation [15].

As a result, disparities between people with and without disabilities are marked: a 2018 disability data review by Leonard Cheshire [16] revealed that youth with disabilities have a literacy rate of 36%, while for youth without disabilities, the literacy rate is 64%. Completion rates at the secondary school level are similarly inequitable: 40% of adolescents with disabilities finish secondary school compared to 56% of their peers without disabilities. About 4.5% of youth with disabilities complete university education, compared to 9.1% of youth without disabilities. Meanwhile, the overall participation rate of youth with disabilities in education and/or training is 25%, compared to 55% for youth without disabilities [16].

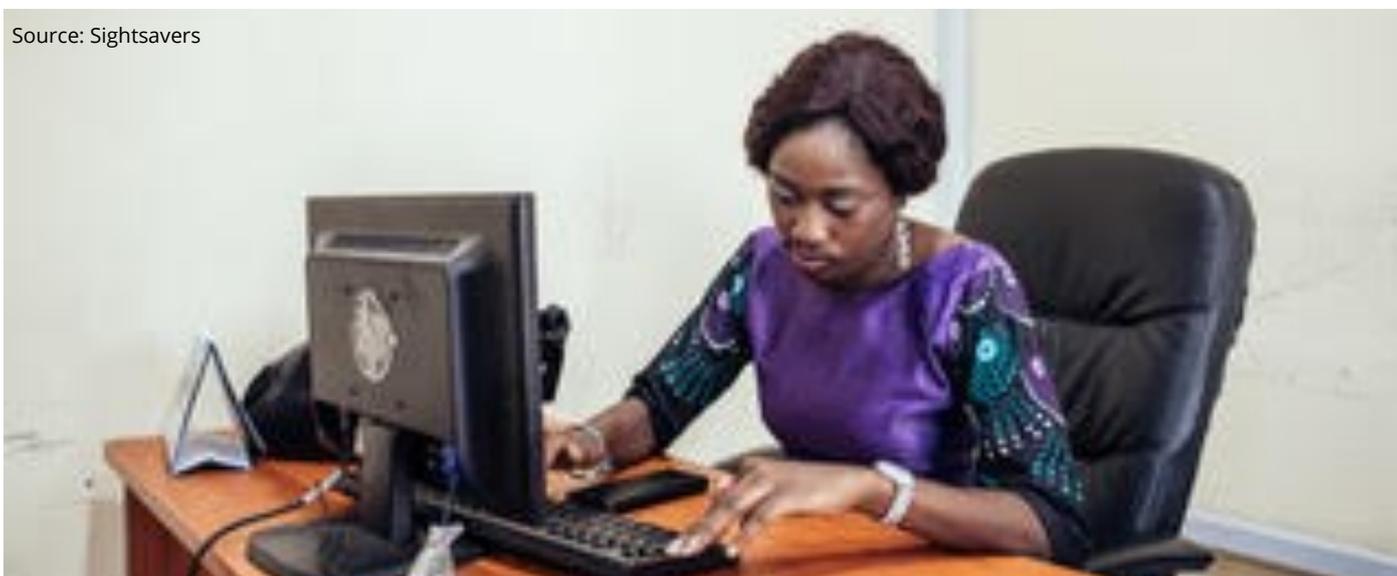
## Employment in Nigeria

Similar to education, there are strong policies (e.g., the Disability Act 2018, the National Employment Policy) that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment, including stipulation that all public and private organisations should reserve 5% of their workforce for persons with disabilities. However, our Phase 1 findings indicated limited mechanisms to monitor implementation of these policies [15].

The nett effect of inequalities in education and training can be seen in the labour market, where the labour force participation rate of persons with disabilities is low compared to those without disabilities, and 77.3% of youth with disabilities are unemployed compared to 49.2% of youth without disabilities [16].

While programmes are being designed and delivered to address these disparities, there are knowledge gaps concerning the lived experience of youth in the country when it comes to education and employment.

Source: Sightsavers



## About this study

---

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of young men and women with disabilities in Nigeria, with a view to highlighting barriers, facilitators, gaps, and opportunities regarding their inclusion in education and employment. The research involved in-depth interviews with 30 young people with various disabilities (including physical, visual, hearing, psychosocial, and intellectual impairments, as well as albinism), aged between 15-35 years, based in urban and rural parts of Nigeria.

Regarding education, we collected data from youth with disabilities currently in formal education (secondary school, tertiary education, and vocational training), those who had received some formal education but were not working, and those who were not in education, training, nor employment. In terms of work, the research focus for Nigeria included youth engaged in the agricultural and digital sectors.

Further details of methods, and breakdown of participant characteristics are provided in the Appendix.



Source: Bilmor Technical and Vocational Centre

# Findings

---

The findings of this study are presented in five parts: (1) education; (2) transition from education to employment; (3) experiences in the agricultural sector; (4) experiences in the digital sector; (5) reflections on cross-cutting issues that shape the experiences of young people with disabilities in Nigeria. Case studies are provided throughout the report to portray stories of selected youth participants (all names and identifiers have been replaced to preserve confidentiality and privacy).

## EDUCATION

---

The National Inclusive Education policy is in place to support the education of children and young people with disabilities, but our Phase 1 findings indicate that there is still limited understanding of inclusive education in many states which has led to limited buy-in from head teachers, teachers, and parents [15]. Inclusive education is where learners with disabilities are in classes together with learners without disabilities in mainstream schools. This differs from special education where learners with disabilities may attend some or all classes separate from non-disabled learners. Typical issues with special education schools are that they may be of poorer quality, while inclusive education, if not implemented well, may include learning material or teaching method are not adapted to suit a learner's impairment [17].

Of the 30 interview participants, one had never attended school, one had stopped in primary school, and 14 had attained secondary or tertiary education. A few young people reported having dropped out of school or that did not attend school. Where possible, we highlight the ways in which their access to and experiences differ by their level of education.

### Amina

Amina is a 15-year-old with a visual impairment. She is studying in a government special education secondary school. She ought to be in the senior secondary class, but her parents were not aware of the special education options for people with disabilities. This delayed her studies, and she is currently in Junior Class 2.

Amina's parents cannot afford to buy her an audio recorder to capture notes during classes, so either her mother or classmate reads notes for her. She sometimes uses a typewriter or braille to take notes, but her school does not provide her the braille paper because of its high cost.

Amina aspires to attend the university and become a lawyer. She hopes to get a scholarship that would not only cover the fees but enable her to afford the assistive products she needs.

## Access to education

---

Findings in this section will be presented according to key stages along the journey to access education, including (i) identifying and enrolling in schools and other educational institutions; and (ii) paying for education.

### Identification and enrolment

Identifying the right school was a key issue for youth with disabilities, mostly linked to the availability of support for students with disabilities. Most inclusive schools, either owned by the government or private, are mostly located in the city centres, thereby making it difficult for most young persons with disabilities to attend as majority live in rural areas. In instances where the school is unable to deliver teaching in accessible ways, students with disabilities would need to find a mainstream school that practises inclusive education (where they are supported to learn alongside students without disabilities) or a special needs school where they are among other students who have disabilities. For young people who acquire disability and must change schools, this causes delays and have lasting impacts:

*I\*: Did you go to the same school with your siblings?*

*P: I got blind at 14 and before then, we went to the same school but when the issue of my sight happened, my parents had no choice but to withdraw me. I stayed at home until I came in contact with a blind school in [detail removed] and went back to school. At the time I lost my sight, I was preparing for the common entrance to get in the Junior Secondary School, but because I stayed home for many years due to lack of awareness and enlightenment, I spent about 5 years at home doing nothing. When my parents discovered [school name removed], I was taken and assessed as a child because I had stayed home for a long time and was told I will have to be taken back to Primary 4.*

*(Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

The above quote highlights an instance of the causes of 'waithood' for young people with disabilities. Waithood is a concept that describes a prolonged period of delay in the lives of youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood [18].

### Paying for education

The majority of youth with disabilities who completed secondary and tertiary education were funded by their parents. Those who experience financial constraints either drop out or seek scholarship funding opportunities, which are rare. Both the federal and some state governments have tertiary scholarship opportunities, but these can only be accessed after gaining admission into university, because student performance in first year is a criterion. So, students who cannot afford that first year of university cannot access these scholarship opportunities.

\*I: Interviewer; P: Participant

None of the participants mentioned being aware of government scholarship opportunities in their state. Some private sector scholarships that were mentioned are the MTN scholarship programme called “scholarship for the visually impaired” and For Tomorrow’s Sake (FTS) funded by Access Bank, for vision impaired applicants at secondary school level. Another was the Chevron scholarship for applicants with various disabilities, also at the secondary level.

*“FTS is the only programme that has been supporting me. They helped me pay my school fees. Although my dad supports me sometimes, but not always. The programme also provides social skills training for students with disabilities.” (Male, 18-24 years, has a visual impairment)*

Thus, cost is a prohibitive factor for many young people with disabilities accessing education, and there is a tremendous need for funding opportunities and for this information to be advertised widely.

*“Most disabled persons are not from a really rich background, so they really need support from the government or any individual or organisation. Because it wasn’t easy for me, and I know it is not easy for others as well. It was a religious organisation called [detail removed] that sponsored my schooling. They gave me NGN100,000 [approx. 215 USD] annually for the 4-year in school in form of scholarship.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

The data emphasised the interlinkage between poverty and disability and how reliance on parents’ ability to pay for their education perpetuates intergenerational inequalities. There is a need for private sector companies to review their scholarship eligibility criteria that exclude students who cannot afford the first-year fees. It is unlikely that many persons with disabilities are able to apply for this scholarship if they are financially struggling to attend secondary school, let alone complete their studies and gain admission into a tertiary institution to fund their first year.

## Experiences during education

For those youth with disabilities in Nigeria who successfully navigated access to educational institutions, their experiences during education were shaped by two main factors: (i) infrastructural accessibility (ii) accessibility and accommodations. There are some other cross-cutting enablers and challenges, and these are reported under Reflections.

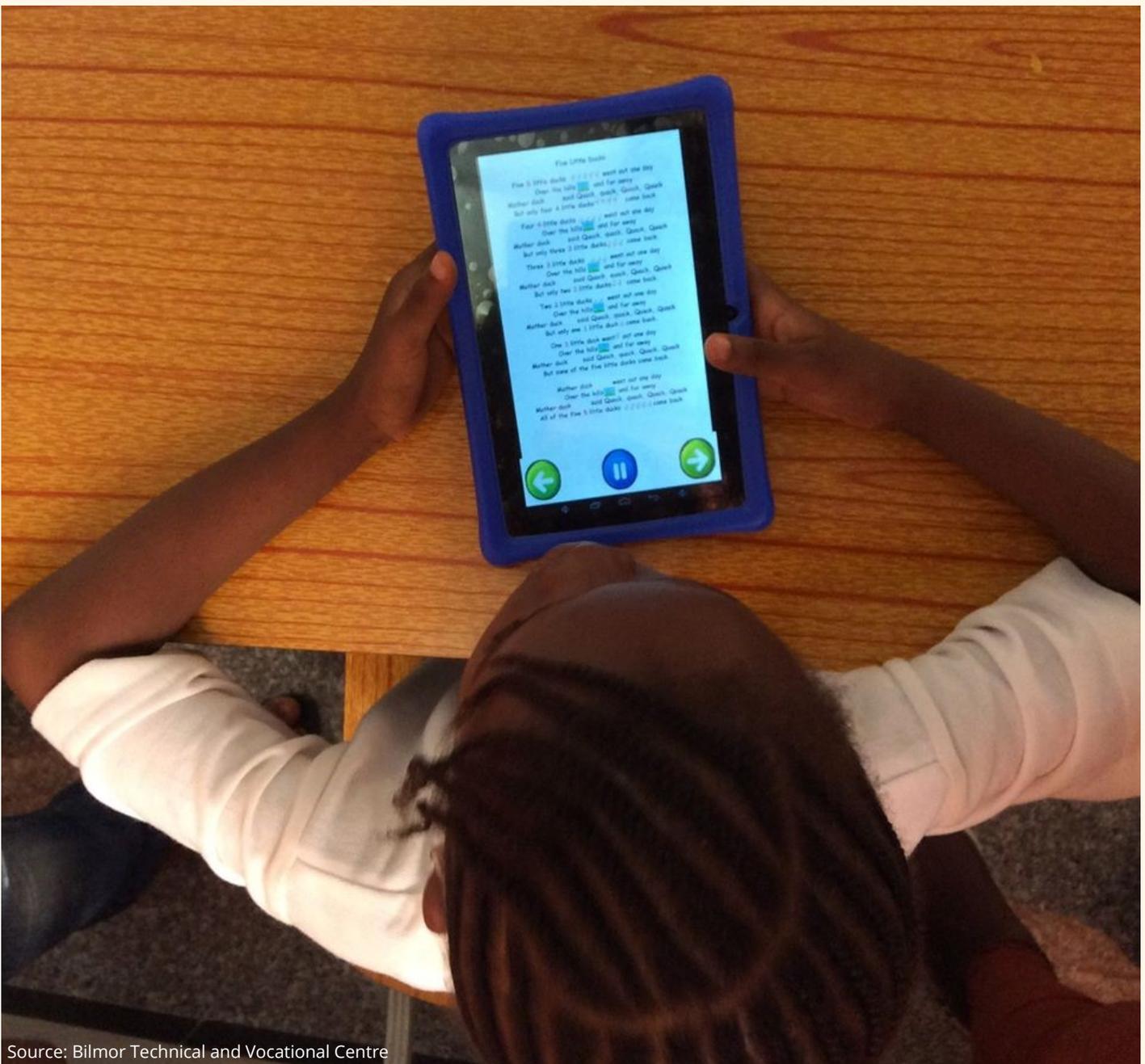
### Infrastructural accessibility

Experiences varied by type of impairment as this determined what support was required. In some cases, infrastructural inaccessibility led to limited participation. The accessibility of physical infrastructure in government-owned tertiary institutions across Nigeria varies, with the majority being inaccessible. While the National Disability Act 2018 makes it mandatory for all public buildings to be accessible for people with disabilities, it provides a 5-year grace period for all private and public property owners to make this adjustment, resulting in poor enactment of this provision [15]. In addition, national building codes in the country make little or no provision for accessibility for people with disabilities.

Some participants reported that their institutions reserved a certain number of hostels on the ground floor for students with disabilities. However, provision of accessible classrooms continued to be a challenge.

*"I know [university name removed] tried to be supportive of persons with disabilities as best they can, but I feel they could do better. I can remember having some classes like zoology or botany on the topmost floor with no lift. I often climb, fall sometimes, take a break, panting, resting, and continuing. Two guys always have to drag one of my department seniors who uses wheelchair all the way up. It was torture. It is mentally stressful to cope with learning. When I was in 200 level, I was tempted to drop out, I was like 'I cannot do this no more.' Because the walking was quite stressful for me. It was not a wonderful experience. I came back to hostel always with serious body pain. When I finished, I was like 'Oh God, I am never coming back to this university.'" (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

As the quote indicates, these difficulties can act as a deterrent to continuing education and can have lasting impact, drastically shaping their educational experience and outcome.



Source: Bilmor Technical and Vocational Centre

## Accessibility and accommodations

Accessibility and reasonable accommodations are an essential component of inclusive education, as well as a fundamental human right for people with disabilities, yet they are often inadequate, inappropriate, or entirely non-existent. Having learning materials that are adapted and accessible for people with disabilities was uncommon at all levels of education, though there were mentions of a few. However, these were also limited.

*“Learning materials are available but not accessible in most schools that I attended. On getting to University, luckily, they have a section of the library demarcated for us which is the visually impaired library whereby they have 2-3 computers with screen readers and embossment papers for those of us who want to type the materials into braille. But what can 2 computers do if you have a lot of blind students? Personally, some of us have to buy our own computers and seek our own survival. Some students go there to do their research and assignments. More can be done with more resources which I believe the university has.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

For deaf or heard of hearing students, availability of sign language interpreters is central to their tertiary education experiences. Youth reported that many institutions were unwilling to bear the cost of employing sign language interpreters, though again, there were a few positive examples, such as a government-owned mainstream tertiary institution.

*“I have no problem with sign language interpreters in my school. We have departmental sign language interpreters. Anytime we’re going for study as a Deaf [person], the Centre will send different interpreters to support us because many Deaf [students] study different courses. This is why we have several interpreters in the University who are employed by the institution. But with increase in Deaf student population, the institution needs to employ more.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

Although these positive examples of institutional practice exist, these tended to vary for different impairment types. Students, including those with disabilities are generally required to write the University and Tertiary Matriculation Exam (UTME) and have a minimum score of 190 – 200 before gaining admission into their tertiary institution of choice. The Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), the government agency administering this examination, provided some reasonable accommodations for candidates with visual impairment, albinism, deaf and physical disabilities, but failed to do the same for those with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. A female youth with cognitive and intellectual impairments described how she requires extra time for her exam, but it was not provided to her because the JAMB does not recognise her disability.

*“I wrote the UTME three times before I passed. I find it difficult to comprehend documents very fast. I need double the hours those without disabilities spend to read and understand. However, JAMB has failed to recognise my reasonable accommodation needs. I have to devise a learning strategy for me to pass the third time.” (Female, 18-24 years, has intellectual impairments)*

The above quote exemplifies how experiences during education varied based on type of impairment as some youth with disabilities received accommodations whilst others were not recognised.

## TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

---

Given their varying learning experiences, the pathway to transitioning to work is challenging for majority of young persons with disabilities.

*I: You mentioned that you're currently looking for work, how long have you been looking for work? And do you want to work, or do you want to start your business?*

*P: Any will do, but I would prefer to have work. I have been looking for work for two years now.*

*I: What type of work do you want to do?*

*P: Secretarial work will do. It will be easy for me because I will not need to be going up and down. I will be in one place.*

*I: What skills do you think you need to be able to perform this secretarial job?*

*P: I don't have any skills in that aspect.*

*(Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

This quote highlights three aspects to which programmes can respond: (1) that young people struggle to find work and they need guidance on how to search for jobs efficiently; (2) that they need more information about the skills required for different jobs, and how to get them; (3) that they lack information about the types of work and careers they could have with the right accommodations and support.

## Vocational Training

---

Vocational training programmes have the potential to provide valuable skills and improve both employment opportunities and quality of life for young people with disabilities. Participants reported taking part in different vocational skills trainings including baking, shoe mending, craft making, making soaps, candles, and pillows.

### James

James is a 24-year-old young man with albinism and a visual impairment. He is an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enthusiast and has attended a couple of trainings on computer repair and maintenance, graphic design, and website development. A few trainings he attended required payments, and most of the free trainings were organised by non-profit organisations. One of the NGO-organised trainings he attended gave him (and other trainees with disabilities) funds for transport and meals.

James loves repairing computers, but he struggles because training organisers do not provide assistive products such as magnifiers. These would help his learning and work, because of his visual difficulties. Nevertheless, he is determined to succeed in this field. With support from an international organisation, James recently received a grant to start his business. He plans to open an ICT centre and give people with disabilities the opportunity to undergo apprenticeships there.

There were, however, instances where assumptions were made about their capabilities. Here, a young man with physical impairment describes his experience:

*I: If you were to be working or going to look for a job, what type of job or business would you like to be doing?*

*P: If I was trained, I would have loved to be an electrician or a welder, but my disability will not allow that but as I am right now, it seems the only job I can do is to be a shoe repairer as people have advised me. And I don't know where I can learn because the first shoe-repairer I asked to teach me looked down on me and said he does not know how to teach me because my disability may slow down my learning ability. He was not willing to have me as his apprentice because he said he would also want someone he could send to buy the necessary materials for work as needed and I would not be able to do that for him. I have resorted to begging for alms until I die as I don't know what profitable job I can do because I am not trained, and I did not go to school."*

*(Male, 18-24 years, has a physical impairment)*

The quote above also highlights how people with disabilities are often directed to certain types of low-skilled work. This has led to frustration among some youth:

*"...I think we should begin to look beyond [telling] women with disabilities 'come and learn how to cook, women with disabilities come and learn how to make soap'. I think we should begin to expand our thinking we should begin to think outside the box on how we can actually empower women with disabilities to go out there and become employable [...] Because if people are not empowered to be employable, that 5% that is written in that [Disability] Act will not be achieved, because you do not expect an agency to employ a person with disabilities simply because he or she has a disability and is not productive. So, we should... programs now should be mapped out how persons with disabilities can be made productive in the workspace." (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

Most trainings were offered through NGOs, both local and international (e.g., Sightsavers), and most were for free. Although all expressed the benefits of receiving these opportunities, young people felt that more organisations (government or non-government) could prioritise making these available for youth with disabilities.

*"So, it's not a work for one person to do so. Other NGOs can as well do something about it or the government, can do something about it. Maybe opening a centre where they will be giving trainings to persons living with disabilities, making them acquire that skill and when they acquire it, to make sure you empower them. The kind of empowerment I'm talking about is not the kind of empowerment thing maybe after the training, you give the person 50,000 Nigerian Naira [approximately 100 UD] and say, 'I've empowered you'. What can it purchase? At least after providing that training, you help the person secure that thing that he learnt. Maybe someone who learnt [...] all these bead-making, cosmetology, you make sure you buy the items. As in the thing that will make the work easy for the person. So, to make sure, because if they start doing all these things, I think it's going to reduce all these begging, street-begging, and the rest of it." (Female, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

The quote here also emphasises the need for post-training support that would enable youth to apply these skills for income generation or seek employment opportunities.

## Good practice example

### Employability training:

Participants described the benefits of receiving training that provided them the skills for seeking and retaining employment. For example, beneficiaries of a private scholarship for persons with disabilities report being supported immediately their graduation with entrepreneurship and employability training. Other participants, mostly after graduation, often attend similar trainings organised by different not-for-profit organisations.

*"I think I did this one that [detail removed] does, but I think that was like employability training. Yes. Yes. I did that, to help you prepare your CV, and how to get prepared for an interview. Basically, even how people use, like MS Office and all of that. It helped me brush up the little I know, and I still learned some new stuff so those are the two trainings I know I took. Like the [detail removed] one, it really helped. I really enjoyed it because I can be very shy. I am very shy in fact, having an interview one-on-one is something I dread but having it online I don't mind. So, I went through the training because they trained us on interviews and everything. And after the training, they gave us a mentor who helped shaped us" (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

These programmes appear to target youth with some experience of higher education, and those belonging to associations of persons with disabilities. This would exclude the considerable proportion of youth with disabilities who have not benefited from formal education and are not linked disability organisations. It is imperative that interventions to support young people with disabilities during this transitional period are inclusive of youth from a variety of backgrounds.



## EXPERIENCES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

As of 2020, agriculture accounts for roughly 34% of the workforce and 21% of GDP [20], and has featured as a priority in the National Development Plan 2021-2025. Although both the National Agriculture Policy and National Agriculture Gender Policy make provisions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, extent to which these policies are implemented is unclear [15].

Six youth with disabilities discussed their experience in the agriculture sector in Nigeria. The analysis shed light on important elements about their experiences and needs. Notably, most of those currently working in this sector were involved in farm-based work, with just one involved in contributing to the agriculture value chain.

### Yahaya

Yahaya is a 28-year-old rice farmer who is also a deaf person. He learnt farming from his parents, and most of his family are farmers. He is used to subsistence farming but aspires to expand his business, for which he needs financial support and skills like how to write business proposals.

Yahaya hired other farmers to work with him on his farm, making a high turnover, but flood has recently affected his farm. He struggled because there is no resilience support from any government agency.

It was only recently that he got the chance to attend a training funded by a multinational private company and acquire the skills to expand his business. He suggests that similar mainstream training should be designed to be more inclusive to make it better available to more farmers with disabilities. Yahaya is also active in the disability community and would love to acquire more knowledge to mitigate climate risk on farmers.

## Challenges related to type of impairment

Most participants described being 'born into' agriculture, as an activity they engaged in because of family or access to land. A few did not identify their poultry farming as a career, because of the small scale of their activities. In undertaking agricultural work, challenges described by participants include difficulties in laborious work (like fetching water) for people with physical impairments, and in overseeing state of produce and poultry, for people with visual impairments. For these tasks, they are supported by family members.

*I: On a daily basis, are there some activities that you require somebody's help?*

*P: Yes. My poultry for example. Most times I call my siblings to come and look at the chickens because of my low vision.*

*(Female, 25-35 years, a person with albinism)*

Overall, the findings indicate that for youth with disabilities, undertaking work in agriculture is limited by access to training, rather due to functioning constraints associated with specific impairments.

## Training needs

The importance of training in the agricultural sector was evident in the data. Only two had received training. All participants expressed a desire to learn more, either to get started or to scale up.

*"I really want to have training more on this poultry farm because my birds are dying most times. I need a proper training on it." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

One participant emphasised the benefit of the training he received. Although he values his decade-long experience in farming, this training taught him how to look for and secure support and funding to scale up his business. However, he noted a common informational barrier for people with disabilities in accessing opportunities:

*"I think the application process should provide more opportunities for inclusion for person with disabilities. Like I told you earlier, out of 2500 people that applied, we have about [one] person with disability that get that opportunity, and the reason is that most of us don't know the proper way to apply. So, I think if something like this, they need to create awareness in disability-inclusive way so that people can be aware of it and can be able to apply. Another thing is that some people cannot read too, and they need to apply." (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

His final point on opportunities not being accessible to people who cannot read is not specific to people with disabilities, but as described under Education, people with disabilities face many additional barriers to education and literacy and are likely faring worse on these aspects than their non-disabled peers.



Similar to the barriers to education, participants struggled with inaccessibility of agricultural trainings and inadequate considerations to include people with different impairment types. For example, some training application processes may not be accessible for people with visual impairments:

*“So, I think they should make it in an accessible way so that even those who cannot see can know that something is going on” (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

The same participant goes on to expand how sign language interpretation was made available to him only after the training had started, causing him to miss some of the content:

*“The challenge that I faced is that they provided sign interpreter at a late hour. So, I had to sit for some days without interpreters. It was later they provided interpreters. And I had to complain, struggle, fight before they decided that they have to bring interpreters in. [But] during the application, I had told them, in the application, that I need interpreters and they agreed on it. But on the day of training, they failed to bring interpreters.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

A participant with intellectual and physical impairments also described her struggle to keep up with the content of her training. According to her, the benefits of having the training be online included the availability of videos, so that she could view them multiple times to help with her understanding. Despite receiving a lot of information on different aspects of agricultural business, she could not complete the final stages as she was not selected for the practical component. Although it is unclear whether she disclosed her impairment to the training providers, these aspects (e.g., learning support to people with intellectual impairments, efforts to explore how those with physical impairments may also be included in practical components) must be considered to make trainings inclusive.

The data highlights that for wider availability of agricultural training that is accessible for people with different types of impairments would enhance youth engagement in the agricultural sector.



Source: Zubaida B. Ibrahim/HumAngle

## EXPERIENCES IN THE DIGITAL SECTOR

---

Along with agriculture, the ICT sector was highlighted as a priority for government investment in the National Development Plan 2021-2025. In addition, the National ICT Policy makes provisions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in this sector [15]. Our Phase 1 reports highlights the efforts made by the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy including programmes that provide training and equipment to young people, including youth with disabilities (see [here](#) for our Phase 1 report).

Six participants were sampled to provide deeper insight on experiences of people with disabilities with training or interest in working in the digital sector in Nigeria. The analysis revealed one important aspect shaping their experience and two needs to which programmes could respond.

### Accessibility

---

One of the key benefits of working in the digital sector was the flexibility in mode and place of work, particularly the post-pandemic hybrid approach to working. However, on days when they are required to be physically present in the office, participants reported facing accessibility issues such as heavy doors, narrow entryways, and absence of lifts. It was encouraging to note that all employers mentioned in the interviews seemed willing to make reasonable accommodations, and receptive to requests from their disabled employees.

The quote below is from a participant working in a digital company that arranged a car to transport her to the bus stop, because that journey was challenging for her. Here she describes her discussion with them about another issue, lifts:

*“And now the issue is that the team is upstairs, and now you’re saying persons with disabilities will have to stay downstairs. We’re working, so we can always communicate online with your team upstairs. But there is this team bonding thing that comes being in the midst of your team and not being an outsider. Just sitting downstairs somewhere, so that is one thing I really don’t like about this place, but they are trying in other aspects, but they try to be as inclusive as possible. And I was speaking with the facility manager the other time asking about the possibility for a lift and they were telling me that that would be a very long shot, so hopefully, maybe they are going to get around to it but for now, it is what it is. But then, there is an arrangement where I am told that if I must go upstairs, then I must get two people, one person to go in front of me and another person to be at my back just in case anything happens...”*  
(Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)

Her quote also highlights a wider implication of inaccessible workspaces. Although one solution to lacking a lift may be for employees with physical impairments to remain downstairs, it could relegate them to specific roles that do not fit their interest or expertise, and even limit their ability to perform their tasks. Disability inclusion at work demands that reasonable accommodations are made so that employees with disabilities have equal opportunities and ability to participate as do employees without disabilities.

## Needs

---

Analysis of youth narratives highlighted two ways in which youth with disabilities may be supported in the digital sector. These are in addition to cross-cutting enablers like assistive products that are detailed under Reflections.

### Training opportunities

All participants reported tremendous benefits of receiving opportunities for digital and IT trainings, describing these as pivotal in securing employment.

*“There was one time [detail removed] was giving a scholarship to train persons with disabilities to make them digitally trained [...] I participated in that, and it was kind of like a turning point for me. It was after that, after I went through my data analysis training, that I got my internship where I currently work” (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

For some, these trainings were needed in addition to having formal education on the subject.

*“It has impacted in my life because, most of the knowledge I got were from the courses that even got me the job. It was those courses that get me the job. The first degree was just a prerequisite to consider me but that additional courses that helped me get the job. (Male, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

This highlights the benefits of making trainings' available and accessible to people with disabilities.

### Salome

Salome is a 22-year-old deaf woman. She is a professional photographer and worked with one of the largest photography studios in Nigeria. She had previously won a beauty pageant which exposed her to several economic and social opportunities.

Her two major ambitions are owning a photography studio and acquiring a university degree. She hopes to have access to start-up capital, be mentored, and advocate for the economic inclusion of deaf girls. Communication barriers are her biggest challenge with colleagues and customers. Salome hopes that her colleagues will learn sign language one day and the government can increase awareness on disability rights to reduce society's discrimination of people like her.

## Financial support

While some digital training opportunities were funded through scholarships, others were free for people with disabilities or facilitated by disability organisations. All reported financial barriers at some point in their educational journeys. Below is a quote from one participant who now earns an income by teaching digital skills to other people with disabilities. Being aware of prohibitive financial costs that he himself faced stops him from quoting high rates to his disabled clients, which then impacts his own income.

*“Yes, in terms of funding, which is the major challenge I am facing right now, which incapacitates me as business owner. The truth is there are so many children with visual impairment in my locality in Lagos at the moment, but they don’t have the financial strength to learn these skills. Do not forget I said it took my father’s life savings to take me this far, not to mention those who can barely eat.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

Overall, the data indicates that providing training opportunities and financial support (covering fees for course, food, and transport), and reasonable accommodations could facilitate young people with disabilities to thrive in the digital sector.

## Good practice examples

Youth narratives highlighted two examples of good practice that improved their experiences in the digital sector.

### **Training followed by internship placement:**

One technology skills institution was reported to reserve free slots in their courses for people with disabilities to learn alongside people without disabilities. Another programme not only supported trainees by covering food and transport costs but went on to organise internship placements.

*“...they do some training like, even if it is hospitality or so, once you pass through all the stages, if you do very well, you will qualify for interning in an organisation. And if you do well in the internship, you get retained. So, that wasn’t a bad one. I like the whole idea of getting interned in an organisation. It makes you employable. (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

The participant went on to describe the benefits of an alumni programme:

*“There’s an alumni [programme] in which we do different activities like workshops. We do some mental health talks. Invite people to talk to us, give us some training. [detail removed]. So, we do some programme workshops, even business activities and all of that. Currently, I think this December, we are planning a business fair. That also has to do with health stuff, like free health check-ups. And then you showcase your business. Like I said it’s an alumni [programme] for the [ICT] training, or different trainings, where we all alumni, we help each other in workshops, business or whatever it might be.” (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

### **Entrepreneurship training followed by grants:**

Another good practice example was an entrepreneurship programme that provided training as well as grants for applicants to kickstart their business.

*“When I was starting my business, I got no support but recently, I took part in a business development programme by [detail removed]. And through their foundation [programme] called [detail removed] Programme which I had to undergo a rigorous training and at the end, pitched their business ideas. And I was opportune to receive a grant of 800,000 Nigerian Naira which helped me purchase other equipment for my business last year.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*



Source: Bilmor Technical and Vocational Centre

TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL

## REFLECTIONS

Described below are reflections on cross-cutting factors that shape the experiences of young people with disabilities in Nigeria.

### Adebayo

Adebayo is a 29-year-old student with visual impairment in his final year in university. In addition to being a university student, he is self-employed, running a tech company.

To enable him to study effectively, he makes use of several assistive products. He uses screen reader software on his computer, a digital recorder to take notes, guide cane to aid his mobility when going to lecture classes, and other apps on his mobile phone to enhance his independent living. But all of this comes at a high cost. Adebayo lamented that it cost his father a fortune to send him to primary and secondary school. For example, the cost of purchasing a screen reader in Nigeria is about \$1500, and assistive products are imported from developed countries.

## Assistive products

Assistive products are equipment or devices that enhance an individual's functioning in education, work, and daily life. The table below shows the type of assistive products used by the study participants, noting that this study did not involve assessing the need (or unmet need) for assistive products.

Impairment type	Number of participants	Assistive products used
 Physical	10 (All 10 had mobility difficulties)	Wheelchair = 4 Crutches = 5 (Among these, 3 also use caliper/corrective shoes)
 Visual	7 (All 7 could not see at all)	White cane = 4 Screen reading software and apps = 4
 Hearing	6 (All 6 could not hear at all and used sign language interpreters.)	Hearing aid = 3 (Note: hearing aids were mentioned to aid them feel vibrations, rather than to hear sound.)
 Albinism	3 (All 3 had difficulties with vision)	Glasses = 3 (Note: 1 person mentioned sunscreens and umbrellas under assistive products)

The young people interviewed reported using a range of assistive products to support them in daily life, education and in work. Some participants with physical impairments reported using caliper or corrective shoes. However, people's responses to seeing these often deter them from using them.

*"Yes, I have my corrective shoe. I don't wear it often because of the way they stare at me and keep looking at me most times. Most times [it's] when I go to places where they don't know me. Me using my corrective shoe." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

The use of white cane seemed to be fairly common among the participants with visual impairments and were helpful in navigating. Many used screen readers such as JAWS (Job Access With Speech) and smartphone apps like Be My Eyes, Seeing AI, TapTap See). Those in education used digital recorders and braille, though it takes them twice as long as their peers without disabilities because after each lecture, they must translate the audio recording to an accessible format (e.g., braille). In addition, there are additional challenges associated with using these, for which they need support:

*"But then some easily understand by reading on braille while some easily understand by reading on PDF format. And there's no way you will tell someone to come and start braille without Braille Embosser. Maybe a textbook that has up to 500 and something pages, you tell the person to come and start braille one after the other? It's not possible, but if they [resource centre] have a Braille Embosser, and they put that textbook there, the thing will convert it to braille and print it out." (Female, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

There are also financial barriers in procuring and maintaining assistive devices to use in education, particularly for those who find school fees challenging to meet.

*"And secondly, it's not all of us who has the money to purchase digital recorder. Yes, because some of us are in school but it is a challenge staying here. [...] So, it's not all of us who has money for something like digital recorder and the rest of them. During my Year One, Two, and Three that I am in now, all the memory cards that I used to record my lectures are all corrupt[ed]." (Female, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

Students with hearing impairments also described the effort required to manage their studies and participation in hearing settings.

*"... the problem will soon come up, I believe, when I'll have to use my phone as an assistive device. For example, maybe during a lecture, I'll have to use my phone to transcribe. And if I have to say something, I'll have to type so that it can voice. I have that in mind. But also, I have one sheet that I can quickly write whatever it is. I have to write, and they read and then write [their response], at home as well. [...] If I have any extra responsibility then I'll need an interpreter and other things like that, but for now nothing" (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

People with albinism reported having to use a range of assistive products, including glasses to help them see clearly (though different from reading glasses), sunblock to help manage short periods of time in the sun, and umbrellas for shade. As one participant highlighted, their multiple difficulties mean that unless several assistive products and accommodations are in place, many jobs are restricted to them.

*“For example, there are jobs that I can’t actually take because of this. If the job warrants me to stay in the sun or in the field for a long time, for example police officer or working in a factory where you always have much heat, you will notice that your skin is very reddish, and this will pose risk of contracting cancer. But if it is indoor application, why not? Although there are some indoors that has limitations too. For example, if you’re working in an IT company and you’re given a very small screen to work with which means you will be straining and squeezing your eyes to be able to work. That will reduce your work efficiency and will make you look like you are not competent. Meanwhile it is just [that] an enabling environment is lacking. If someone can get a large screen or even a laptop but you have a desktop and screen that is a bit wider, then I’ll be able to perform my work diligently and efficiently. Moreso, I can’t even drive because I don’t have [an] enabling device. Even though there are glasses out there that I can use, which I even tested when I went for my prescription test but then, I can’t even afford the money. [...] But if I am able to get all these assistive products, I know I would excel.” (Male, 18-24 years, person with albinism)*

The above quote also emphasises the importance of access to assistive products to strengthen livelihoods for people with disabilities.



Source: Behance/Ayodeji Ogunro

## Digital skills

---

As reported earlier in this report, digital skills training had tremendous benefits to youth with disabilities who wanted to work in the digital sector. These trainings were also powerful enablers for participants who went to work in other sectors. However, as the data shows, digital skills trainings are beneficial if they are (i) widely available; (ii) appropriate to different levels; (iii) combined with other supports; (iv) accessible.

Nearly all participants reporting having had some exposure to computer skills, though for many, these were basic lessons in setting up a computer or laptop, connecting to the internet, and typing. Some were taught Microsoft programmes like Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. There was an evident appetite for more training opportunities in digital skills, as many reported its benefits to improve their chances of success un education and employment. One participant who hopes to work as a disability advocate said:

*"I think number one, I need more training on ICT because everything is going digital now. So, I need more training in ICT. I think that is what I'm thinking of." (Male, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

As noted regarding agriculture training, there may be informational gaps among people with disabilities about the availability of digital skills training. For example, nearly all trained participants reported they had received at least one training for free. However, those who had not received any training anticipated that there would be a prohibitive cost attached to trainings. Thus, there is a need to strengthen the information about trainings, costs, and application processes, making that information more widely available.

Some participants remarked upon how some opportunities may only be known or made available to people already known to the organisers:

*"They need to give us more empowerment because some with disabilities, they don't have any training. They have not gone for any training. The people that selected us for the training, selected those that they knew. So, what about those that were outside [the organisation]? Many deaf people were outside, and they didn't get any of those opportunities. So, we need to involve them in this." (Female, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

There were several instances where the digital skills training had directly impacted young people's ability to explore different career paths, such as those in the creative sector. One participant learned photo editing skills that led her to be employed as photographer, while another built on what they learned to write his first film script.

Still, the analysis indicated improvements were needed in providing different levels of training, and ensuring that they were matched to needs of youth with disabilities:

*"What do you intend to achieve with this training? Is it just to give them a touch, the peripheral part and say, 'okay, this is how to turn on your laptop'? Or are you teaching them a skill that they can take out there and excel at?" (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

A few participants reported receiving devices (such as laptops) as part of completing their training courses. They described this as extremely beneficial to pursuing their goals since they could not have afforded these on their own. For example:

*“Yeah, before we had that training, I could not even open a computer, to know how to write [type]. But at the end when I got the computer, I can open the computer. [...] I learn a lot of things there, I even use now. I can't say I am a scriptwriter [but] I even wrote a film, and I wrote a series, and this is all on my computer. Without my computer I will not be able to do it” (Male, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

In contrast, those who did not receive similar support reported struggling to apply these digital skills:

*“And also, to maybe give out starting package because we were not given anything. We just receive the training: ‘take the training, receive the certificate’ and come back to our various homes. I was trying to start the business, but unfortunately the money I have could not allow me to do such kind of business till now. That's over two years I'm talking about. So that's some of the challenges. Concerning the ICT, you know you get the certificate of computer [skills], maybe you can be provided with at least one laptop, just for you to go and keep on doing things [...] You know, computer is just to [get] you through the way. It's just to teach you, you can learn on your own a lot of things, as time goes on. So, we were not given any kind of support from anybody. So, definitely, if you don't have money for the laptop, the knowledge will remain dormant.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

Another point was made about combining digital skills training with wider employability training:

*“It should be something that is in line with our present reality. Because then if you teach me MS Office, or you teach MS Excel okay. [But] I don't have a job, what am I using that to do? So now, we should begin programmes that make people employable. Because the world has gone from analogue, where you talk about ‘okay, go and start producing soap and slippers and all that.’ [But] the world is digital. So, you have to teach women with disabilities employability skills, sometimes these women want to venture out on their own, maybe do an online kind of business or they don't have to leave their houses, [teach them] like affiliate marketing, search engine optimization and all that.” (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*



Source: Behance/Ayodeji Ogunro

## Accessibility barriers

As with other educational endeavours, young people with disabilities who received digital skills training opportunities faced many barriers related to their impairments. These stem from inadequate consideration among training providers about their accessibility needs and insufficient efforts in making reasonable accommodations to support their full participation. This was most commonly reported by participants with hearing impairments.

In some instances, they miss several elements of the training because of the training providers:

*“And then when I came in, they were like, you're a deaf, they asked ‘how would you understand what hearing persons are saying?’ So, I told them, I wrote it down. I told them they could write. [...] So, they gave us a form. And then we were able to learn, we used our hands to repair a few things. Then the training was not a problem. But the problem is the instructor, the instructors don't have time for the deaf people, [say] ‘do you understand what I'm saying’ and take extra care, not just focus entirely on the hearing persons. We can [physically] access anywhere, but the only issue is the instructors.” (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

As the same participant goes on to note, there was also unwillingness to make reasonable accommodations:

*“They didn't have deaf [person] on their list. But they just ‘say come’. And they're like ‘oh you're qualified, you're qualified [to join this course].’ And then I explained my condition. Oh, am I deaf person, I need an interpreter? And then they go ‘oh, sorry. We don't have provisions for interpretation.’ That's wrong. But then, you [training provider] called, you called people for applications. And now I'm applying. But the trainer is now saying, ‘oh, sorry, we do not have provisions for interpretation.’ But if you can come with your interpreter, [they] have to pay for the service. And then they're like, ‘no funds, no funds.’” (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

In instances where sign language interpretation is provided, they are often not knowledgeable in IT terminology, or they are only intermittently present, retracting from the benefits of the training.

*“... because the interpreters do not always come. And most time, the interpreters come late and the person giving the lectures just continues without waiting for the interpreters. So, we don't get much information about it.” (Female, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

## Stigma

---

Stigma remains a significant issue for young people with disabilities in Nigeria. Participants described experiencing stigma and in many aspects of their lives, including from family members, peers, teachers, prospective employers, and the community at large. Below, we outline the ways in which stigma affects education and employment, highlighting key forms of stigma that young people with disabilities often experience including (i) negative attitudes and stereotypes; (ii) bullying and exploitation; and (iii) discrimination and exclusion.

## Ngozi

Ngozi is a 34-year-old young woman with physical impairment. She currently works as a data analyst in one of the leading telecom companies in Nigeria. She has studied to Master's level but remembers disturbing incidences when she first started university. For instance, when she been enrolled in a private university, the school owner, who is a religious leader, publicly humiliated her for her disability. She remembers having to leave that university and went to enrol at another university to start from year one.

Ngozi believes the communities need a lot of awareness on disability rights as majority among them forget that anyone can acquire disability regardless of status.

## Negative attitudes and stereotypes

For some young people, negative attitudes are experienced first within their own family. Participants described assumptions and stereotypes from family members that they are not capable of doing well in education:

*"Sometimes parents may not even pay attention to a child with disability thinking they cannot be useful like those without disabilities. They tend to spend more energy towards the education of those without disabilities, thereby leaving you with disabilities, at the mercy of God." (Male, 18-24 years, person with albinism)*

This also extended to peers and community members.

*"We were actually in a queue, so she... I don't know what happened, but I held [onto] her, I was falling, yes, so I held [onto] her then she turned and looked at me horribly. So, after the class I asked her what the problem was, why she had to look at me like that. She said she felt irritated when I touched her. It was not as if I am a dirty girl, I am clean. So, when she said that, I asked her why she said that. She said it was because of my disability, it was like a plague, so she felt irritated when I touched her." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

As one participant pointed out, stereotypical beliefs about the capabilities of people with disabilities persist, and affect their livelihoods:

*"In [detail removed], there is a person with wheelchair. She has a business, baking, she bakes, she bakes cakes. But if you see her [as a] person with disability, 'I can't buy'. But it's her business. Why don't you buy from her? It's just cake. Like just Coke, it's just [like] Fanta, that's all. You buy." (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

## Bullying and exploitation

The young people interviewed also experienced bullying, (i.e. derogatory language, harassment, being demeaned by peers), and vulnerability to sexual exploitation (i.e. sexual assault, rape, and threat of sexual violence). Some attributed this to being the only person with disabilities in the school.

*I: But what did you like about the school?*

*P: And when I was there [in that school], I had a very terrible encounter with the owner of the school. He publicly humiliated and embarrassed me. He was like, 'What are you doing in my school? Someone like you is not supposed to be in my school.' Like publicly saying in front of everybody and I felt really bad [...]*

*I: Was it because of your disability?*

*P: That was obviously what it was. I was the only disabled person in the school...*

*(Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

Participants reported how painful this bullying and abuse is and how it can also impact their self-esteem.

*"I face lots of challenges. You know, some people will just be looking at me and say, 'see this stupid deaf girl.' They ridicule me because of my disability. Sometimes they just look at me and say I'm useless. I hear them because I mingle with hearing students in school." (Female, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*



Source: Behance/Ayodeji Ogunro

There were some mentions of sexual exploitation in the process to access employment opportunities, though these were few and may not be only for people with disabilities.

*I: What program do you know are available, maybe in your state or Nigeria as a whole to support young people with disability to get education?*

*P: For me, I don't know any. But people use to mention that in [detail removed], you can write letter and take it to some people in authority. But you know when you write this kind of letters to request for assistance, most of the people in power ask for sex in return and which is why I decided not to seek assistance from individuals.*

*(Female, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

## Discrimination and exclusion

Discrimination and exclusion based on disability is a pervasive form of stigma highlighted by many of the participants. In the interviews, young people reported discrimination in their pursuit of employment including being denied jobs:

*"What really happened was that someone knew me in [detail removed]. So, he wanted to help me in getting a job, so he told this other person that was in my state of service. Upon meeting this person, he said, 'oh is it you? You that can't walk.' (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

Participants also cited examples of exclusion in various community gatherings, like in church:

*"For instance, they will say...in some churches, they used to say hold somebody's...hold somebody's hands and pray with that person. You know, in churches, once they discover that...most people, once they discover that you are blind, they would not like to hold your hand." (Female, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

## Drivers of stigma

Understanding the drivers of stigma towards people with disabilities can highlight ways to address it, to better include young people with disabilities in education and employment. Some attributed this stigma to cultural beliefs about disabilities being contagious. The data showed that this belief was stronger regarding people with albinism:

*"I believe that she acted that way because her reaction is because of the myth surrounding albinism thinking that albinism is contagious." (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

Lack of awareness about people with disabilities as being capable in education, work, and in contributing to the community plays a key role in limiting opportunities.

*"Persons with disabilities are not given the opportunity to prove their ability. For example, as a graduate of Mass Communication with a second-class upper division and I take my CV to a broadcasting station because I learnt of an opening. The first thing they say is 'you are blind, and you want to apply?' They doubt your ability that you cannot be blind and still perform at the role effectively." (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

Assumptions around capability can be complex. The assumption that people with disabilities are not capable often excludes them from opportunities where they might positively contribute. However, assumptions that people with disabilities have no limitations or support needs can prevent needed provision of reasonable accommodations or creating accessible environments.

In situations where financial resources are scarce, this lack of awareness about capabilities lead to exclusion from opportunities for young people with disabilities.

*“And the cost... some parents, it's not like they cannot afford it, but that feeling to concentrate on the children that are 'normal', the ones they tag as 'normal'. And they tag this one as 'not normal', [and think] 'why am I my spending this much [on this one]?’” (Female, under 18, has an intellectual impairment)*

So how can these be addressed? The young people interviewed suggest that sensitisation on disability may be an important part of the path forward.

*“I think it is sensitisation. More and more of sensitisation because we cannot have enough. Most people are doing it out of ignorance. So, we need to continue sensitising people.” (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

As one participant noted, the awareness raising activities may be tailored to include messages that discourage efforts to 'heal' disabilities. Instead, to encourage educational opportunities for people with disabilities, targeting parents in particular:

*“I think the first one is that government needs to create more awareness. Let people know that disability is not a sickness. Deaf[ness] is not a disease. So that people can change. And also, through that awareness, they should include parents of deaf children. This is not time to be carrying them to church for any miracle. Let them encourage their children and send them to school. Because when the children go to school, they will have a good life and they will behave well in the society and that will have positive effect in the society. So, more awareness to the parent of children with disabilities” (Male, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

Similarly, awareness raising could also highlight elements of disability law, particularly non-discrimination.

*“One of the things I think can be done is for government to carry out awareness on disability law using TV jingles so that people will know about disability rights. And the punishment attached to discrimination against persons with disabilities either at work, community, and school. (Female, 18-24 years, has a hearing impairment)*

## Support structures

---

Despite the pervasive stigma and discrimination people with disabilities continue to face, the young people also described examples of positive attitudes and support from family, friends, teachers, and community members.

### Family

Positive attitudes and support within the family can have a significant impact on young people's self-esteem, belief in their capabilities, and resilience when they are excluded outside the home.

*"Within my family, it was not made an issue for me that I was physically challenged. I was not ostracized or anything like that. In fact, I use to do well in school, so my parents used to brag [about me]. Especially my mum anyway, she used to be like 'she's very bright' and all of that. In terms of house chores, I did my fair share of house chores." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

### Friends and peers

Positive attitudes and support from friends or peers in protecting the young people from bullying and ultimately supported them for meaningful participation.

*"I needed help really in personal chores and movement. It was my roommate. [...] She brought a bike for me [to go to educational institute] and even made sure that I don't go on a different bike every day. She had to talk to a bike-man and keep paying him at the end of the month. She made everything so simple and easy for me." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

For students in mainstream schools, as there is lack of formal disability specific support, their educational experiences were vastly improved if they had support from their peers and friends, for example with navigating inaccessible environments:

*"Sometimes I would need somebody's assistance, like if the place I am going to requires me to climb steps. So, I would need somebody to assist me in climbing that area and all that. [...] Like I said some of my friends were always there to assist me in climbing upstairs and take me to lectures." (Male, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

### Community

Familiarity and inclusion in the community can also contribute to positive experiences and support.

*"They see me as the same, they don't think of me as being deaf, we are just the same. They know. They are friendly with me. They are cordial. So, our relationship is great" (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

There were several mentions of community members being sources of support to young people with disabilities:

*"If I send somebody in my community [on an] errand, they will assist me. Or if they see me going outside, they will assist me." (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*



## Belonging with other persons with disabilities

Many of the young people with disabilities are actively involved with OPDs and report the positive impact of engaging with other people with disabilities, encouraging one another.

*“Okay, so there is this other one, women with disabilities. It’s an organisation, we meet online, we talk, and we just plan activities basically to support one another and for some learning process.” (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

Participants working or volunteering with OPDs also described the positive impact of engaging with people who understand disability and the challenges they face, and building relationships that are encouraging and empowering for the community.

*“I have been involved with [detail removed]. Yes, I have been extremely active because we organise a lot of workshops for our members. I teach them how to operate computers, how to... all those ICT basic things, we used to teach them” (Male, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

## Intersectionality

---

How, where, and in what ways young people with disabilities are included or can participate in education and employment varies greatly based on factors like gender, location, severity and type of impairment, and other aspects of identity. It is important to examine this intersectionality, to better support their inclusion.

### Type of impairment

The type and severity of impairment can impact a young person’s experiences. Those with more severe impairments experience disproportionate discrimination, and more barriers to participation in education and work. Moreover, the visibility of a person’s impairment can influence how they are perceived and treated by the community.

*“People look down on me because I don’t have legs. I am not regarded as a human being or considered for anything important. There is the attitude of ‘you are useless in life and cannot amount to anything good.’” (Male, 18-24 years, has a physical impairment)*

As mentioned previously, people with albinism often contend with added discrimination because of their appearance. According to participants with albinism, the multiplicity of their challenges is still poorly understood:

*“...they don’t understand our issue, they just see us, and the layman views... ‘okay, this person is just light-skinned and doesn’t have a problem.’ And that is not how it is because when they say [that], okay, we have just one disability. I will say albinism is a double disability because you don’t only think about your eyes, you also think about your skin. Now, in the past years, persons with albinism have been dying, still dying of skin cancer, and our issues are not there in the open.” (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

Intellectual impairments are often considered to have 'spiritual' origins, leading to additional exclusion and discrimination.

*"Some people look at them as strange, some people don't even know that it could be as a result of any biological thing like that. They just feel it's spiritual. There's a lot of spiritual thoughts about disability. Some people are even afraid to come close to them, or even talk to them." (Caregiver of male, under 18, has an intellectual impairment)*

## Gender

Women with disabilities experience compounded discrimination as both disability and gender carry forms of marginalisation and stigma. The data highlighted that young women with disabilities face unique challenges such as gender-based violence, and socio-cultural expectations that differ based on gender.

*"Just that things like maybe fetching water or serving food on a tray, and then carrying it, any things that has to do with carrying things from one place to the other, because my hands are usually occupied with the crutch, so it is difficult for me to move. Anything that does not have a handle that I can just hold at the tip is usually very difficult. So, for instance, I'm always wondering how I'm going to serve my in-laws and to get married..." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

Gender-based violence including sexual harassment is often a major concern for young women with disabilities. These concerns are heightened for women with intellectual impairments who may struggle to protest or express their concerns.

*"If he wants to talk to me, I don't used to understand what he is saying. Or if he wants to touch my breast, I used to shout at him." (Female, under 18, has an intellectual impairment)*

## Urban-rural differences

The differences between youth with disabilities based in urban versus rural areas are mainly related to opportunities:

*"School??... I have never known what going to school is like. I am not educated at all. Not even what little children go to, called nursery. You can even see I cannot speak basic English. I grew up in the village." (Male, 18-24 years, has a physical impairment)*

## Voice and agency

---

Voice and agency in decision-making varied among the young people with disabilities. For some, decision-making within the family was related more with cultural family hierarchies rather than their disabilities:

*"In family, though it depends on the situation. Most times I make my own decisions without anybody to influence me. And also at home, you know we have some decisions that I have to allow them to make because of the social beliefs." (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

Some played caretaking or 'elder' roles within the family:

*"And concerning the family members, they believe persons with disabilities, or I can say they believe I, can participate despite the fact that I'm visually impaired. I used to advise them in maybe [how to] proceed in their education" (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

Although most participants reported having agency within the family, there were instances of young people lacking these. As this quote below shows, this has deep negative impacts on their self-belief and voice:

*"I do not have any active participation in my family or in the community. My disability does not allow me to participate well which is why I shy away from family gatherings or activities. I don't attend family meetings because I will not be given any room to contribute neither will I be recognised. As a matter of fact, they will even be wondering what I am doing there. My type is not needed for participation in such activities. I do not have any role to play." (Male, 18-24 years, has a physical impairment)*

In educational settings, there was instances where young people with disabilities felt their choice of courses were limited because of their disabilities and that they were ushered towards special education. Although this appears to be just two institutions that was mentioned by several participants, this highlights a serious restriction to young people's voice and agency.

*"If any deaf person in [detail removed], or if any deaf [person] wants to study Law, they will be refused. This forced them to study Special Education [course]. I don't like that. Anybody that sees a deaf person, or a blind person just feel like 'all of you just go and do Special Education.'" (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

*"...there is this thing in [detail removed] especially where they like to push people who are physically challenged to a particular department. I don't know where that tradition came from. So, if you're a person with disabilities, especially if it is maybe blindness or deafness, you would automatically be pushed to Special Education. I don't know if it is a must that it's only Special Education that people with disabilities can do." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

## Naomi

Naomi is a 31-year-old woman with intellectual disability. She has obtained her undergraduate and post-graduate degrees and is now self-employed, processing and packaging fruits.

She is a fellow of a youth initiative and is active in the alumni association. Through this, she helped organise seminars for girls in government-owned secondary schools in her community, educating them on their rights and social skills. Naomi believes in raising a new generation where everyone is treated equally, where people won't even point a finger at anyone because of his or her disability.

There were several examples of young people with disabilities playing crucial advocacy and leadership roles in OPDs, which not only developed their self-belief in their voice and agency, but also made significant contributions to their communities. Below are two examples:

*"I remember now, in 2020, during the COVID, when everyone was at home, I worked with an organization, an NGO that is focused on Deaf persons. So, we wrote a letter to the government to announce that everyone should stay at home, don't shake people's hands. [...] So, I, I signed about COVID. Many people saw me on TV because I was involved in sign language aspect, for deaf person to get information on the risk of COVID, how to use a mask and all of that, what government announces it in the spoken form..." (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

*"... after the training, I started a WhatsApp group for women and girls with albinism, on the WhatsApp group now are seven-six women and girls with albinism, from different states, and on the WhatsApp group, I had to you know, get coordinators, to represent six geopolitical zones. So, this is something I learned from a particular training on leadership. And then even from the training, I went for another workshop, I was made the [details removed] where we are like a middleman between the community people and the [detail removed]. So, we carry the issues of people in the community, to the [detail removed], make sure they have a commitment, you know, and hold them accountable for whatever commitments they give to us" (Female, 25-35 years, person with albinism)*

## Aspirations and opportunities

---

The data indicated a gap between young people's aspirations and opportunities available to them. Most participants described wanting more training opportunities and education, as well as needing funding as start-up capital to expand their work. Notably, both are linked to financial challenges. While this may be a common barrier to the non-disabled population too, it is likely to be particularly challenging for people with disabilities who face extra costs of disability and are on average poorer.

*"Two supports. Number one, capacity building for myself. And two, funding, financial aspect. Capacity training will help me to have more understanding of where I'm going and learn the things that I don't know [...]. I also need financial support to keep going to achieve my dream." (Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

There was a strong preference for establishing their own businesses. The analysis indicated that this may be tied to a desire to be independent after having relied on family or difficult employers and peers.

*"Well, my own support is always concerning education, that's one. After education, then business, just to be independent in life because I wish to my have my PhD anywhere, I can see. I really want to be an academia. That's one and in another one, I also want to establish a very good business where I can maybe depend on my own, to have an independent life..." (Male, 25-35 years, has a visual impairment)*

*"I want to own a big poultry farm. That's it. Because I don't want to work for anybody. I just want to have my own. That's what I'm looking out for. I also want to have my own baking shop. That's the part I really want to venture into. I love baking, I love finding new recipes." (Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

As the quote above indicates, there were some mismatches in the work they undertake and what they hoped to do. For example, some participants engaged in agriculture had not had any training in it, and several who had received agriculture training had no desire to work in the agriculture sector.

Aspirations varied greatly, ranging from wanting to be doctors, counsellors, lawyers, and small business-owners. Those who had experienced exclusion had goals to simply be given an opportunity to prove themselves.

*I: Where do you see yourself in five years?*

*P: I wish to get a good job in the future.*

*I: What kind of support do you need for you to get this good job in the future?*

*P: What I want is for the government to consider me and give me job for me to survive.*

*(Male, 25-35 years, has a hearing impairment)*

It is notable that several participants who expressed a desire to start their own businesses or organisations reported this as a way to help others like them. This highlights that it is young people with disabilities that will be the drivers of change for their peers to thrive in their communities and be respected.

*I: I mean in the next five years, where do you think you will be?*

*P: I think in the next five years, I would have finished my Master's and even my PhD, or I am already working in a ministry or developed my business. Or I might have even opened my own organization for persons living with disabilities and would have employed lots of people working in my organisation.*

*I: What kind of support do you think you will need to help you achieve this?*

*P: I need employment, either in a ministry or organisation. Because I believe if I am employed, I would get money to start my own organisation in order to help persons with disabilities who are growing up now.*

*(Female, 25-35 years, has a physical impairment)*

It was clear that young people with disabilities have the passion and potential to achieve their aspirations; however, this requires substantial societal change. With increased support, awareness, and opportunities, these young people are more likely to live up to their potential and fulfil their aspirations.



## Recommendations

---

This study has built on findings from past phases of this research, highlighting several areas for change to promote inclusive education and employment for young people with disabilities in Nigeria. These include:

### Improving access to education and vocational training

- Advocate to government and private sector foundations to put in place educational scholarships that focus on transition of young persons with disabilities from secondary school to tertiary institution as well as factoring the cost of assistive devices that such students would need.
- Build the institutional capacity of mainstream TVET centres to understand the concept of reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, delivering content in an inclusive and accessible manner and providing industry certified technical courses.
- Encourage vocational training organisers to ensure content are accessible, relevant, and aligned to specific job functions that meets the needs of the intended beneficiaries with disabilities.
- Make available opportunities for trainees to receive tangible start-up kits and mentoring; as well as linking them to employment opportunities or finance to start their aspired profession.

### Improving access to employment

- Make job advertisements and application processes accessible for people all types of impairments and ensure that advertisement extend beyond members of associations.
- Provide in-depth and accessible training on modern farming techniques, agricultural value chain.
- Connect youth with disabilities to agriculture service providers and opportunities to scale their business ventures.
- Build the disability confidence of employers to understand the business and ethical rationale for disability inclusion as well as providing them with practical technical guidance of including people with disabilities in their core business function as employees, suppliers, and customers.

### For general programmes and policies

- Develop tools and policy implementation mechanisms to assess, measure, and improve disability inclusion in policy and programmes.
- Establish the national accessibility standards and mechanisms to enforce it to improve physical accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Increase financial support for families of young people with disabilities to offset the economic burden of disability, education, and transport costs, and improve access to assistive products.

### For researchers

- Investigate the behavioural factors (positive or negative) that could influence community, employers', and development practitioners to fully embrace and practice disability inclusion.
- Given the high cost of assistive products, more research is needed to understand what could be done to encourage local production of assistive products in Nigeria as this is key to improving access to education and employment for people with disabilities.

## References

---

- [1] UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*: resolution/adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106.
- [2] World Health Organization, the World Bank. *World Report on Disability*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2011.
- [3] Banks LM, Kuper H, Polack S. Poverty and disability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. *PLoS One*. 2017; 12(12): e0189996.
- [4] Shakespeare T, Mugeere A, Nyariki E, Simbaya J. Success in Africa: People with disabilities share their stories. *Afr J Disabil*. 2019; 25(8): 522
- [5] Adolescents and Youths Dashboard - Nigeria. UN Population. March 29, 2023. <https://www.unfpa.org/data/adolescent-youth/NG>
- [6] National Population Commission [Nigeria], Ministry of Health [Nigeria] and ICF. *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018 [Dataset]*. Rockville, Maryland, USA: ICF, 2018
- [7] Washington Group. Question Sets of the Washington Group. Available online: <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/> (accessed on 29 November 2020)
- [8] Obiakor FE, Eleweke CJ. "Special Education Today in Nigeria," in *Special Education International Perspectives: Practices Across the Globe* (Advances in Special Education, Vol 28), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2014, 377-395.
- [9] Ofuani A. The right to economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in Nigeria: How enabled? *AHRLJ*. 2011; 11(2): 659-682
- [10] Eleweke CJ, Ebensoj. Barriers to Accessing Services by People with Disabilities in Nigeria: Insights from a Qualitative Study. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*. 2016; 6(2): 113-124
- [11] World Bank. *Disability Inclusion in Nigeria: A Rapid Assessment*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2020
- [12] Nkechi C. Education of the Disabled in Nigeria: Access and Perception. *Plus Education*. 2013; 9(1): 133-142
- [13] Omiegbe O. Chapter 8 Poverty and Persons Living with Disabilities in Nigeria. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021
- [14] Inclusive Friends Association. *Situational Analysis on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Social Protection in Nigeria*. Abuja, Nigeria: AAH, Action Against Hunger, IFA, Inclusive Friends Association, Save the Children International, 2021
- [15] International Centre for Evidence in Disability, University of Abuja, Mastercard Foundation. *Disability-inclusive education and employment: understanding the context in Nigeria*. London, UK: ICED, 2022
- [16] Thompson S. Inclusion Works Situational Analysis 2020. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/15487/IW%20SITAN%20Nigeria%20Version%20II%20June%202020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- [17] UNICEF. Inclusive education. Available online: <https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education> (accessed 15 October 2023)
- [18] Oosterom, M. and Sumberg, J. (2021). Are young people in rural sub-saharan africa caught in waithood? Available at: <https://doi.org/10.19088/ids.2021.039> (accessed November 10 2023)
- [19] UNdata, Nigeria. 2020. Available online <https://data.un.org/en/iso/ng.html> (accessed October 2023)

## Appendix: Methodology

---

This report is based on in-depth qualitative interviews with 30 young men and women with disabilities in Nigeria to explore lived experiences around education and employment. For education, we collected data from youth currently in education (secondary, tertiary, vocational), those who were educated but not working, and those not in education and not working. For employment, the research focus was the agriculture sector and digital sector, selected in discussion with the Mastercard Foundation.

### Qualitative data collection

In Nigeria, the interviews were conducted by two research assistants (Omojo Adaji, Ebuka Okonkwo), among whom one was a young person with disabilities. They were led by Dr Fatima Kyari and Rasak Adekoya from University of Abuja, who monitored data quality and progress. Prior to data collection, the research team participated in training workshops (jointly with other country teams) facilitated by LSHTM that covered ethical protocols, interview techniques, maintaining data quality, and in-depth discussion of topic guides. Draft topic guides were pilot-tested, and research teams participated in feedback workshops after conducting at least one pilot interview.

Topic guides for the interviews were developed in discussion with the broader project team, Mastercard Foundation and Youth Advisory Groups comprising youth with disabilities based in Uganda and Ghana. Interviews were conducted in English and pidgin language between September to December 2022.

Ethical approvals for the study were obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) for Nigeria. All participants were provided with information about the study and written informed consent was obtained before the interview. Interviews lasted between 60 -90 minutes. 18 interviews were conducted face-to-face while 12 were over phone or online, for participants based in distant geographical regions. All were audio-recorded after informed consent was given by the participant. Interview recordings were transcribed in English language for analysis by Isaiah Ude, Christy Angulu, Omolola Adetunji and Tonye Oghenekan.

After data collection and transcription, the researchers participated in a data analysis workshop held virtually with other West African country teams to discuss approaches to coding and analysis. A coding scheme and codebook were developed based on the study objectives and emerging themes. Transcripts were coded using the NVivo software and analysed thematically.

Participants were identified in collaboration with local organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Nigeria and through snowball sampling.

Table 1. Breakdown of participant characteristics

		Male	Female
<b>Age</b>	15-17 years	1	1
	18-24 years	5	2
	25-35 years	10	11
<b>Impairment type</b> (Note: Some participants had multiple impairments, therefore these totals are different from actual total)	Physical	6	4
	Visual	3	4
	Hearing	4	2
	Psychosocial	0	0
	Intellectual	2	2
	Albinism	1	2
<b>Education</b>	Currently in education	5	2
	Educated, but not working	2	5
	Not in education, not working	2	0
<b>Employment</b>	Working in Agriculture	3	3
	Working in Digital	3	3
	Working in other sectors	3	1
<b>Location</b>	Urban	7	4
	Rural	3	1
	Peri-urban	6	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>

For comments or questions  
please contact:

**Dr Sarah Polack**  
Sarah.Polack@lshtm.ac.uk

**Dr Shaffa Hameed**  
Shaffa.Hameed@lshtm.ac.uk

LSHTM is a charitable institution and an exempt charity, as defined by Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011, and is regulated by the Office for Students. Our legal name and correspondence address is London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London, WC1E 7HT.



**Improving health worldwide**