To: Adamu Adamu, Honourable Minister of Education, Nigeria
From: Ebenezar Wikina, Chimdi Chukwukere, Comfort Onyaga, Kehinde Adebiyi, Oteheri Akinruntan [**Team 91**]
Date: 6/14/2020
Re: Nigeria's Public Education in a Post-COVID World: Strategies for Inclusive Learning in Tertiary Institutions

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Executive Summary

In Nigeria, the COVID-19 pandemic has further widened ***the digital divide between public and private tertiary institutions***. To close this gap, key digital learning constraints like access to devices, lack of constant power supply, and high cost of reliable internet need to be addressed. There's also a need to lobby for an increase in the national education budget and enact policies that mainstream education technologies in public institutions. With a youth unemployment rate of over 55.4%, keeping young people at home without a definite engagement plan can only spell disaster for Nigeria.

Background and Context

The Federal Ministry of Education announced the temporary closure of all schools in Nigeria, effective March 23rd, in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus (FME, 2020). The Learn from Home Program (LHP) designed by the Ministry in April 2020 was focused on a small percentage of public secondary students leaving millions of students in public tertiary institutions stranded for over 3 months.
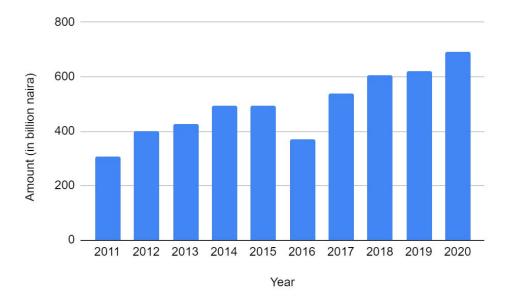

Fig 1: Nigeria's Education Budget, 2011-2020 (Source: Nigerian Bureau of Statistics)

Inadequate funding has been identified as one of the main hindrances to growth in Nigeria's public education sector (Rowell & Money, 2018). In Figure 1, at face value, it may appear that the education budget has relatively increased over the years, however, Figure 2 puts it into perspective.
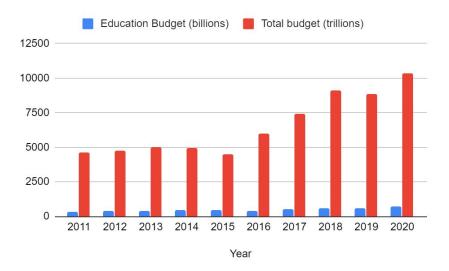
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Fig 2: Education Budget vs Total Budget, 2011-2020 (Source: Nigerian Bureau of Statistics)

Despite UNESCO's recommendation for developing countries to allocate 15% to 20% of their national budgets to education (UNESCO, 2015), Nigeria has not allocated more than 8% in the past ten years.

Evidence + Analyses

Using google forms, we leveraged Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp groups filled with Nigerian students and lecturers to run randomized anonymous surveys on the key constraints to virtual learning and instruction faced by both target groups. Within 18 hours (after the start of the hackathon) we received a total of 134 responses from the targeted sample - 106 responses from students and 28 responses from lecturers.
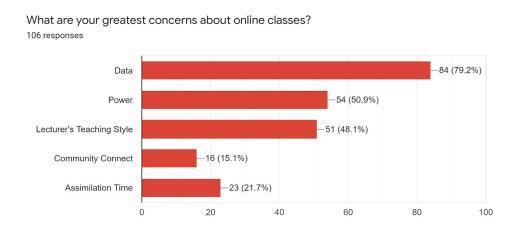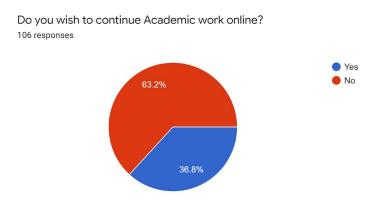

Fig 3: Nigerian Students responses on key constraints to online learning (Source: Team 91 Survey Findings)

Our study showed that the leading concerns for students' access to virtual learning are data (79.2%) and Power supply (50.9%) thus underscoring the points earlier made about these

constraints. Many students (48.1%) also attributed Lecturer's teaching style as a hindrance which is understandable, knowing that for many lecturers in Nigeria, the COVID-19 lockdown was their first contact with virtual conferencing software thus they didn't have the required digital literacy to deliver content through these platforms.

Similarly, 83.3% of lecturers affirmed that access to cheap and reliable internet data has been a challenge for them while 87.5% attributed poor electricity supply as a major impediment to virtual instruction.

Fig 4: Responses highlight the lack of students' willingness to continue online academic work
(Source: [Team 91 Survey Findings](#))

Only 6.6% of students are very convenient with digital learning, with 93.4% fairly/not convenient with it. In addition to this, 63.2% of student respondents do not wish to continue academic work online while 36.8% were willing to continue. This doesn't come as a surprise because the key constraints stacked up against them make it difficult to learn online successfully.

Proposed Recommendations + Next Steps

1. **Lobby National Assembly for an increase in the Education budget.** The Honourable Minister of Education (HMoE) should achieve this by working closely with the Presidency as well as the House and Senate Committees on Education in the National assembly to increase the education allocation for 2021 to 10%, and then steadily grow the percentage upwards moving forward.
    1.1. In a situation where the Executive is unable to make funding increments, the HMoE should explore partnerships with the private sector and international donors to access funding for the Ministry's development activities.

2. **Establish community learning hubs by equipping local libraries with required digital devices, renewable energy supply, and free internet data.** This will help to address the constraints we identified during our study. The proposed *Community*

Learning Hubs will also help to revitalize Nigeria's dying local libraries and can mirror the technology hub model in the Startup community. Considering its potential impact, this will leave a legacy for the HMoE.

    2.1. This should be implemented immediately, especially in rural communities with a high population of vulnerable young people.

3. **Advocate for the implementation of the National Broadband Masterplan (NBM)**. The implementation of the NBM will help to provide fast and affordable internet across the country.

    3.1. The HMoE should ensure that the NBM (2020-2025) remains on the agenda of the Federal Executive Council by engaging relevant government officials saddled with the task of bringing the plan to fruition.

4. **Enact policies and programs that support indigenous Education Technology (EdTech) Providers**. Currently, most of the digital content used for virtual learning programs in Nigeria are foreign and do not match the typical Nigerian student.

    4.1. The HMoE should design an EdTech program to identify organizations that will build local solutions and provide them with tax havens, conditional loans, and grants.

5. **Incorporate Digital Literacy programs in School Curriculum and Teacher Training Programs**. This will help to prepare instructors as well as students for the new era of learning by ensuring they gain the required skills to use digital learning platforms.

    5.1. Technology giants Facebook and Google currently have free digital literacy programs that can be adapted for Nigeria.

(See Annex for Implementation Work plan & timelines)

<u>Urgency Statement</u>

Being the World's Poverty Capital (Brookings Institute, 2018) with more than half of its youth unemployed or underemployed (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2019), Nigeria cannot continue to let education take the backseat. The Honourable Minister must champion the digital revolution in Nigeria's public education sector to avert the impending doom.

Theory of Change

Impact
- increased national budget on education from 8% to 15%
- At least 70% reduction in the level of digital divide between private tertiary institutions and public tertiary institutions in Nigeria
- Reduction in the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education in Nigeria
- Improved power supply through renewable energy across public tertiary institutions and among households in Nigeria
- Improved quality of education and Human Development Index in Nigeria
- Increased private sector investment in education
- Reduction in the level of youth unemployment and underemployment from 55.4% to no more than 20%

Outcomes
- Removal of entry barriers for adoption and use of indigenous Education Technology (EdTech) Providers.
- Establishment of community learning hubs by equipping local libraries with required digital devices,
- Increased investment in Nigeria's Public Education Sector from 8% to 15%
- Increased availability of renewable energy supply across all Public University campuses in Nigeria
- Provision of free internet data for inclusive learning
- Adoption and review of policy recommendation by relevant stakeholders
- Implementation of Policy recommendations across 50% of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Activities
- Drafting of EdTech Policy Memo by Team Hack Naija
- Grant Award/Signing of MoU between Team Hack Naija and the Stanford/MIT COVID-19 Policy Hackathon team
- Team building and planning
- Stakeholders mapping
- Identification and engagement with private sector partners and service providers
- Signing of partnership between Team Hack Naija and EdTech Companies and ICT companies/ Internet Service Providers
- Advocacy to the Federal Ministry of Education for the adoption and implementation of EdTech policy in public universities in Nigeria
- Advocacy/Lobby for increased investment in Nigeria's Public Education Sector from 8% to 15%
- Advocacy/lobby for increased private sector investment in inclusive education facilities for public institution
- Advocacy to the Federal Ministry of Education for the implementation of the National Broadband Masterplan (NBM).
- Advocacy for favourable policies to encourage private sector investment in education

Problem Statements
- Low level of national education budgetary allocation
- Lack of policies that support the adoption and use of EdTech in public universities in Nigeria
- Low level of private sector investment in education
- Lack of community learning hubs
- Lack of constant power supply
- High cost of internet

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Table 1. Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria (2016)

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Monotechnics and specialized institutions	33	2	12	47
Colleges of health technology and allied institutions	9	40	1	50
Technical colleges	19	110	3	132
Approved VEIs/IEIs	100			100
Colleges of education	18	46	36	100
Polytechnics	22	38	16	76
Universities	40	43	69	152
TOTAL	**147**	**277**	**237**	**657**

- Table 2: Implementation Work Plan

Activity	Description	Timeline
Lobby National Assembly and Presidency	This is to increase the national education budget to 10% by 2021	June - December 2020
Equip Local Libraries with Internet data, devices, and renewable energy	This will help to create the Community Learning Hubs across the States. If done in partnership with Local Governments it will be achieved faster	July - August 2020
Advocate for National Broadband Masterplan	This can be done by engaging government stakeholders and the National Communications Commission to increase willpower	June - December 2020
Digital Literacy Training	- For a start, this can be organized virtually for lecturers. - Engage Facebook and Google Nigeria Offices to adopt free training for Nigerian students	July - August 2020

- Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)

The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. This proposal contributes to the achievement of Goals 4 (*Quality Education*), 8 (*Decent Work and Economic Growth*), and 9 (*Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure*).

- Snapshot of Survey Form