

Closing the Digital Divide: Strategies for Building Human Rights Literacy Through Mobile Technology in the Global South

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Abstract

The digital divide represents one of the most pressing challenges facing human rights education in the 21st century, with 2.6 billion people worldwide lacking internet access. This article examines how mobile technology, combined with traditional media platforms including radio, television, and social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, can serve as powerful vehicles for building human rights literacy in the Global South. Through detailed analysis of platform usage data from Nigeria as a case study, this research demonstrates the transformative potential of multiplatform approaches to human rights education delivery. The article explores the intersection of mobile connectivity, digital platforms, and human rights awareness, proposing comprehensive strategies for leveraging these technologies to close the educational divide. Drawing on current data and scholarship, this work argues that a coordinated, context sensitive approach utilizing diverse platforms can significantly expand human rights literacy even in contexts marked by infrastructure challenges and economic constraints. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, civil society organizations, and technology companies seeking to democratize human rights knowledge through digital innovation.

Keywords: *digital divide, mobile technology, human rights education, Global South, Nigeria, social media, radio, television, digital literacy, connectivity*

Understanding the Digital Divide in Human Rights Education

The digital revolution has transformed how knowledge is created, disseminated, and accessed globally. Yet this transformation has been profoundly unequal, with vast disparities in digital access creating what scholars and policymakers term the "digital divide." This divide is not merely about technology access but represents a fundamental barrier to exercising human rights, including the right to education, freedom of expression, and access to information. As of 2023, nearly one third of the world's population, approximately 2.6 billion people, still lacks internet access, deepening existing inequalities and creating what some call an emerging "artificial intelligence divide" (UNESCO, 2023).

The implications of this divide for human rights education are profound. Human rights literacy, the knowledge and understanding of fundamental rights and freedoms, is essential for individuals to claim and defend their rights, participate meaningfully in democratic processes, and hold power accountable. When significant populations lack access to platforms through which human rights education is increasingly delivered, they are effectively excluded from this vital knowledge. The challenge is particularly acute in the Global South, where infrastructure limitations, affordability barriers, and digital skills gaps combine to restrict access to digital educational resources.

However, the same technological revolution that has created these disparities also offers unprecedented opportunities to address them. Mobile technology has emerged as a potential game changer for expanding access to human rights education in contexts where traditional educational infrastructure is limited. Unlike desktop computers and fixed internet connections, mobile phones have achieved remarkable penetration even in resource constrained settings. In Sub Saharan Africa, mobile penetration reached 44 percent by 2023, with mobile connections totaling 205.4 million in Nigeria alone, equivalent to 90.7 percent of the total population (DataReportal, 2024). This article examines strategies for leveraging mobile technology and associated platforms to build human rights literacy in the Global South, with Nigeria serving as a detailed case study. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with 226.5 million people, offers particularly valuable insights given its diverse media landscape, significant mobile adoption, and persistent digital access challenges. The analysis explores how radio, television, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can be strategically deployed, individually and in concert, to expand human rights education reach and effectiveness.

The Mobile Revolution in the Global South: Opportunities and Constraints

The proliferation of mobile technology across the Global South represents one of the most significant technological transformations of the 21st century. Between 2014 and 2023, mobile communications improved by 19.8 points across Africa, making it the most improved infrastructure indicator on the continent (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2025). Access to mobile internet improved by an extraordinary 41.1 points over the same period, representing the largest improvement across all governance indicators. These statistics tell a story of rapid technological change that is fundamentally reshaping how people in the Global South access information, communicate, and engage with the world.

Mobile technology's transformative potential lies in its ability to bypass traditional infrastructure limitations. Where fixed line internet remains prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable, mobile networks provide connectivity. Where desktop computers are financially out of reach for most households, smartphones and feature phones offer a more affordable entry point to digital services. This infrastructure pattern is particularly pronounced in Africa, where mobile networks serve as the backbone of digital progress, with many countries effectively "leapfrogging" over fixed broadband deployment (Opensignal, 2024).

The Global System for Mobile Communications Association reports that the mobile industry contributed 140 billion dollars to Sub Saharan Africa's GDP in 2023, a figure projected to reach 170 billion dollars by 2030 if key connectivity barriers are addressed (Siedner et al., 2012). This economic impact is driven by mobile technology's role in enabling financial inclusion through mobile money, facilitating access to education and healthcare information, supporting agricultural productivity, and creating platforms for small business development. For human rights education, these mobile platforms offer unprecedented opportunities to reach populations that have historically been excluded from formal educational systems and information networks.

However, mobile connectivity alone does not guarantee meaningful access to digital resources or human rights education. Significant barriers persist even as infrastructure expands. Mobile internet penetration in Sub Saharan Africa reached only 27 percent by the end of 2023, despite much wider network coverage (Siedner et al., 2012). This gap between coverage and usage, termed the "usage gap," reflects barriers including device affordability, data costs, digital literacy limitations, and concerns about online security and privacy. The usage gap in Sub Saharan Africa stands at 60

percent, meaning that while people live within network coverage, they face obstacles preventing them from using mobile internet services (Siedner et al., 2012).

These constraints have direct implications for human rights education delivery. Even where mobile networks theoretically enable access to educational content, economic barriers may prevent consistent engagement. Smartphones can cost up to 95 percent of monthly income for the poorest 20 percent of the population in Sub Saharan Africa (Voptia & Stukalina, 2025). Data costs remain prohibitively high, with the average cost of one gigabyte of mobile internet representing 10.5 percent of monthly per capita Gross National Income in 2019 (World Bank, 2024). These affordability barriers are compounded by limited digital skills, with many potential users lacking the literacy needed to effectively navigate digital platforms and evaluate online information.

Understanding these opportunities and constraints is essential for developing effective strategies to expand human rights education through mobile technology. Solutions must address not only infrastructure gaps but also affordability challenges, digital skills development, and the creation of content that is accessible, culturally relevant, and available in local languages. The most successful approaches will likely involve multi-platform strategies that combine mobile technology with traditional media, recognizing that different platforms offer distinct advantages for reaching diverse audiences.

Nigeria as a Case Study: Digital Media Landscape and Usage Patterns

Nigeria provides an exceptionally rich context for examining strategies to close the digital divide in human rights education. As Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, Nigeria's experiences offer insights that extend beyond its borders to inform approaches across the Global South. The country's media landscape combines traditional broadcast media with rapidly expanding digital platforms, creating a complex ecosystem through which human rights education can be delivered.

As of January 2024, Nigeria had 103.0 million internet users, representing 45.5 percent penetration (DataReportal, 2024). While this indicates substantial progress, it also means that 123.4 million people, 54.5 percent of the population, remained offline at the start of 2024. This digital divide has significant implications for human rights education access, as it means that strategies relying solely on internet-based platforms will inevitably exclude more than half the population.

Mobile connectivity is particularly crucial in the Nigerian context. Of 205.4 million cellular mobile connections active in Nigeria in early 2024, the vast majority serve as the primary means of internet access for users (DataReportal, 2024). Mobile devices account for 61 percent of social media platform access in Nigeria, with Facebook dominating mobile social media traffic at 61 percent, followed by Twitter at 13 percent and Instagram at 12 percent (Statista, 2024). This mobile first pattern reflects broader infrastructure realities, with mobile networks providing the most accessible pathway to digital services for most Nigerians.

Social media usage in Nigeria has experienced remarkable growth. From 18 million users in 2017, the number of social media users skyrocketed to approximately 36.75 million in January 2024, representing 16.2 percent of the total population (DataReportal, 2024; Thrive Media Africa, 2024). Experts predict this trend will continue, with over 90 million Nigerians expected to be on at least one social media platform by 2025. However, significant gender disparities persist, with 58.3 percent of social media users being male and 41.7 percent female (DataReportal, 2024).

Platform specific data reveals distinct usage patterns that have important implications for human rights education strategies. WhatsApp leads as the most widely used social platform, with over 95 percent of internet users aged 16 to 64 years actively using the messaging application, translating

to approximately 10.6 million users (Thrive Media Africa, 2024). WhatsApp's dominance reflects its utility for personal communication, relatively low data consumption, and strong end-to-end encryption that provides privacy protections valued by users.

Facebook maintains the largest potential advertising reach among traditional social media platforms, with 36.75 million users in Nigeria in early 2024, a 16 percent increase from 31.6 million in January 2023 (DataReportal, 2024). The platform's user base is predominantly male (58 percent) and concentrated among individuals aged 25 to 34 years. Facebook's reach and demographic profile make it particularly valuable for human rights education campaigns targeting young adults and working age populations.

YouTube had 28.50 million users in Nigeria in early 2024, representing a 9.8 percent decline from 31.6 million users at the start of 2023 (DataReportal, 2024). Despite this decrease, YouTube remains a critical platform for video-based education content, offering opportunities for creating visual, narrative-driven human rights education materials that can engage audiences in ways text-based content cannot.

Instagram showed remarkable growth, increasing 74 percent from 7.1 million users in early 2023 to 12.40 million users in early 2024 (DataReportal, 2024). The platform's visual focus and popularity among younger demographics make it particularly suitable for infographic-based human rights education, storytelling through images, and campaigns designed to raise awareness about specific rights issues.

Twitter (now known as X) had 7.57 million users in Nigeria in 2024, showing 31.7 percent growth (Krestel Digital, 2025). The platform's role as a space for real-time discussion and political discourse makes it valuable for human rights advocacy and education, particularly around current events and emerging rights issues.

Beyond social media, traditional broadcast media continues to play an essential role in Nigeria's media landscape. Radio remains one of the country's biggest means of news dissemination, with 77.4 percent of Nigerians overall and more than seven in ten across all major demographic groups saying they listen to radio for news at least weekly (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2015). Three quarters of Nigerians reported listening to radio in the week preceding surveys. Most Nigerian households, 83.4 percent, have a working radio (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2015).

Among Nigerian radio stations, Wazobia FM and Ray Power FM consistently rank as the two most listened-to stations, with Wazobia FM achieving a 9.6 percent share of all listeners and Ray Power FM capturing 8.2 percent (Akintola, 2021). Wazobia FM's particular success stems from its use of Pidgin English, making its content accessible across Nigeria's diverse linguistic landscape. This accessibility makes radio exceptionally valuable for human rights education, as it can reach populations with limited literacy, no internet access, and minimal economic resources.

Television ownership is also widespread, with 74.6 percent of Nigerian households possessing a working television set (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2015). Channels TV leads television viewership with 15.3 percent share of all viewers nationally, followed by AIT at 14.1 percent and Silverbird TV at 9.3 percent (Akintola, 2021). Weekly television reach for major stations like Channels TV stands at 48 percent (Statista, 2023). Television's combination of visual and audio content, narrative capacity, and established presence in Nigerian homes makes it a powerful medium for human rights education programming.

This detailed platform analysis reveals several key insights for human rights education strategies. First, a multi-platform approach is essential, as no single platform reaches all demographic groups or geographic areas. Second, mobile optimization is critical, given that mobile devices serve as the

primary internet access point for most users. Third, traditional media, particularly radio, remains indispensable for reaching populations that are digitally excluded or have limited internet access. Fourth, content must be adapted to platform specific affordances and audience expectations, recognizing that Instagram's visual storytelling differs fundamentally from radio's audio narrative or Facebook's mixed media approach. Fifth, language and cultural accessibility are paramount, with Pidgin English and local languages often providing better reach than standard English.

Radio: Reaching the Unreached Through Audio Human Rights Education

Radio's enduring power as a medium for human rights education in Nigeria and the broader Global South stems from several distinctive characteristics that make it exceptionally well suited for closing the digital divide. Unlike digital platforms requiring internet connectivity, smartphones, and data plans, radio receivers are relatively inexpensive, widely available, and require no ongoing costs beyond batteries or electricity. This accessibility makes radio perhaps the most democratic of all media platforms, capable of reaching populations across economic strata, geographic locations, and literacy levels.

The primacy of radio for news and information access in Nigeria cannot be overstated. With 77.4 percent of Nigerians listening to radio for news at least weekly, radio serves as the primary information source for a substantial majority of the population (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2015). This reach extends across demographic divides, with strong listenership among rural populations, older adults, and individuals with limited formal education, precisely those groups least likely to have internet access or social media presence. For human rights education, this means radio can reach populations that are entirely excluded from digital platforms.

Radio's audio only format, while seemingly limiting compared to multimedia platforms, offers distinct advantages for human rights education. Human rights stories and information can be conveyed through narrative, interview, drama, music, and discussion without requiring literacy from audiences. Complex human rights concepts can be explained through dialogue and example rather than written text. Personal testimonies can be shared in ways that convey emotion and authenticity, creating empathetic connections between listeners and rights violations or advocacy efforts. Call in formats enable audience participation, transforming listeners into active participants in human rights discussions.

Successful models for radio based human rights education already exist within Nigeria. Jake Okechukwu Effoduh, now an assistant professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, gained national prominence hosting radio programs focused on human rights and civic education. His show "Talk Your Own: Make Naija Better" aired on over 100 stations across Nigeria, reaching millions of listeners and tackling critical societal issues ranging from health and education to civic rights and governance, aiming to empower Nigerians with knowledge and tools for advocacy (Effoduh, 2024). This program demonstrated radio's capacity to deliver substantive human rights education at scale, creating informed communities capable of claiming their rights and holding power accountable.

Building effective radio based human rights education programs requires attention to several key elements. First, content must be produced in languages actually spoken by target audiences. While English serves as Nigeria's official language, Pidgin English and indigenous languages like Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa often provide much greater reach and comprehension. Wazobia FM's success demonstrates this principle, as its use of Pidgin English has helped it achieve the highest listenership of any radio station in Nigeria.

Second, programming formats should be diverse, recognizing that different audiences and topics benefit from different approaches. News magazine formats can cover multiple human rights issues in a single program, providing breadth. Documentary style programs can offer deep dives into specific rights issues, including historical context, current challenges, and potential solutions. Drama and storytelling can make human rights concepts accessible and emotionally resonant, particularly for audiences with limited formal education. Call in shows create spaces for community dialogue about rights issues, while also providing real time human rights advice and information. Interview programs can feature human rights defenders, lawyers, activists, and affected communities, giving voice to those working to advance rights.

Third, timing and scheduling are crucial for maximizing reach. Programs broadcast during peak listening hours, typically early morning and evening when people are commuting or at home, will achieve significantly greater impact than those airing during off peak times. Repeat broadcasts can help ensure that audiences who miss initial airings have additional opportunities to access content. Regular scheduling builds audience loyalty and habitual listening.

Fourth, partnerships with established radio networks and stations provide essential infrastructure and credibility. Rather than attempting to establish new stations, human rights organizations can work with existing broadcasters to develop and air human rights content. Such partnerships can take various forms, from sponsored program slots to provision of content that stations air as part of their public service obligations, to collaborative production where human rights expertise combines with radio professionals' production skills.

Fifth, radio programs can be enhanced through complementary platforms. Phone lines enable listeners without internet access to ask questions, share experiences, and receive human rights information. SMS messaging can provide follow up resources or alerts about upcoming programs. Where mobile penetration is high but internet access limited, Interactive Voice Response systems can offer on demand access to human rights information via phone calls, effectively creating audio libraries accessible through basic mobile phones. Radio programs can drive audiences to social media platforms for those with internet access, creating integrated multi-platform campaigns.

Evaluation and impact assessment are essential for ensuring radio programming effectively builds human rights literacy. Audience surveys can measure reach and demographic profile of listeners. Knowledge assessments administered before and after programming can measure learning outcomes. Call in volume and content provide direct feedback on audience engagement and information needs. Community observations can document behavioral changes resulting from increased human rights awareness, such as greater willingness to report rights violations or increased participation in civic processes.

Radio's role in human rights education extends beyond formal programming. Public service announcements can deliver concise human rights messages that air multiple times daily, ensuring repeated exposure and message reinforcement. Radio stations' news programming can integrate human rights frames, reporting on events through a rights-based lens that helps audiences understand issues in terms of rights rather than merely as isolated incidents. Station promotional activities, including community events and mobile broadcasts, create opportunities for face to face human rights education and resource distribution while building brand loyalty and audience connection.

Despite radio's enormous potential, challenges remain. Radio stations operate as commercial enterprises and must balance public service programming with revenue generation. This can limit airtime available for human rights content. Production quality matters, with poorly produced programs risking low listenership regardless of content quality. Governments may restrict

broadcast content, particularly programming that addresses politically sensitive rights issues. Measuring impact with precision is difficult, as radio audiences are often anonymous and dispersed.

Nevertheless, radio's combination of wide reach, accessibility, and proven effectiveness makes it an indispensable component of any comprehensive strategy for building human rights literacy in Nigeria and the Global South more broadly. Its capacity to reach digitally excluded populations ensures that human rights education is not limited only to those with internet access, while its flexibility enables adaptation to diverse contexts, languages, and audience preferences. For closing the digital divide in human rights education, radio serves as both a bridge technology reaching those currently offline and a powerful complement to digital platforms for those who are connected.

Television: Visual Storytelling for Human Rights Education

Television occupies a distinctive position in Nigeria's media ecology, combining elements of radio's accessibility with visual storytelling capabilities that can powerfully convey human rights narratives. With 74.6 percent of Nigerian households possessing working television sets, television reaches a substantial majority of the population, though not with quite the same universality as radio (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2015). Television's visual dimension enables forms of human rights education unavailable through audio only media, from documenting rights violations through video footage to putting human faces to statistics and creating visual metaphors that resonate emotionally.

The power of television for human rights education lies significantly in its capacity to show rather than merely tell. Viewers can see conditions in detention facilities, witness peaceful protests being violently dispersed, observe the faces of human rights defenders as they tell their stories, and vicariously experience the impacts of rights violations on individuals and communities. This visual documentation serves multiple purposes: it provides evidence of rights violations that can be difficult to deny, creates emotional connections between viewers and rights issues, and helps audiences understand abstract human rights concepts through concrete visual examples.

Leading television stations in Nigeria command significant audiences that translate to substantial reach for human rights programming. Channels TV, with 48 percent weekly reach and 15.3 percent share of all viewers nationally, represents a particularly valuable platform for human rights content (Statista, 2023; GeoPoll, 2017). The station's positioning as a 24 hour news channel means its audience is already seeking information and analysis, potentially making viewers more receptive to substantive human rights programming. AIT and Silverbird TV similarly reach millions of viewers, providing additional channels through which human rights education can be delivered.

Television programming formats suited for human rights education span a wide range. Documentary programs offer in depth exploration of rights issues, combining interviews, archival footage, expert analysis, and on the ground reporting to create comprehensive narratives. Investigative journalism programs can expose rights violations, document systemic problems, and hold power accountable while simultaneously educating viewers about rights standards. News magazine formats enable coverage of multiple rights issues within single programs, providing breadth alongside depth. Talk shows and panel discussions create spaces for diverse perspectives on rights issues, modeling constructive dialogue and debate. Dramas and docu dramas can make human rights concepts accessible through storytelling, particularly reaching audiences who might not tune in to explicitly educational programming.

Successful television based human rights education requires attention to production quality. Nigerian audiences have access to high production value content from international broadcasters and streaming services, setting expectations that local human rights programming must meet to maintain viewership. This demands investment in skilled camera operators, editors, producers, and directors who can create visually compelling content. Story structure matters enormously, with effective programs following narrative arcs that maintain viewer engagement while delivering educational content.

Visual ethics constitute a particular challenge for human rights television programming. Depicting violence, suffering, and rights violations risks desensitizing viewers, exploiting subjects, or crossing lines of graphic content that stations will not air. Producers must balance the imperative to document and expose rights violations with ethical obligations to protect subjects' dignity and avoid gratuitous depictions of suffering. Techniques like strategic use of B roll footage, victim testimony that respects privacy, and contextual framing that explains rather than sensationalizes can help navigate these tensions.

Language and accessibility considerations are essential. While educated urban audiences may understand English programming, substantial portions of potential viewers require local language content for comprehension. Subtitling and dubbing can expand reach, though both require additional resources. Content should avoid overly technical legal language, instead explaining human rights concepts in accessible terms while maintaining accuracy. Visual storytelling can transcend some language barriers, with powerful images conveying meaning even where verbal content is imperfectly understood.

Television's integration with digital platforms creates opportunities for expanded reach and engagement. Programs can be uploaded to YouTube after broadcast, enabling viewers who missed initial airings to watch on demand and extending reach beyond television's geographic broadcast range. Short clips can be shared on Facebook and Instagram, driving awareness and potentially motivating viewers to watch full programs. Interactive elements, such as encouraging viewers to share reactions on social media using designated hashtags, can extend programming impact beyond passive viewing into active engagement and dialogue.

Partnerships between human rights organizations and television broadcasters can take several forms. Sponsored content arrangements enable organizations to fund human rights programming that stations produce and air. Content provision models see organizations producing programming that stations air, sometimes as fulfillment of public service requirements. Collaborative production brings together organizations' human rights expertise with stations' production capacity and broadcast infrastructure. Advisory relationships can help stations develop human rights focused journalism and programming without organizations directly producing content.

Measuring television's impact on human rights literacy presents challenges similar to radio but with some additional tools available. Nielsen ratings and similar measurement systems provide audience size data. Viewer surveys can assess comprehension and attitude changes. Social media engagement around programs offers real time feedback and evidence of viewer activation. Tracking of requests for information or resources mentioned in programs can demonstrate audience action. Qualitative research, including focus groups with viewers, can provide deeper insights into how programming shapes human rights understanding.

Television broadcasting in Nigeria faces constraints that affect human rights programming potential. Power infrastructure limitations mean irregular electricity supply can prevent viewership, particularly in rural areas. While satellite and cable television expand access, they require subscription fees that exclude economically disadvantaged populations. Government

regulation and potential censorship may limit content that criticizes authorities or addresses politically sensitive rights issues. Competition for airtime means human rights programming must compete with entertainment content that may be more commercially attractive to broadcasters. Despite these challenges, television's combination of wide household penetration, visual storytelling capacity, and established position in Nigerian media consumption makes it a vital component of comprehensive human rights education strategies. Its ability to document rights violations, humanize abstract rights concepts, and reach mass audiences simultaneously positions it as a powerful complement to radio's even broader reach and digital platforms' interactive capabilities. To close the digital divide, television serves those households with electricity and television sets but limited or no internet access, representing a significant population segment that would otherwise be excluded from digitally delivered human rights education.

Instagram: Visual Human Rights Advocacy for Young, Urban Audiences

Instagram's emergence as a significant platform in Nigeria's digital landscape, growing 74 percent from 7.1 million users in early 2023 to 12.40 million users in early 2024, reflects broader global trends toward visual social media (Jimada, 2019). The platform's core functionality, enabling users to share and discover images and short videos, makes it distinctively suited for certain forms of human rights education. Instagram's demographic profile skews younger and more urban compared to other platforms, with 59.1 percent of internet users aged 16 to 64 actively using the platform (Thrive Media Africa, 2024). This younger audience represents both a challenge and an opportunity for human rights education, as young people are simultaneously more engaged with digital platforms yet potentially less familiar with traditional human rights frameworks.

Instagram's visual first design enables human rights education approaches that would be ineffective on text heavy platforms. Infographics can distill complex human rights information into visually compelling, easily shareable formats that communicate key concepts quickly. A single well-designed infographic explaining the components of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, can convey more information more memorably than a lengthy text post. Photo essays can document human rights conditions, tell individual stories, and create emotional connections with audiences. Video content, particularly short format reels, can explain human rights concepts, showcase activism, or document events in ways that maintain attention and encourage sharing.

The platform's features facilitate different educational approaches. Instagram Stories, content that disappears after 24 hours unless saved to highlights, enable organizations to share timely human rights information, breaking news, and event coverage without cluttering permanent feeds. This ephemeral content can create urgency and encourage regular return visits to see new Stories. Reels, Instagram's short form video feature, taps into the same consumption patterns popularized by TikTok, enabling bite sized human rights education delivered in entertaining formats. IGTV and regular posts support longer form content for audiences seeking deeper engagement.

Hashtag strategies amplify Instagram's human rights education potential. Strategic hashtag use increases content discoverability, enabling users interested in specific rights issues to find relevant content even if they do not already follow educational accounts. Campaign specific hashtags create cohesion across multiple posts and enable user generated content, as audiences contribute their own posts using campaign hashtags. Trending hashtags provide opportunities to insert human rights frames into popular conversations, reaching audiences who might not actively seek human rights content.

Instagram's predominantly young demographic makes the platform particularly suitable for human rights education focused on issues affecting youth. Gender based violence, educational rights, freedom of expression, digital rights, and environmental justice all resonate strongly with Instagram's user base. Content addressing these issues can leverage generational communication styles, cultural references, and aesthetic preferences familiar to younger audiences. Youth activists and influencers using the platform can serve as powerful human rights educators, reaching peer networks through trusted voices rather than institutional organizations.

Interactive features enable audience engagement beyond passive content consumption. Instagram polls in Stories can gauge audience knowledge about human rights issues, both assessing baseline understanding and driving curiosity that motivates learning. Question stickers allow followers to ask human rights questions that organizations can answer publicly, creating crowd sourced human rights education addressing community information needs. Interactive quizzes can test knowledge in engaging formats. Countdowns build anticipation for human rights events, campaigns, or content releases.

Instagram's visual aesthetic presents both opportunities and challenges for human rights education. The platform's culture values high quality, aesthetically pleasing images and videos, setting a bar that content must meet to gain engagement. This can be challenging for resource constrained human rights organizations but also creates opportunities to present human rights issues in compelling, beautiful ways that attract attention and shares. The prevalence of professional photography and design on Instagram means human rights content must be visually competitive to succeed, potentially requiring investment in skilled creators.

Authenticity is prized on Instagram, with audiences valuing genuine storytelling over overly polished corporate content. For human rights education, this creates opportunities to share raw, unfiltered documentation of rights violations and grassroots activism. User generated content, where affected communities document their own experiences, can be more powerful than professionally produced content. However, organizations must balance authenticity with quality, as poorly produced content risks being ignored regardless of its genuine nature.

Instagram's algorithmic content delivery means that simply posting human rights content does not guarantee audience reach. The platform prioritizes content that generates engagement, measured through likes, comments, shares, and saves. Human rights educators must therefore create content that not only informs but also motivates interaction. This can involve asking questions in captions that prompt comment responses, creating shareable content that followers want to spread to their own audiences, or designing posts that viewers will save for future reference. Understanding and working with rather than against algorithmic priorities is essential for maximizing reach.

Collaborations with Instagram influencers and popular accounts can dramatically expand human rights education reach. Nigerian influencers with large followings can introduce human rights issues to audiences who might not follow dedicated human rights accounts. Takeovers, where activists or affected community members temporarily run an organization's Instagram account, bring authentic voices to institutional platforms. Influencer partnerships must be carefully structured to ensure educational integrity while respecting influencers' relationships with their audiences.

Instagram advertising offers opportunities to reach audiences beyond organic followers. Promoted posts and targeted ads can deliver human rights content to specific demographics, interests, and geographic locations. While advertising requires financial resources, costs can be relatively modest compared to television advertising, and targeting capabilities ensure budgets reach intended

audiences. Campaigns around specific rights issues or events can benefit from advertising amplification.

Measuring impact on Instagram combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Platform analytics provide data on reach, engagement, and audience demographics. Follower growth indicates sustained audience building. Engagement rates reveal which content resonates most strongly, informing content strategy refinement. Website traffic from Instagram links demonstrates audiences taking action beyond the platform itself. Qualitative analysis of comments and direct messages provides insights into how audiences understand and respond to human rights content. Challenges for Instagram based human rights education include the platform's inherent limitations around content depth. While visuals can powerfully introduce concepts, Instagram's format makes it difficult to provide comprehensive human rights education on complex topics. Link restrictions limit ability to direct users to external resources easily. The platform's addictive design and emphasis on casual browsing mean audiences may engage superficially without deeper learning. Algorithm changes can suddenly reduce reach, undermining strategies built around previous platform behavior.

Despite these constraints, Instagram's visual strengths, young demographic, and growing presence in Nigeria make it an increasingly important component of multi-platform human rights education strategies. Its capacity to make human rights visually appealing, accessible, and shareable positions it as a gateway platform that can introduce concepts and issues that other platforms then develop more fully. For reaching digitally connected young Nigerians, particularly in urban areas, Instagram provides opportunities unavailable through traditional media or even other digital platforms. As Nigeria's Instagram user base continues expanding, the platform's role in human rights education will likely grow correspondingly.

Facebook: Community Building and Information Sharing for Human Rights

Facebook's position as the largest social media platform in Nigeria, with 36.75 million users in early 2024, makes it an indispensable tool for human rights education (DataReportal, 2024). The platform's dominance spans demographics more broadly than Instagram's younger focus, though men constitute 58 percent of users and the 25 to 34 age group represents the largest user segment. Facebook's combination of extensive reach, diverse content formats, and community building features positions it as perhaps the most versatile platform for comprehensive human rights education strategies.

Facebook's functionality enables multiple approaches to human rights education. Standard posts support text, images, videos, and links, offering flexibility to share diverse content types. Photo albums can document events or create visual narratives without space constraints of single image posts. Video posts, both short and long format, enable everything from brief human rights tips to extended documentary content. Live video creates real time engagement opportunities, enabling human rights events, discussions, and education to reach online audiences simultaneously with physical participants. Stories provide ephemeral content similar to Instagram, useful for timely updates and behind the scenes content that creates intimacy with audiences.

Facebook Groups represent particularly powerful tools for building human rights education communities. Groups create spaces where members with shared interests in human rights issues can gather, discuss, share resources, and organize action. Private groups enable confidential discussions of sensitive topics, important where speaking openly about rights violations might endanger participants. Public groups maximize reach and discoverability, enabling anyone

interested to join and participate. Group administrators can moderate discussions, share curated content, and create structured learning experiences through scheduled posts and activities.

Successful human rights education groups often employ several strategies. Regular educational posts introduce concepts, share news, and provide analysis of current events from human rights perspectives. Member contributions enable peer education, as community members share their own experiences, knowledge, and resources. Question and answer sessions, where human rights experts respond to community questions, provide personalized education addressing specific community needs and interests. Resource libraries compiled through pinned posts or file features create permanent repositories of human rights documents, guidelines, and educational materials accessible to all members.

Facebook Pages serve as institutional presences for human rights organizations, enabling them to build followings, share content, and establish authority. Pages differ from personal profiles in allowing unlimited followers, providing detailed analytics, supporting advertising, and offering features designed for organizations rather than individuals. Successful human rights organization Pages typically post consistently, share diverse content types, engage with audience comments, and use Facebook's features strategically to maximize reach and impact.

Facebook's advertising system enables sophisticated audience targeting for human rights education campaigns. Advertisements can target specific demographics, interests, behaviors, and locations, ensuring human rights messages reach intended audiences. Lookalike audiences enable reaching people similar to existing followers or website visitors, expanding reach to likely receptive populations. Retargeting serves advertisements to people who previously engaged with content, increasing likelihood of conversion to deeper engagement. While requiring budget allocation, Facebook advertising provides cost effective reach compared to traditional media and enables precise audience targeting impossible with broadcast platforms.

Events functionality facilitates organizing and promoting human rights education activities, from workshops and training sessions to protests and commemorations. Creating Facebook Events enables easy invitation of communities, provides platforms for sharing event details, and generates reminders that increase attendance. Virtual events can stream directly through Facebook, enabling remote participation and permanent accessibility through saved videos. Event pages become discussion spaces where participants coordinate, ask questions, and build community even before events occur.

Facebook's multimedia capabilities support diverse human rights education content styles. Infographics explain complex rights concepts visually. Personal testimony videos give voice to affected communities. Documentary style content providers in depth exploration of rights issues. Explainer videos break down legal frameworks and advocacy strategies. Memes and humor make human rights accessible and shareable, though must be crafted carefully to avoid trivializing serious issues. Photo documentation provides evidence of rights violations and activism. All these content types can coexist within a single Page or Group strategy, appealing to different audience preferences and learning styles.

Cross promotion capabilities connect Facebook to other platforms and offline activities. Posts can embed YouTube videos, Instagram content, and external links, driving audiences to additional resources. Radio and television programs can direct listeners and viewers to Facebook for additional information, discussion, and community connection. QR codes in print materials or physical locations can link to Facebook pages and content. This integration enables Facebook to serve as a hub connecting various human rights education initiatives across platforms and formats.

Facebook's challenges for human rights education include platform saturation and attention competition. With 36.75 million Nigerian users and countless pages, groups, and posts competing for attention, breaking through noise requires strategic content creation and distribution. Algorithm changes periodically reduce organic reach, particularly for organizational pages, potentially requiring paid promotion to reach even existing followers. Misinformation proliferates on Facebook, requiring human rights educators to combat false narratives while building accurate understanding. Privacy concerns, particularly following high profile data scandals, may make some users hesitant to engage publicly with human rights content on the platform.

Nevertheless, Facebook's combination of extensive reach, versatile functionality, and established presence in Nigerian digital life makes it essential for comprehensive human rights education. The platform's community building tools enable creating networks of rights literate individuals who can support each other, share knowledge, and organize collective action. Its advertising capabilities provide cost effective methods for expanding reach beyond existing followers. Its multimedia support accommodates diverse content types and learning preferences. For organizations seeking to build sustained engagement with audiences around human rights issues rather than one-time information delivery, Facebook provides infrastructure and tools unavailable through broadcast media or other digital platforms.

Twitter: Real Time Human Rights Discourse and Advocacy

Twitter, now officially known as X, occupies a distinctive niche in Nigeria's digital ecosystem, with 7.57 million users in 2024 showing 31.7 percent growth (Krestel Digital, 2025). While smaller in absolute user numbers compared to Facebook or Instagram, Twitter's particular cultural positioning and functionality make it disproportionately influential for human rights discourse. The platform serves as a primary space for news dissemination, political debate, and real time responses to events, making it especially valuable for human rights education focused on current developments and advocacy.

Twitter's core design prioritizes brevity, immediacy, and conversation, creating communication dynamics distinct from other platforms. The 280-character limit for standard tweets forces concise articulation of human rights messages, beneficial for creating shareable, digestible content but challenging for explaining nuance. Thread functionality enables longer form content by connecting multiple tweets, allowing human rights educators to provide depth while maintaining the platform's immediate, conversational feel. Retweets and quote tweets facilitate content amplification and enable audiences to add commentary, creating dialogic exchanges around human rights issues.

Hashtags function particularly powerfully on Twitter, serving as organizational tools for human rights movements and education campaigns. Strategic hashtag use connects scattered conversations into unified streams, enabling users to follow discussions of specific rights issues. Campaign hashtags create identity and cohesion for human rights initiatives, from global movements like MeToo to Nigerian specific campaigns like EndSARS. Trending hashtags gain prominent platform placement, dramatically increasing visibility. Human rights educators can leverage trending hashtags by contributing relevant content to popular conversations, inserting human rights frames into broader public discourse.

The EndSARS movement demonstrated Twitter's exceptional capacity for human rights mobilization and public education in Nigeria. Beginning in 2020 as nationwide protests against police brutality and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the movement used Twitter as its central organizing and communication platform (Uwazuruike, 2025). Through viral videos,

hashtags, eyewitness updates, and coordinated digital action, protesters educated millions of Nigerians about fundamental rights, including the rights to life, dignity, security, and freedom from torture. As Uwazuruike's analysis in the *Harvard Human Rights Journal* shows, #EndSARS quickly evolved beyond calls to end a rogue police unit, emerging as a broader digital movement demanding human rights protection, democratic accountability, and structural reform in Nigeria (Uwazuruike, 2025).

Twitter's real time nature makes it ideally suited for covering developing human rights situations as they unfold. Citizen journalism on Twitter enables rapid documentation of rights violations, protests, and state responses. Human rights organizations can provide immediate analysis and context for unfolding events, educating audiences about relevant rights frameworks and standards. Live tweeting from human rights events, court proceedings, protests, or educational sessions brings digital audiences into physical spaces, expanding participation and impact. This immediacy creates educational opportunities unavailable through platforms with delayed content production cycles. Twitter's influential user base includes journalists, politicians, activists, celebrities, and opinion leaders whose tweets reach large audiences and shape public discourse. Human rights educators engaging with or being followed by these influential accounts can dramatically expand reach and legitimacy. @mentions and replies enable direct engagement with power holders, creating public accountability pressure. Journalists following human rights accounts may incorporate tweet content into their reporting, extending human rights messages beyond Twitter itself. This amplification potential makes Twitter particularly valuable for advocacy oriented human rights education seeking to influence policy and public opinion.

Effective human rights education on Twitter requires understanding platform specific communication norms. Tone tends toward direct, even confrontational, contrasting with Instagram's aesthetically focused positivity or Facebook's community-oriented discussion. Snark, wit, and humor often characterize successful tweets, requiring human rights educators to adapt serious content to platform communication style without trivializing issues. Visual content, particularly images and videos, increases engagement compared to text only tweets. Accessibility practices, including alt text for images and captions for videos, ensure content reaches disabled users.

Twitter threads enable structured human rights education delivering information sequentially. A well-crafted thread can walk audiences through complex issues, from explaining legal concepts to documenting chains of events to providing step by step guides for rights claiming. Numbered threads help audiences follow sequence. Threading enables depth impossible in single tweets while maintaining immediacy and shareability. Some organizations compose threads as Twitter native content, while others link first tweets to external articles or resources, using threads as teasers drawing audiences to comprehensive content elsewhere.

Twitter Spaces, audio chat rooms enabling live conversations, create opportunities for verbal human rights education. Spaces can host discussions among experts, facilitate community conversations, or provide platforms for affected populations to share experiences. The audio format combines some advantages of radio accessibility and intimacy with Twitter's interactive, networked nature. Recorded Spaces become permanent content available for later access, though Twitter's relative deemphasis of recorded Spaces limits this functionality's reach compared to dedicated podcast platforms

Challenges for Twitter based human rights education include the platform's often toxic communication culture. Harassment, particularly of women, minorities, and human rights defenders, is endemic on Twitter. Misinformation spreads rapidly. Pile ons, where multiple users

attack individual tweets or accounts, can overwhelm human rights educators. Platform moderation has been criticized as inconsistent and inadequate for protecting users from abuse. These dynamics may deter some human rights educators from using Twitter or limit content to avoid triggering harassment.

Twitter's business model instability, particularly following Elon Musk's acquisition and rebranding, creates additional uncertainties. Policy changes, including verification system alterations and moderation approach shifts, affect how human rights content appears and spreads. Technical decisions about algorithm functioning determine which tweets gain visibility. Advertiser exodus has created revenue pressures that may lead to further platform changes. These instabilities make long term Twitter strategy challenging for human rights organizations with limited resources to adapt to frequent changes.

Despite challenges, Twitter remains vital for human rights education, engaging current events, reaching influential audiences, and enabling rapid response to emerging rights situations. The platform's role in Nigerian political discourse and news dissemination ensures that human rights messages shared on Twitter reach decision makers, journalists, and engaged citizens. For organizations combining advocacy with education, Twitter's capacity to simultaneously inform general audiences and pressure power holders is unmatched. As part of comprehensive multi-platform strategies, Twitter serves specific functions complementing Facebook's community building, Instagram's visual storytelling, and YouTube's in depth video content.

YouTube: Long Form Video Human Rights Education and Documentary

YouTube's 28.50 million users in Nigeria as of early 2024, despite representing a 9.8 percent decline from the previous year, still constitute a substantial audience for video based human rights education (DataReportal, 2024). The platform's positioning as the internet's second largest search engine, combined with its specialization in video content, makes it uniquely valuable for creating and distributing comprehensive human rights educational materials. While YouTube requires more significant production resources than text or image based platforms, its capacity for long form, in depth content enables forms of human rights education difficult or impossible through other channels.

YouTube's primary strength lies in its ability to host video content of virtually any length, from brief clips under a minute to multi hour documentaries and lectures. This flexibility enables human rights educators to match content length to subject complexity and audience needs. Brief explainer videos can introduce basic human rights concepts in formats accessible to viewers with limited time or attention spans. Medium length videos, typically 10 to 30 minutes, can explore specific rights issues with significant depth, providing historical context, explaining relevant legal frameworks, and showcasing real world applications. Long form content, including full length documentaries and recorded training sessions, can offer comprehensive human rights education rivaling formal coursework.

Successful human rights education YouTube channels typically employ several content strategies. Educational series create ongoing relationships with audiences, with new episodes released on regular schedules encouraging viewers to subscribe and return. Interview programs featuring human rights defenders, lawyers, activists, and affected community members bring diverse voices and perspectives to audiences. Documentary content investigates specific rights violations, social movements, or systemic issues, combining interviews, archival footage, and original reporting. Explainer videos break down complex concepts like international human rights law, mechanisms

for reporting violations, or strategies for advocacy. Q&A videos respond to audience questions, creating interactivity and addressing specific information needs.

YouTube's search functionality makes it valuable for serving audiences actively seeking human rights information. Unlike social media platforms where content primarily reaches existing followers or appears in algorithmically generated feeds, YouTube allows anyone searching terms like "human rights Nigeria," "police brutality documentation," or "understanding Universal Declaration of Human Rights" to discover relevant content. This discoverability is enhanced through strategic use of titles, descriptions, tags, and thumbnails that make videos findable and clickable. Human rights educators can optimize content for search while maintaining educational integrity.

Playlists organize related videos into sequences, enabling structured learning experiences. A human rights organization might create playlists covering specific rights (right to education, freedom of expression, workers' rights), geographic focuses (human rights in northern Nigeria, urban vs rural rights issues), or skill development (documenting rights violations, using legal mechanisms, community organizing). Playlists transform scattered videos into curricula, guiding viewers through progressive learning rather than random content consumption. Educational playlists can be embedded on websites, shared via social media, or distributed as standalone resources.

YouTube's comment section enables audience engagement and community building around human rights videos. Viewers can ask questions, share their own experiences, debate interpretations, and provide additional information or perspectives. Channel creators can respond to comments, creating dialogue and demonstrating responsiveness to audience needs. However, comment sections also attract misinformation, harassment, and toxic behavior, requiring moderation to maintain educational value and safe environments. Many successful educational channels actively moderate comments, pin helpful viewer contributions, and respond to thoughtful questions.

Collaboration features enable partnerships that expand reach and impact. Guest appearances bring diverse expertise to channels. Collaborative videos where multiple creators address rights issues from different perspectives provide richness unavailable in single voice content. Shoutouts and recommended channels help audiences discover additional human rights resources. These collaborations build networks of human rights education creators whose collective reach far exceeds what any single organization could achieve independently.

YouTube's monetization potential through advertising revenue, channel memberships, and Super Chat during livestreams can provide financial sustainability for human rights education content creation. While building audiences large enough to generate significant revenue requires time and consistent effort, monetization enables some creators to produce human rights content as primary work rather than volunteer efforts. However, YouTube's advertiser friendly content policies may restrict monetization for videos addressing controversial topics or depicting violence, even when educationally necessary for documenting rights violations.

YouTube livestreaming creates real time engagement opportunities similar to Facebook Live but with YouTube's superior video quality and stability. Human rights events, training sessions, panel discussions, and protests can be livestreamed, enabling remote participation and creating permanent records. Livestreamed Q&A sessions enable audiences to ask questions and receive immediate responses. The replay value of livestreams means content continues educating audiences long after live events conclude.

Accessibility features make YouTube human rights education more inclusive. Automatic and human generated captions enable deaf and hard of hearing viewers to access content. Multiple audio tracks can provide content in various languages. Video descriptions can provide additional context, resources, and links. Playlist organization helps viewers navigate content libraries. These accessibility features, when fully utilized, significantly expand potential audiences beyond those able to access standard video audio.

Challenges for YouTube based human rights education include significant production resource requirements. Quality video production demands equipment, skills, and time often exceeding what resource constrained organizations can provide. Competition for attention is fierce, with millions of hours of content uploaded daily. YouTube's algorithm prioritizes watch time and engagement, potentially disadvantageous to educational content competing with entertainment. Data costs in Nigeria mean that watching videos consumes expensive mobile data, potentially limiting audiences to those with WiFi access or adequate data plans.

Nevertheless, YouTube's combination of searchability, long form format capabilities, and substantial Nigerian user base makes it essential for comprehensive human rights education strategies. The platform serves audiences seeking in depth understanding, provides permanent repositories of educational content, and enables production values that command attention and convey professionalism. Particularly for documentary style content, investigative reports, and comprehensive rights training, YouTube provides infrastructure and reach unavailable through other platforms. As part of multi-platform strategies, YouTube can offer the depth that social media platforms' brevity constraints, while links from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can drive audiences to YouTube for fuller engagement.

Integration Strategies: Building Cohesive Multi-Platform Human Rights Education

The preceding platform analyses reveal that no single medium can effectively reach all populations or serve all human rights education needs. Radio excels at reaching digitally excluded populations but cannot provide visual documentation. Instagram offers visual storytelling but limits content depth. Facebook enables community building but requires internet access. Television reaches mass audiences but involves high production costs. Twitter facilitates real time engagement but hosts toxic dynamics. YouTube supports comprehensive education but demands significant data for video streaming. Effective strategies for closing the digital divide therefore require thoughtful integration of multiple platforms, leveraging each medium's strengths while compensating for limitations.

Integrated campaigns deploy coordinated content across platforms, adapting core messages to platform specific affordances while maintaining consistent themes and goals. For example, a campaign on women's rights might include a radio drama series in Pidgin English, Facebook graphics explaining relevant laws, Instagram stories featuring women rights activists, Twitter discussions using a campaign hashtag, and YouTube documentaries providing in depth exploration. Each platform component reinforces others, with radio mentions directing listeners to Facebook for resources, social media posts promoting YouTube documentaries, and comprehensive YouTube content distilled into social media friendly formats.

Content atomization breaks comprehensive human rights materials into platform appropriate formats. A 45-minute documentary can yield dozens of social media posts: key quotes become tweets, powerful images become Instagram posts, short clips become Facebook and YouTube videos, interview segments become audio for podcasts or radio, and infographics summarize key findings. This approach maximizes return on production investment, ensuring content created for

one platform extends reach across others. A single investigative project can feed all platforms for weeks or months through strategic content atomization.

Audience journeys conceptualize how individuals move across platforms, using awareness building content on high reach platforms to drive deeper engagement on platforms enabling learning. Radio mentions and television promotions build awareness and direct audiences to social media for more information. Instagram posts introduce topics and drive audiences to Facebook groups for discussion and community. Twitter threads link to YouTube videos providing full context. Each platform serves specific journey stages, from initial awareness through knowledge building to action taking. Understanding these journeys enables strategic platform use matching education goals to platform capabilities.

Complementary timing coordinates when content appears on different platforms. A radio interview announcing a human rights report generates initial awareness. Facebook and Twitter posts go live during and immediately after the interview, capturing audiences while interest is high. Instagram graphics explaining key findings appear throughout the following day. A YouTube video providing full context launches within 24 hours, promoted through social media. This temporal coordination creates momentum, with each platform appearance reinforcing others and building cumulative awareness.

Platform ecosystems recognize that audiences increasingly use multiple platforms, creating opportunities for strategic redundancy and reinforcement. A Facebook post reaching someone at work might be reinforced by a radio program they hear commuting home, strengthening message retention. Seeing human rights messages across multiple platforms signals importance and creates repeated exposure that facilitates learning. Different family members may use different platforms, with younger members on Instagram and older relatives following Facebook, yet integrated campaigns ensure all receive human rights information through their preferred media.

Community management coordinates engagement across platforms. Questions asked on Twitter can be answered there while also informing FAQ content created for Facebook and YouTube. Instagram comments requesting additional information can receive immediate replies while also suggesting Facebook group membership for ongoing discussion. Active community management transforms individual interactions into broader value, using audience questions to identify information needs that inform content strategy across all platforms.

Evaluation frameworks assess impact across integrated campaigns rather than measuring platforms in isolation. Reach metrics span all platforms, measuring total unique audiences contacted. Engagement combines interactions across social media with radio listener responses and television viewership. Learning assessment measures knowledge gains attributable to the full campaign rather than individual platforms. Action measures track behaviors resulting from exposure to multi-platform campaigns. This holistic evaluation recognizes that impacts often result from cumulative exposure across multiple platforms rather than single platform content.

Resource allocation balances investment across platforms based on strategic priorities, audience profiles, and organizational capacities. Organizations with strong production capabilities might emphasize video for YouTube and television. Those with limited technology but strong community relationships might focus on radio and in person activities complemented by Facebook community building. Urban focused campaigns might emphasize Instagram and Twitter while rural initiatives prioritize radio and television. Strategic allocation ensures resources flow to platforms offering greatest impact for target audiences and education goals.

Partnership approaches recognize that most organizations cannot maintain excellence across all platforms simultaneously. Collaborative models enable organizations to specialize, with some focusing on content production while others manage distribution, or different organizations taking primary responsibility for different platforms. Networks of human rights educators can collectively maintain presence across platforms more effectively than any single organization attempting everything. Such partnerships require coordination mechanisms but enable comprehensive reach while respecting capacity constraints.

Jake Okechukwu Effoduh's Scholarship: Context Driven Approaches for the Global South

The scholarship of Jake Okechukwu Effoduh provides crucial theoretical grounding for understanding how digital technologies must be deployed for human rights education in the Global South. His work emphasizes that technological solutions developed primarily in and for the Global North often break down when applied in different contexts, potentially undermining rather than advancing their intended benefits (Effoduh, 2024). This insight has profound implications for strategies to close the digital divide in human rights education.

Effoduh's 2024 analysis of explainable artificial intelligence from a Global South perspective demonstrates how AI principles like "explainability" are often framed around assumptions of access and agency unique to the Global North (Effoduh, 2024). Through interviews with 255 people primarily in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, Effoduh documented cases where AI systems designed without consideration of local contexts failed to serve their intended purposes. For instance, Kenyan cattle herders using a U.S. designed image vision model to identify malnourishment in livestock found the software repeatedly misdiagnosed their cattle because it was trained on Western breeds, whose optimal weight differed from leaner local breeds (Effoduh, 2024). The herders were unaware of these discrepancies, and repeated misdiagnoses led to mistrust in the AI system.

This example, while focused on agricultural technology, illuminates broader challenges for human rights education technologies. Digital platforms and content developed primarily for Northern contexts may fail to serve Southern populations effectively if they assume infrastructure, literacy levels, economic resources, cultural frames, or political contexts that do not exist in target communities. Human rights education delivered through data intensive video platforms becomes inaccessible where internet costs are prohibitive. Content assuming high literacy excludes populations with limited formal education. Frameworks presenting human rights through Western cultural lenses may fail to resonate with or may alienate audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

Effoduh, together with Akpudo and Kong, extended this analysis in their August 2024 examination of data governance policy for AI use in Africa (Effoduh et al., 2024). They argue that trustworthy and inclusive data governance requires attention to unique challenges and opportunities in different regions, including limited infrastructure, diverse linguistic landscapes, and different regulatory frameworks. For human rights education, these insights suggest that strategies must be developed with deep understanding of local contexts rather than assuming approaches successful elsewhere will transfer smoothly.

Context driven human rights education recognizes that effective approaches must emerge from local knowledge about audiences, infrastructure, economic realities, cultural values, political environments, and existing social systems. This does not mean abandoning universal human rights frameworks, which provide essential common standards. Rather, it means adapting education delivery to local realities. Radio based education may be more effective than internet platforms in

contexts with low connectivity. Pidgin English or indigenous languages may reach broader audiences than standard English. Content addressing rights issues through local examples and cultural frames may resonate more than abstract international declarations.

Effoduh's decade of experience hosting radio programs reaching millions of Nigerians demonstrates the power of locally grounded approaches. His programs tackled human rights and civic issues using communication styles, languages, and frameworks accessible to Nigerian audiences across literacy levels and geographic locations. This practical experience, now complemented by scholarly analysis, provides models for how human rights education can be delivered at scale in Global South contexts through thoughtful adaptation to local realities.

The broader implication of Effoduh's scholarship is that closing the digital divide in human rights education requires more than simply extending Northern platforms and content to Southern audiences. It demands creating content specifically designed for target contexts, delivered through infrastructure actually available to those audiences, in languages they understand, addressing rights issues in culturally resonant ways. Digital platforms, including social media, must be complemented by traditional media reaching digitally excluded populations. High data consumption applications must be paired with low bandwidth alternatives. Text based content requires audio and visual alternatives for populations with limited literacy.

Furthermore, Effoduh's work highlights that those designing and implementing human rights education strategies must include voices from target communities rather than imposing externally developed approaches. Global South scholars, activists, and communities possess knowledge about effective education delivery in their contexts that Northern experts, regardless of good intentions, cannot replicate. Partnerships that center Southern knowledge and leadership are essential for developing genuinely effective human rights education strategies.

Policy and Implementation Recommendations: From Analysis to Action

Translating the insights from platform analyses and contextual understanding into practice requires coordinated action across multiple stakeholder groups. Governments, civil society organizations, technology companies, educational institutions, media outlets, individual human rights educationists and international development partners all have roles to play in closing the digital divide for human rights education. The following recommendations provide actionable pathways forward.

Governments must prioritize digital infrastructure investment, recognizing connectivity as essential for exercising fundamental rights. Expansion of mobile networks to currently unserved areas would directly impact human rights education access. However, as the GSMA data demonstrate, coverage gaps have declined substantially even while usage gaps persist (Siedner et al., 2012). Therefore, infrastructure investment must be coupled with affordability measures. Subsidized data packages for educational content, reduced taxation on mobile devices and data services, and public WiFi installations in schools and community centers can address economic barriers preventing usage. Regulatory frameworks should encourage rather than constrain human rights content across all platforms, protecting freedom of expression even for politically sensitive rights advocacy.

Civil society organizations must develop sophisticated multi-platform strategies recognizing that different populations access information through different media. Radio content remains essential for reaching digitally excluded populations. Social media presence builds communities and engages younger demographics. Partnerships with television stations expand reach to mass audiences. Organizations should invest in production capacity, whether building internal expertise

or partnering with media professionals, ensuring human rights content meets quality standards that maintain audience attention. Strategic planning should identify target audiences, select platforms matching those audiences' media consumption patterns, and develop content adapted to platform affordances.

Technology companies, including social media platforms, have obligations extending beyond simply providing infrastructure. Algorithms determining content visibility significantly impact human rights education reach. Platforms should prioritize educational content in algorithmic ranking while combating misinformation. Moderation policies must protect human rights educators from harassment while enabling frank discussion of rights violations. Data costs reduction through partnerships with mobile network operators could expand access. Tools simplifying content creation, particularly for resource constrained organizations, would democratize human rights education production. Local language support expands accessibility for non-English speaking populations.

Educational institutions can integrate digital literacy into curricula, preparing students not only to access information but to critically evaluate it and use platforms responsibly for human rights advocacy. Media literacy education enables audiences to distinguish credible human rights information from misinformation. Training programs for human rights organizations build capacity to effectively use digital platforms. Research on human rights education effectiveness across platforms informs evidence-based strategy development. Partnerships between universities and civil society enable resource sharing and knowledge exchange.

Media outlets should recognize their essential role in human rights education beyond news reporting. Radio stations can air human rights programming as public service content. Television networks can produce or broadcast human rights documentaries and educational series. Print media, while not analyzed extensively in this article, can provide in depth human rights education that digital platforms' brevity constrains. Journalists across all platforms can integrate human rights frameworks into reporting, helping audiences understand events through rights lenses.

International development partners can support national and regional human rights education initiatives through funding, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and advocacy. Support for infrastructure development enables connectivity. Grants help organizations produce quality human rights content. Training programs build skills. Research initiatives generate evidence about effective approaches. However, as Effoduh's scholarship emphasizes, international partners must resist imposing Northern models and instead support locally developed strategies rooted in contextual understanding.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks must assess not merely how much content is produced but whether it effectively builds human rights literacy and impacts behaviors and advocacy. Audience reach metrics establish whether content reaches target populations. Knowledge assessments measure learning. Behavioral indicators track actions resulting from education, from reporting violations to engaging in advocacy. Longitudinal studies examine sustained impacts over time. Such evaluation enables strategy refinement, directing resources toward most effective approaches while abandoning unsuccessful ones.

Individual human rights educationists also play a crucial role in advancing digital human rights education, particularly in contexts where institutional efforts are limited or slow-moving. Educators, advocates, and researchers can leverage personal platforms to disseminate rights-based knowledge at scale. This includes writing accessible articles and thought pieces on personal blogs, creating engaging human rights content across social media platforms, and submitting scholarly

or practice-oriented articles to strategic journals that reach policymakers, practitioners, and international audiences.

Conclusion: Technology, Rights, and Social Change

Closing the digital divide for human rights education represents a profound challenge requiring sustained commitment, strategic coordination, and resources from diverse stakeholders. However, it is achievable. The combination of mobile technology, traditional broadcast media, social media platforms, and strategic integration can deliver human rights education even to populations facing significant connectivity and resource constraints. Nigeria's experience demonstrates both the opportunities and challenges, with substantial progress in some areas combined with persistent gaps requiring continued attention.

The platforms analyzed throughout this article offer distinct contributions to comprehensive human rights education. Radio reaches the otherwise unreached, ensuring digital exclusion does not equate to educational exclusion. Television combines reach with visual storytelling power. Facebook builds communities and enables sustained engagement. Instagram attracts younger audiences through visual appeal. Twitter facilitates real time advocacy. YouTube supports in depth exploration. Together, these platforms can deliver human rights education to diverse populations across literacy levels, economic statuses, geographic locations, and technology access.

Yet platform availability alone is insufficient. As Effoduh's scholarship illuminates, technology must be deployed through context driven approaches that recognize local realities, respect cultural particularities, and incorporate community voices. Content must be accessible linguistically, economically, and cognitively. Production quality must compete for attention in crowded media environments. Strategies must adapt as technologies, platforms, and audiences evolve. Human rights education must be sustained rather than episodic, building cumulative knowledge rather than simply reacting to crises.

The stakes could not be higher. Human rights literacy empowers individuals to claim rights, hold power accountable, and advocate for justice. Without such literacy, rights violations persist unchallenged and populations remain vulnerable to exploitation and oppression. Digital divides that exclude populations from human rights education therefore perpetuate and exacerbate injustice. Conversely, democratizing human rights knowledge through strategic use of technology and media creates potential for transformative social change as informed populations assert rights and demand accountability.

Looking forward, several trends will shape human rights education in the Global South. Continued mobile technology expansion will bring more populations online, though closing usage gaps requires addressing affordability and digital literacy barriers alongside infrastructure building. Artificial intelligence may enable personalized human rights education, adaptive learning experiences, and automated translation making content accessible across languages. However, as Effoduh warns, AI systems must be designed with and for Global South contexts rather than simply transferring Northern technologies. Platform evolution will continue, requiring ongoing adaptation of strategies. New technologies and platforms will emerge, offering fresh opportunities but also demanding flexibility and learning.

The digital divide in human rights education is neither inevitable nor permanent. It results from choices about infrastructure investment, platform design, content development, and resource allocation. Different choices can produce different outcomes. Governments choosing to prioritize connectivity and education access enable broader reach. Organizations choosing to develop multi-platform strategies reach diverse audiences. Platforms choosing to support educational content

expand impact. Communities choosing to leverage available technologies for rights advocacy demonstrate that even imperfect access can drive change.

Human rights education through mobile technology and digital platforms represents more than simply adapting pedagogy to new media. It embodies fundamental questions about who has access to knowledge, whose voices are heard, and how power relations are challenged or reinforced through technology. Closing the digital divide for human rights education means democratizing knowledge that enables all people to understand, claim, and defend their rights. It means ensuring that technology serves justice rather than exacerbating inequality. It means recognizing that human rights are universal while acknowledging that education delivery must be contextual. This work is challenging, requiring resources, expertise, and sustained commitment. It is also essential, for human rights cannot be realized without human rights literacy, and literacy cannot be built while populations remain divided by digital access.

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