

Digital Technology: A Key Drive for Social Mobility

By Adefunke Adeyeye

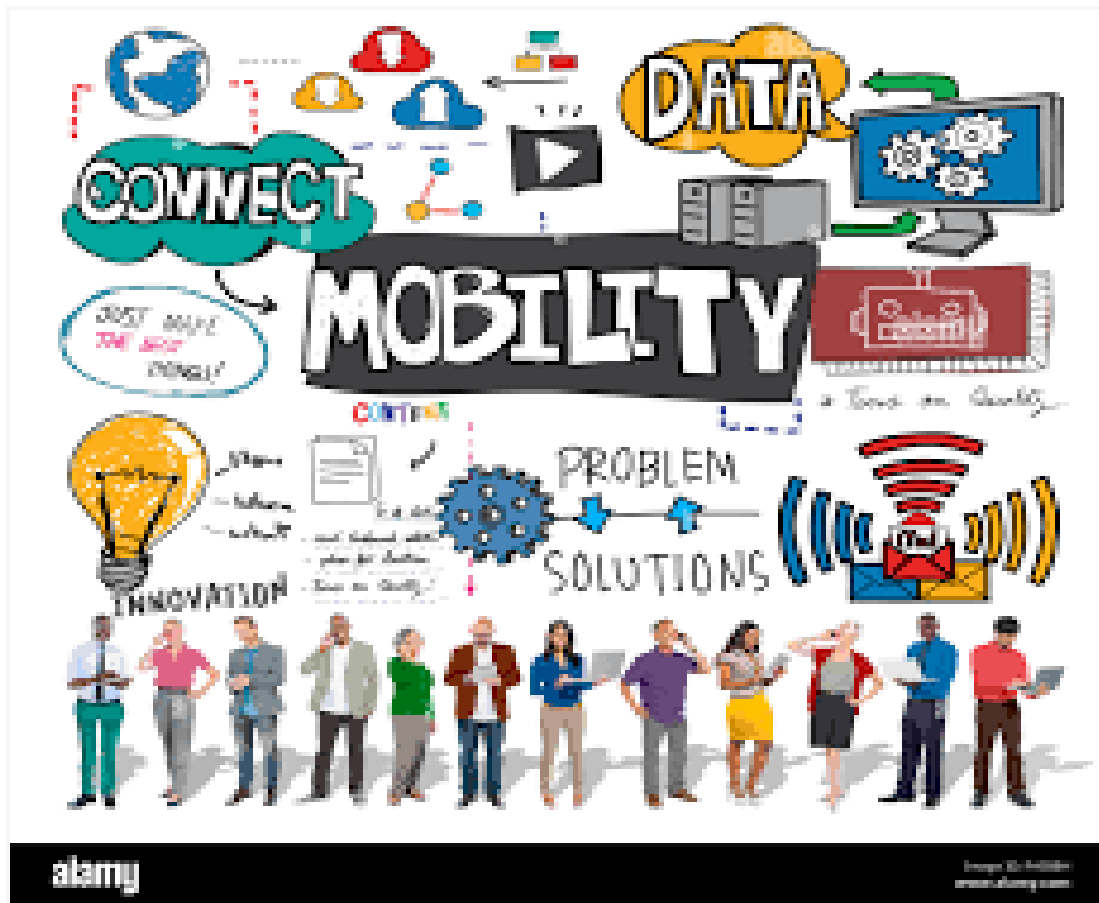


Image source: [Alamy](https://www.alamy.com)

Introduction

The term Social mobility, relative to the context of this article, refers to the capacity for people to change their socioeconomic status. The change can be upward or downward, with the former being the capacity to change from a lower to a higher social class and the latter being a change from a higher socioeconomic status to a lower one. While Poverty has been a major bane of social mobility for African youth, Education and Employment continue to top the leading escape route from poverty. In the dynamic landscape of the modern world, digital technology however has emerged as an unparalleled force, reshaping and influencing how we learn, work, and interact by presenting individuals from all walks of life with newfound opportunities to transcend barriers and realize their full potential.

This article delves into the transformative power of digital technology, exploring how it has influenced learning and working by empowering individuals, fostering inclusivity, and how young people in Africa can harness the transformative power of digital technology to scale up the social ladder and open doors to a world of boundless possibilities.

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Role of Digital Technology in Education

The advent of digital technology has shown massive development in education and reduced the effects of limiting factors like cost, geographical location, effectiveness, scalability, efficiency and quality, gender issues, etc., to the barest minimum because of how it is delivered and how it has changed the capability of learning new things. The key to consider is [The Latest Technology in Education Statistics](#). Findings from this study revealed that online learning has been estimated to increase retention by 25-60% among students, and 66% of teachers that teaches kindergarten to 12th grade believe that digital learning materials can improve student performance. **Without a doubt**, Digital technology has made easy access to updated information possible for both learners and teachers, which can help curb one of the challenges facing the education system in developing countries as teachers need to be updated with the latest information, thereby delivering outdated information to their students.¹ [74%](#) of teachers agree that technology enables them to reinforce and expand on content.

Similarly, Digital technology enables access to education beyond traditional boundaries. Online courses, educational platforms, and virtual classrooms provide opportunities for individuals, irrespective of their geographic location or socio-economic background, to acquire new skills and knowledge. Recent studies have highlighted the use of Internet and communication technologies as a promising solution to provide quality school education in the remotest parts of the country. E-learning has a future in making the world a better place through learning, creating awareness, and bridging the gap between the privileged and the less privileged in developing countries.² Digital education can bridge the gap between the privileged and underprivileged, equipping people with the tools to secure better jobs and improve their social status.

Role of Digital Technology on the Job Market

The digital technology advancement in the job market is becoming more rapid than ever; [about 230 million jobs](#) will require technology skills in sub-Saharan Africa alone within the next ten years, and 9 out of 10 jobs globally will require digital skills. This transformation holds great potential to reduce the unemployment and underemployment challenges facing the ever-growing youth of the African population.

Digital technology plays an essential role in the job market in terms of new opportunities that are available and the accessibility of opportunities to those who face unemployment, thus, creating a pathway out of poverty. One significant way digital technology is achieving this is by being a

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<https://techbaji.com/technology/positive-negative-impact-of-technology-on-education/#:~:text=Technology%20also%20increases%20student%20engagement,on%20society%20as%20a%20whole.>

² <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40561-021-00182-7>

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catalyst for inclusive job opportunities for youth who are marginalized from the formal workforce. This has a net positive impact on jobs and income generation, particularly for youth.³

Undisputedly digital technology has transformed the job market by enabling people to work remotely and online and access job opportunities beyond their local. This ultimately allows for inclusive employment practices. This opportunity can positively impact individuals in rural or economically disadvantaged areas by giving them access to employment opportunities previously limited to urban centers.

In summary, Digital Technology has helped lowered barriers to entry for entrepreneurs and increased opportunities for digital entrepreneurs, enabling them to launch and grow businesses more easily. The growth of online platforms also makes it easier for entrepreneurs to offer their services regardless of location. Also, it enables them to showcase their services globally within a short time.⁴ With the help of technology, individuals can find jobs online, ranging from microwork, which is accessible to anyone with basic literacy and numeracy skills, to more technical jobs, which require advanced technical skills. These jobs provide high wages and long-term job stability, which can significantly help people work out of poverty and move up their social and economic classes.

Digital skills also enhance employability and open doors for career advancement.

In a study conducted to measure the relationship between digital skills and employability, the study revealed and concluded that digital skills were strongly associated with jobs⁵.

Conclusion

The transformative power of digital technology as a key driver for upward social mobility lies in the fact that it fosters inclusivity and increases accessibility, thereby bridging the gap between the underprivileged and the privileged and creating a more equitable world. Embracing digital technology as a tool for upward social mobility requires a collective effort from governments, businesses, educators, and individuals.

- Governments and private sectors should prioritize investing in robust digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved areas. High-speed internet access must become a fundamental right, ensuring no community is left behind.
- Organizations should advocate for policies that promote digital inclusion and bridge the digital divide. This could include supporting initiatives that provide internet access to underserved communities and ensuring that digital resources are available to all.

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<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Catalyzing-Inclusive-Opportunities-For-Youth.pdf>

4

<https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/354261452529895321/WDR16-BP-Enabling-digital-entrepreneurs-DWE-LSUM.pdf>

⁵ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2382939

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- Employers should consider remote work options when possible, as it can expand employment opportunities for individuals who might not be able to relocate for work.
- Individuals and agencies who have benefited from digital technology should share their success stories to inspire others and raise awareness about the potential of digital solutions for upward social mobility.
- Youth are encouraged to stay informed about the latest advancements in digital technology and its impact on social mobility and advocate for policies prioritizing digital inclusion and equal access to opportunities.