

## IMPACT OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN ON ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract.

*The persistent issue of out-of-school children in Nigeria poses a significant challenge to the nation's educational system, particularly in the arts and social sciences. These disciplines, essential for fostering critical thinking, cultural development, and societal progress, have witnessed declining enrollment due to the growing number of children excluded from formal education. This study examines the multidimensional impacts of out-of-school children on art and social science education, highlighting factors such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure, cultural barriers, and gender disparities. The findings reveal that the reduced participation in these fields not only hinders the development of creative and analytical skills but also limits the nation's ability to address pressing social and cultural issues. Recommendations include improving access to quality education, reforming curricula to make arts and social sciences more relevant, offering financial support for disadvantaged students, and promoting awareness of the importance of these fields. Addressing these challenges is critical for enhancing educational equity and ensuring that the arts and social sciences continue to contribute to Nigeria's socio-economic and cultural development.*

### Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar of societal development, playing a crucial role in shaping the intellectual, social, and economic fabric of a nation. In Nigeria, however, the issue of out-of-school children has emerged as a pressing challenge with far-reaching consequences. According to Abuya, Oketch, & Musyoka (2013) Nigeria has one of the highest rates of out-of-school children in the world, with millions of young individuals—particularly in rural and underserved areas—lacking access to formal education.

The absence of formal education for millions of children diminishes the potential contributions of these disciplines, thereby hindering national progress. Similarly, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2024) Education Manager, Mr. Jutaro Sakamioto, has said that one out of four children in Nigeria is out of school, and 75 per cent of Nigerian children have not developed functional learning skills, which are critical building blocks for advanced knowledge and skills. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, a nationwide household survey implemented by the National Bureau of Statistics with UNICEF's support, one in four children are out of school, and 75 per cent

of children do not develop foundational learning skills that are critical building blocks to develop advanced knowledge and skills.

BBC Hausa editor Jimoh Saleh says the failure in the education system is due to a lack of government funding, rather than any cultural factors as suggested by the ministry. "Government funded schools in Nigeria have practically collapsed over the years because of poor funding leaving children from poor homes with nowhere to go but the streets," he says. UNICEF estimates that 60% of Nigerian children not attending school live in the north of the country.

In the Nigerian context, the implications are particularly severe. Without access to education, many children are drawn into cycles of poverty, child labor, and early marriage, limiting their opportunities to participate meaningfully in society. Furthermore, the creative and analytical skills essential for national development are underdeveloped, reducing the potential for innovation and societal transformation. Adediji, & Oluwasola (2021) observed that these has a ripple effect on various sectors, including art and social science, which are vital disciplines for fostering creativity, critical thinking, and social cohesion. Art education nurtures self-expression, innovation, and cultural identity, while social science equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to analyze societal structures, promote civic engagement, and address complex social issues.

Addressing the issue of out-of-school children is critical not only for achieving universal education but also for leveraging the transformative power of art and social science. This study aims to explore the multidimensional impacts of this challenge on these disciplines and to propose actionable strategies for reintegrating out-of-school children into the educational system. By doing so, it seeks to highlight the importance of inclusive education as a cornerstone for sustainable development and social harmony in Nigeria.

### **Definition and Scope of Out-of-School Children**

Out-of-school children are defined as individuals within the age range for compulsory education who are not enrolled in or attending formal or informal educational institutions. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2024), these children are typically categorized into three groups:

**a. Children who have never attended school:** Children who have never attended school are individuals within the age bracket for compulsory education who have not been enrolled in any formal or informal educational setting at any point in their lives. Finding from the work of Ajayi (2021) revealed that these children typically have no exposure to structured learning environments, leaving them without basic literacy, numeracy, or foundational life skills. These are children who have not been enrolled in any form of education due to factors such as poverty, cultural norms, or lack of access to schools.

**b. Children who have dropped out of school:** Children who have never attended school are individuals within the age bracket for compulsory education who have not been enrolled in any formal or informal educational setting at any point in their lives. These are children who were previously enrolled in school but discontinued their education due to economic, social, or institutional barriers (Bassey, 2022).

**c. Children who are at risk of dropping out:** Children who are at risk of dropping out are those currently enrolled in school but face challenges or circumstances that increase the likelihood of discontinuing their education before completing the required level. In support of the above assertions Farswan (2023) further clarified that these children often struggle with maintaining consistent attendance or academic performance due to external and internal factors. These are children enrolled in school but face challenges that may lead to early termination of their education, such as poor learning conditions, financial hardship, or family obligations. In consonant with the above Ojiya, *etal* (2023) the scope of the issue in the Nigerian context is significant, encompassing millions of children, particularly in northern regions where sociocultural factors, insecurity, and limited educational infrastructure exacerbate the problem. Key subgroups include:

#### **Overview on Causes Out-of-School Children in Nigeria**

The issue of out-of-school children in Nigeria has been a longstanding challenge, with significant disparities in access to education across different regions, demographics, and socioeconomic groups. Below are some key trends and patterns observed over recent years. **National Prevalence:** According to recent data, Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world. Over 13 million children between the ages of 6 and 17 are not enrolled in school. According to UNICEF (2024) Nigeria is home to about 20 million out-of-school children with 33 per cent from the northeast which is the highest proportion of its school-age children that are out-of-school. This was followed by North-central with 26 per cent; North-west with 25 per cent; South-south, with 24 per cent; South-west with 22; and South-east with 19 per cent.

To address the school dropout Nigerian government has invested in a series of policy initiatives and other instruments to revitalize its system of education to achieve positive results and outcomes. The National Policy on Education (NPE) introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) through the Free Universal Basic Education Act, 2004 providing a policy framework to enforce section 18(3) (a) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). By the combined effect of section 18(3) (a) of the Constitution and section 2(1) of the Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Act 2004, the right to free and compulsory primary education and free junior secondary education for all qualified Nigerian citizens are enforceable rights in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) has an enforceable mechanism at both federal and state levels.

**Gender Disparities:** Girls represent a larger proportion of out-of-school children compared to boys, particularly in rural and northern regions where cultural and societal norms limit their educational opportunities. In Nigeria, gender disparities in education remain a significant issue, particularly for girls. Girls represent a larger proportion of out-of-school children compared to boys, with the problem being more pronounced in rural and northern regions. According to data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other educational reports, approximately 10.5 million children in Nigeria are out of school, and 60% of them are girls. This translates to over 6 million Nigerian girls lacking access to basic education. The northern regions of Nigeria face unique challenges that exacerbate gender disparities in education. In states such as Borno, Yobe, and Zamfara, cultural and societal norms often place a higher value on domestic roles for girls,

prioritizing marriage and household responsibilities over formal education. Early marriage, a prevalent practice in northern Nigeria, is a significant barrier, as girls are often married off in their teenage years, limiting their opportunities for schooling. Reports show that 43% of girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18, and many of these cases occur in the northern states.

The disparity is further intensified in rural areas, where poverty and limited access to schools significantly hinder girls' education. Schools in rural communities often lack basic infrastructure, qualified teachers, and adequate learning materials, creating a challenging environment for all students, particularly girls. For instance, girls in rural areas are three times more likely to be out of school compared to their counterparts in urban centers. (UNESCO Global Education Monitoring, 2023). Many families prioritize the education of boys over girls when resources are limited, as boys are perceived to have greater potential for economic contributions in the future. According to the World Bank, (2018) 44% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with rural families disproportionately affected. This financial strain often leads to decisions that sideline girls' education.

### **Geographical Differences:**

Educational disparities in Nigeria show significant geographical variations, with northern states reporting higher rates of out-of-school children compared to their southern counterparts (Adeleke, & Alabede 2022). Northern states like Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina consistently record some of the highest numbers of out-of-school children, while southern states such as Lagos and Abuja have much lower rates. The northern regions face widespread poverty, which compels families to prioritize immediate economic survival over education. Many children, especially girls, are engaged in domestic work or income-generating activities to support their families. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports that poverty rates are significantly higher in the North, with the northwest and northeast regions accounting for the majority of Nigeria's poorest households.

Persistent insecurity, including insurgencies by groups like Boko Haram and banditry, has disrupted educational activities in northern states. Many schools have been closed due to attacks, abductions, and general instability, leaving children without access to safe learning environments (Asiegbu, Nwankwo, Briggs, & Macs (2021). A lack of adequate school infrastructure, including classrooms, teaching materials, and trained teachers, further hinders educational opportunities in the North. In rural areas, many children must travel long distances to attend school, which discourages enrollment and attendance, particularly for girls.

In contrast, southern states like Lagos and Abuja benefit from better infrastructure, stronger economic conditions, and greater security, leading to lower rates of out-of-school children. Investments in education, access to urban amenities, and active governmental and non-governmental educational initiatives have contributed to improved enrollment and retention rates in these regions.

### **Socioeconomic Disparities**

**Rural vs. Urban Areas:** The disparity between rural and urban areas in terms of access to education is a critical issue, as evidenced by the fact that nearly 70% of out-of-school

children live in rural areas. According to Okeke, Adeyemi, & Tijani (2020) this gap can be attributed to several factors, including limited access to educational facilities, inadequate infrastructure, economic challenges, and social norms that may deprioritize education in rural settings. Children in rural areas face significant educational disparities compared to their urban counterparts. Ndanusa, Abayomi, & Harada, (2021) mentioned Key differences for rural urban bias as, lower enrollment rates, poorer infrastructure, higher dropout rates, and lower literacy levels in rural regions. Urban areas benefit from better resources, qualified teachers, and gender parity, while rural areas often struggle with inadequate facilities, economic challenges, and cultural barriers, especially for girls. These issues highlight the need for targeted policies to bridge the gap and ensure equitable access to quality education for all children.

**Future Projections** If current trends continue without significant policy reforms and inclusive practices, it is projected that the number of out-of-school children could exceed 15 million within the next decade, further worsening educational inequality in Nigeria (UNICEF 2024).

### **Societal Implications (consequences) of Out-of-School Children**

The issue of out-of-school children has far-reaching societal implications that affect communities, families, and the overall development of a nation. These implications touch on various aspects of social, economic, cultural, and political life, and addressing them is essential for fostering a more inclusive and sustainable society. Below are the key societal implications of the high number of out-of-school children in Nigeria.

#### **1. Loss of Productive Human Capital**

**Economic Impact:** A large population of out-of-school children translates into a significant loss of potential human capital. Education is a critical driver of economic development, and the exclusion of children from the education system reduces the pool of skilled workers necessary for economic growth and innovation. Without access to education, children are less likely to contribute meaningfully to the labor force, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limiting national development.

#### **2. Increased Inequality and Social Exclusion**

**Social Stratification:** Out-of-school children contribute to widening social inequality, as those who receive education are better positioned to access opportunities such as employment, social mobility, and political participation. The absence of educational opportunities reinforces social exclusion, with marginalized groups, including girls, children from poor households, and those in remote regions, being disproportionately affected. This can exacerbate tensions and divisions within communities.

#### **3. Higher Rates of Unemployment and Underemployment**

**Workforce Challenges:** Societies with high rates of uneducated individuals face difficulties in developing a skilled workforce capable of competing in a rapidly evolving job market. As a result, there is an increase in unemployment and underemployment rates, which in turn affects the overall economic stability of communities. Poorly educated

populations may engage in informal or low-skilled labor, limiting their economic productivity and decreasing their quality of life.

#### **4. Loss of Cultural and Traditional Knowledge**

**Cultural Erosion:** Education, particularly in social sciences and humanities, helps preserve cultural heritage and pass down knowledge from one generation to another. When children are excluded from formal education, valuable cultural practices, languages, and traditions may be lost, impacting the collective identity of communities. This erosion of cultural knowledge weakens the social fabric and reduces the community's ability to maintain its distinct identity in an increasingly globalized world.

#### **5. Increased Poverty and Dependency**

**Poverty Cycle:** Out-of-school children often face limited opportunities to escape poverty. With little access to education, they are more likely to remain trapped in cycles of economic hardship, relying on low-paying, unstable jobs. This perpetuates poverty across generations, affecting the long-term sustainability of social and economic progress. Without the skills needed to succeed in competitive job markets, families may experience increased dependency on social welfare systems, which puts a strain on national resources.

#### **6. Increased Crime and Social Instability**

**Social Security Concerns:** Research has shown that populations with high numbers of out-of-school children are more prone to social instability, crime, and radicalization. Lack of educational opportunities can lead to increased youth disenfranchisement, which, when left unaddressed, may contribute to violence and antisocial behaviors. Out-of-school children are at greater risk of engaging in illicit activities, as they may lack the skills necessary to pursue legitimate paths for success, leading to higher crime rates and social unrest.

#### **7. Weak Political Participation and Representation**

**Limited Civic Engagement:** Education fosters political awareness, participation, and leadership. Children who do not attend school are less likely to be politically active, aware of governance structures, and able to represent their communities effectively. This underrepresentation reduces the voices of marginalized groups in policymaking processes, hindering inclusive and equitable governance that responds to the needs of all citizens.

#### **8. Health and Well-being Implications**

**Poor Health Outcomes:** Education has a direct impact on health outcomes. Out-of-school children are more likely to experience poor health due to limited access to information on nutrition, hygiene, and health services. Additionally, they may face higher risks of child labor, early marriage, and exploitation, all of which compromise long-term health and well-being. Poor health among children leads to increased strain on healthcare systems and contributes to broader societal challenges in managing healthcare demands.

#### **9. Weakened Social Cohesion and Community Development**

**Fragmented Communities:** Societies with high numbers of out-of-school children often experience weakened social cohesion, as education serves as a unifying force that brings diverse groups together through shared knowledge, values, and goals. In contrast, communities with large segments of uneducated individuals may lack a sense of collective purpose, weakening collaboration for community development and social progress.

### **Impact of out of School on Art and Social Science Education**

The exclusion of children from school, whether they have never attended, have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out, has profound effects on both art and social science education. These fields are essential for fostering critical thinking, creativity, cultural awareness, and an understanding of societal structures, which are vital for holistic development. Below are the impacts of this exclusion:

#### **1. Reduced Access to Creative and Analytical Skills**

**Inadequate Exposure:** refers to the lack of opportunities for children, particularly those who are out of school or at risk of dropping out, to engage in comprehensive learning experiences in art and social science. This lack of exposure hampers their development of essential skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities necessary for personal growth and active participation in society. Below is a deeper explanation of how inadequate exposure impacts these subjects. Children who are not enrolled or who have dropped out of school miss out on foundational learning in art and social sciences, which are essential for personal and societal growth.

**Limitations in Critical Thinking:** Art education encourages self-expression, innovation, and problem-solving. Similarly, social sciences develop analytical thinking, understanding of social systems, and the ability to engage with complex societal issues. Without access to these subjects, children may struggle to develop these competencies. Similarly arise when children are deprived of a comprehensive education in both art and social science, which are essential for developing analytical, reflective, and problem-solving skills. These limitations significantly hinder a child's ability to evaluate information, consider multiple perspectives, and apply knowledge to real-world situations. Below are the specific ways these limitations manifest due to restricted exposure to these subjects.

#### **Loss of Cultural and Historical Understanding**

**Decline in Cultural Awareness:** Art education provides a platform for the study and preservation of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage. Children who are excluded from art education are less likely to engage in or understand the nuances of traditional and contemporary Nigerian art forms. It occurs when children are deprived of a comprehensive education in art and social science, which play pivotal roles in preserving and understanding cultural heritage. These subjects enable students to explore traditions, history, values, and identities, which are essential for fostering a sense of cultural pride and diversity. The absence or limited exposure to these areas can lead to a weakened

understanding of cultural contexts and a diminished appreciation for Nigeria's rich heritage.

**Impact on Social Identity:** Social science education allows children to explore their place within society and the broader world. A lack of exposure reduces their understanding of social structures, governance, history, and the role of civic engagement, which are critical for shaping informed citizens. The lack of access to art and social science education for children, particularly those who have never attended school, have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out, significantly impacts their development of social identity. Social identity refers to how individuals perceive themselves within a social context and how they understand their place within a community, society, and larger global context. Art and social science education play crucial roles in shaping a child's social identity by fostering a sense of belonging, cultural awareness, and social engagement. Below are the ways in which this impact manifests:

### **Reduced Creativity and Innovation**

**Barriers to Artistic Expression:** Art education is a medium through which children can express creativity and explore various forms of artistic expression. Exclusion from this form of education deprives children of outlets for artistic growth and the opportunity to develop unique solutions to societal challenges. Barriers to artistic expression for children, particularly those who have never attended school, have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out, are significant obstacles that hinder their ability to fully engage in creative and self-expressive activities. These barriers are multifaceted, influenced by factors such as access to education, resources, societal attitudes, and socio-economic conditions.

**Innovation Limitation:** In social sciences, children learn how to approach social problems with empathy and data-driven solutions. Without access, they may miss opportunities to contribute to innovative and inclusive solutions for societal challenges. Innovation is a critical component of artistic expression and social development, and for children, particularly those who are out of school or at risk of dropping out, limitations in artistic expression can significantly hinder their ability to innovate. Without access to quality art and social science education, children may struggle to explore new ideas, experiment, and develop creative solutions to challenges.

### **Social Science and Civic Engagement Deficit**

**Weak Civic Participation:** Social science education develops an understanding of civic responsibilities, governance, and social justice. Children who are unable to access this education are less equipped to engage effectively in community development and democratic processes.

**Reduced Social Inclusion:** Social science fosters a deeper understanding of marginalized groups and the importance of inclusivity. Exclusion hinders efforts to build a more just and inclusive society, where children are empowered to advocate for their rights and the rights of others.

### **Limited Career Opportunities**



**Weak Foundations for Social Science Careers:** For children who are out of school or at risk of dropping out, the lack of access to a robust education in social sciences creates a weak foundation for pursuing careers in related fields. Social sciences play a crucial role in shaping understanding of human behavior, societal structures, and cultural dynamics, which are essential for various professions such as sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, and economics. When children are deprived of this educational foundation, they face challenges in advancing careers that require a deep understanding of societal contexts. Below are the ways in which this limitation impacts social science careers.

### **Limited Exposure to Core Social Science Concepts**

**Weak Understanding of Social Structures:** Social science education provides children with a foundation to explore topics such as governance, culture, history, economics, and human development. Without exposure to these concepts, children may struggle to develop a comprehensive understanding of societal issues, resulting in a weak academic and professional foundation for careers in social sciences. Careers in social work, sociology, anthropology, and community development require a strong grounding in social sciences. Out-of-school children miss opportunities for specialized academic paths and professional roles that contribute to societal development.

### **Increased Social and Economic Inequality**

**Exclusion from Holistic Education:** Art and social science education help bridge gaps in understanding social disparities and the importance of community development. Children who are excluded lack the tools to challenge inequality and advocate for systemic change.

### **Role of Art and Social Science in Addressing Out-of-School Challenges**

Social science plays a pivotal role in addressing the multidimensional challenges associated with out-of-school children in Nigeria. By providing insights into the social, cultural, economic, and psychological dimensions of education, social science helps in formulating effective strategies and policies that promote inclusive and equitable access to education. Below are key ways in which social science contributes to tackling out-of-school challenges.

#### **1. Understanding Socioeconomic Factors**

**Analyzing Root Causes:** Social science examines the underlying socioeconomic factors—such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and cultural norms—that contribute to high rates of out-of-school children. By studying these factors, social scientists provide data-driven insights to develop policies that address systemic barriers to education. For example, through research in sociology or economics, social scientists can identify the relationship between household income and children's school attendance, helping policymakers craft targeted interventions to reduce poverty-related school dropout rates.

## **2. Promoting Inclusive Education**

**Addressing Disparities in Access:** Social science focuses on issues related to inequality and discrimination in education. By exploring marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities, girls, and children in remote areas, social science informs strategies to create inclusive educational environments that meet diverse needs. Social science research can help design policies that address specific barriers faced by these groups, such as inaccessible school infrastructure, cultural biases, or gender disparities, ensuring that all children have equitable access to education.

## **3. Informing Policy Development and Implementation**

**Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Social science research provides empirical evidence that guides policymakers in crafting education policies tailored to the unique needs of out-of-school children. This includes understanding the barriers faced by families, schools, and communities, allowing for the development of interventions such as community education programs or flexible schooling models. For instance, social scientists can evaluate the effectiveness of community-based education programs in increasing school enrollment rates, providing valuable feedback for policy adjustments.

## **4. Enhancing Community Engagement and Support**

**Building Social Capital:** Social science emphasizes the importance of community engagement in education. It studies how communities can be mobilized to support out-of-school children through parental involvement, community-driven initiatives, and social support systems. Research in areas like community psychology and anthropology helps to understand how social networks influence school attendance and retention, leading to interventions that strengthen community involvement in education.

## **5. Identifying Psychological and Emotional Barriers**

**Addressing Mental Health and Social Inclusion:** Social science explores the psychological aspects of education, including the emotional well-being of children who are at risk or are currently out of school. This includes understanding the impact of trauma, stigma, and social exclusion on children's ability to access education. Studies in fields such as psychology and social work inform strategies for counseling, mentorship, and therapeutic programs that support the mental health of out-of-school children, thereby encouraging their return to education.

## **6. Supporting Gender Equality in Education**

**Gender Analysis and Advocacy:** Social science investigates the role of gender in education access and outcomes, identifying barriers that disproportionately affect girls. Research highlights how cultural practices, parental expectations, and discriminatory policies hinder girls' access to education. Through this research, social scientists advocate for policies and programs that promote gender equality in education, such as scholarships, mentoring programs, and initiatives to keep girls in school.

## **7. Strengthening Curriculum and Educational Relevance**

**Cultural and Contextual Relevance:** Social science emphasizes the need for curriculum that is culturally relevant and socially responsive to the needs of marginalized communities. By studying local traditions, histories, and social dynamics, social science ensures that education systems are adapted to the specific contexts in which out-of-school children live. For instance, incorporating local history and social issues into the curriculum can enhance engagement and relevance, making education more accessible and meaningful to children from diverse backgrounds.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Educational Programs**

**Assessing Impact and Effectiveness:** Social science methodologies, such as longitudinal studies and impact evaluations, are used to assess the success of educational interventions aimed at out-of-school children. This allows for the continuous improvement of educational programs by understanding their long-term effects and areas for development. Through sociological and ethnographic research, social scientists track how out-of-school children transition back into formal education, providing actionable insights for sustaining educational outcomes.

Social science provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges associated with out-of-school children in Nigeria. By leveraging insights from disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and political science, social science helps to create inclusive, effective, and culturally sensitive educational solutions that address the root causes of exclusion from education. Through evidence-based research and advocacy, social science plays a critical role in shaping policies and practices that empower children to access and complete quality education.

## **Importance of Addressing the Issue of Out of School**

Addressing the issue of out-of-school children is critical for fostering sustainable development, promoting social equity, and unlocking the potential of Nigeria's human capital. The pervasive nature of this challenge has far-reaching implications for individuals, families, communities, and the nation as a whole.

### **1. Economic Development**

Education is a key driver of economic growth. Addressing the out-of-school crisis equips children with skills needed for the workforce, reduces dependency on social programs, and enhances productivity. Ensuring that all children receive education can help break cycles of poverty and create a more skilled and competitive labor force.

### **2. Social Equity and Inclusion**

Out-of-school children are often from marginalized groups, including girls, rural communities, and families living in poverty. Addressing this issue promotes social justice by providing equal opportunities for all children to thrive. It also reduces social disparities and fosters greater unity by integrating vulnerable groups into mainstream society.

### **3. Civic Participation and National Stability**

Education helps children develop critical thinking skills, civic awareness, and a sense of responsibility toward their communities and the nation. Addressing educational exclusion reduces the risks of social instability, crime, and radicalization, fostering a more peaceful and cohesive society.

#### **4. Empowering Through Art and Social Science**

Art education enables children to explore their creativity, express themselves, and connect with their cultural heritage, while also contributing to the preservation and evolution of Nigerian culture. Social science education fosters an understanding of societal structures, governance, and human behavior, equipping children to address real-world challenges effectively.

#### **5. Long-term Development Goals**

Addressing the issue aligns with global and national development goals, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4: Quality Education for All. Achieving universal education lays the foundation for broader progress in health, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

#### **6. Strengthening Families and Communities**

Educated individuals are more likely to contribute to the well-being of their families by making informed decisions about health, nutrition, and financial management. They are also better equipped to engage in community development initiatives, fostering collective progress.

#### **7. Unlocking Potential**

Millions of Nigerian children currently out of school represent untapped potential. By addressing this issue, the nation can nurture future leaders, innovators, and change-makers who will drive progress in diverse fields, including art and social science.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Increase the availability of schools, especially in rural and underserved areas, to ensure all children, including those in remote regions, have access to quality education. Building more schools and providing transportation options can help reduce the barriers to attendance.
2. Reform the curriculum to make arts and social sciences more relevant to the needs of students. Incorporate practical, hands-on learning experiences, and offer career pathways that emphasize the value of these fields in societal development.
3. Establish scholarship programs and financial incentives to support students, especially those from low-income backgrounds, who wish to pursue art and social science courses. Partner with local and international organizations to fund these initiatives.

4. Implement programs specifically aimed at reducing gender disparities in education. Encourage the enrollment of girls in art and social science fields by providing incentives, mentorship, and creating safe learning environments.
5. Provide training programs for teachers in both urban and rural areas to improve the delivery of arts and social science education. Teachers should be equipped with the necessary skills to engage students in these subjects effectively.
6. Strengthen collaboration between the government and the private sector to create educational initiatives, internship programs, and mentorship opportunities in the arts and social sciences. This collaboration can help bridge the gap between education and the job market.
7. Invest in digital education platforms that offer online courses in arts and social sciences, making learning accessible to children in remote and hard-to-reach areas.
8. Develop policies that promote inclusive education for all children, including those with disabilities, marginalized groups, and out-of-school children. Special programs should be designed to reintegrate children into the education system and support their academic success.

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