

Building a Resilient Future: Integrating Educational Solutions for Societal Renewal

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SALUTATION

- Good morning,
- Your excellences,
- The Vice-Chancellor,
- The Vice-Chancellors,
- Other Principal Officers present,
- The Dean,
- The LOC Chairman and his team,
- Honourable guests,
- Esteemed colleagues, and educators
- Other distinguished guests and students,
- Ladies and gentlemen.
- I feel honoured to be invited, to give an address to this distinguished gathering of scholars, and experts from other areas of knowledge, at the 12th International Conference and Workshop of the Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

The Importance of Resilience

- Rapid changes and unprecedented challenges (environmental, economic, social, technological)
- Opportunity to reshape societies for strength, justice, and sustainability
- Education as a pivotal tool for societal transformation

Education Systems and Resilience

- Education equips individuals and communities for sustainable growth
- Holistic education beyond traditional classrooms
- Lifelong learning, civic engagement, essential skills for global challenges

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Concept of Resilience

- Dynamic process of positive adaptation despite adversity
- **Components:**
- Adversity (exposure to risk)
- Positive adaptation (behavioral competence, social skills)

Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) on Resilience Model

- ▶ Effective dealing with pressure, optimism, recovery, learning
- ▶ **Four Pillars:**
- ▶ Mental: The ability to effectively cope with mental stressors and challenges. Pay attention to your needs and feelings. Our thoughts control our energy.
- ▶ Physical: The ability to adopt and sustain healthy behaviours. Regularly work out and continually monitor physical stamina. Recognize the connection between mind and body: strong bodies help build strong minds
- ▶ Social: The ability to network. Build and value interpersonal relationships and social networks. Social connections with others widen perceptions and grow character.
- ▶ Spiritual: The ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, or values needed to persevere and prevail in accomplishing missions.

Education as a Pillar of Resilience

- Enhances individual and community capacities
- Fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration
- Prepares for sustainability, inclusivity, adaptability

Key Challenges in Education for Building Resilience

- **Challenge:** Access to quality education remains unequal, especially in low-income and marginalized communities. Factors such as poverty, geographic isolation, gender inequality, and disability often result in significant educational disparities.
- **Impact:** Without access to inclusive and equitable education, students in disadvantaged areas struggle to acquire the foundational knowledge and social-emotional skills necessary to navigate life's challenges, limiting their resilience.
- **Example:** In rural areas of developing countries, lack of schools, teachers, and learning materials leaves students without the support systems needed to foster resilience.

Mental Health Challenges

- **Challenge:** Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and trauma are increasingly prevalent among students, exacerbated by stressors like academic pressure, socio-economic hardships, family problems, and global crises (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic). These mental health challenges can undermine a student's ability to cope with adversity and build resilience.
- **Impact:** Students facing unaddressed mental health challenges may struggle to engage fully in their education, leading to absenteeism, poor academic performance, and dropping out of school.
- **Example:** Studies have shown that students in conflict zones or areas affected by natural disasters often experience post-traumatic stress, making it harder for them to focus on their studies and build resilience.^{DAO}

Inadequate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs

- **Challenge:** Social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential for fostering resilience in students, as it helps them develop self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Impact:** When SEL is not prioritized, students may struggle to navigate emotional challenges and interpersonal conflicts, limiting their ability to build resilience.
- **Example:** In many schools, the curriculum focuses heavily on academic achievement, with little emphasis on emotional and social development, which is crucial for building resilience.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

- **Challenge:** Teachers play a critical role in fostering resilience in students, but many educators lack the training and resources needed to support students' emotional and social well-being effectively.
- **Impact:** Without adequate professional development in areas such as SEL, trauma-informed teaching, and mental health awareness, teachers may struggle to identify and address the needs of students facing adversity.
- **Example:** In some education systems, teachers receive little or no training on how to support students dealing with trauma, making it difficult for them to help students develop coping strategies.

Rigid and Test-Oriented Education Systems

- **Challenge:** Many education systems emphasize standardized testing and academic achievement, often at the expense of fostering creativity, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence—skills that are vital for building resilience. Test-oriented education can create a high-pressure environment that discourages risk-taking and stifles student engagement.
- **Impact:** When students are solely focused on achieving high-test scores, they may develop a fear of failure, which undermines their ability to cope with setbacks and challenges.
- **Example:** In high-stakes testing environments, students may feel overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed academically, leading to burnout and reduced capacity to handle adversity.

Cultural and Societal Expectations

- **Challenge:** In some cultures, societal expectations regarding success, failure, and emotional expression may hinder efforts to build resilience. For example, in cultures where academic success is highly prized, students may face pressure to excel at the expense of their emotional well-being.
- **Impact:** Cultural expectations can create environments where students feel isolated or unable to express their emotions, which limits their ability to build resilience. If societal norms discourage vulnerability, students may struggle to develop the coping strategies needed to navigate difficult situations.
- **Example:** In some parts of the world, there is a stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues, which can prevent students from accessing the resources they need to build resilience.

Digital Divide and Technological Challenges

- **Challenge:** In an increasingly digital world, access to technology is essential for modern education and building resilience. However, the digital divide—disparities in access to the internet, computers, and other technologies—can exacerbate existing inequalities and hinder efforts to promote resilience.
- **Impact:** Students without access to digital tools are at a disadvantage in terms of both learning and developing the digital literacy skills needed to navigate the challenges of a technology-driven society. This gap can also limit access to online mental health resources and SEL programs, which are critical for fostering resilience.
- **Example:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, students in rural or low-income areas who lacked access to reliable internet and devices faced significant disruptions to their education, making it harder for them to stay resilient during the crisis.

Parental and Community Involvement

- **Challenge:** When parents and communities are not actively engaged in supporting students' education, it becomes more difficult for schools to build resilience.
- **Impact:** Students benefit from a supportive environment both at home and in their communities. Without this support, they may struggle to cope with academic and personal challenges, reducing their capacity for resilience.
- **Example:** In some regions, parents may not have the resources or knowledge to support their children's education effectively, particularly when dealing with emotional or mental health issues.

Policy and Funding Issues

- ▶ Educational policies and funding priorities often do not prioritize resilience education. Limited funding can restrict the implementation of comprehensive resilience programs, professional development for teachers, and the provision of necessary resources and support systems
- ▶ **Impact on Resilience Building:** Without adequate policy support and financial investment, resilience education remains a low priority.

Educational Innovations for Societal Renewal

- Reimagining traditional educational models
- **Key Areas:**
 - STEAM Education
 - Sustainable Education
 - Lifelong Learning and Digital Literacy
 - Civic Education and Global Citizenship

Detailed Educational Innovations

► **STEAM Education**

- Integration of Arts with STEM
- Benefits: Creativity, critical thinking

► **Sustainable Education**

- Embedding environmental education
- Projects on sustainability and renewable energy

► **Lifelong Learning and Digital Literacy**

- Importance of continuous education and digital skills
- Adaptability to technological changes

► **Civic Education and Global Citizenship**

- Understanding democratic principles, human rights
- Promoting empathy and global responsibility

Integrating Educational Solutions for Societal Renewal

- Interdisciplinary learning
- Collaboration between sectors
- Inclusive policies and equitable access

The Role of Educational Policies and Programs

- Importance of policy frameworks
- Investment in inclusivity, innovation, sustainability
- Emphasis on civic education and global citizenship

Case Studies and Best Practices

➤ **Finland's Education System**

- Teacher autonomy, equitable access, student well-being

➤ **Kenya's Digital Learning Initiative**

- Digital literacy program, bridging the digital divide

➤ **Japan's Disaster Education**

- Disaster preparedness in curriculum

➤ **Colombia's Escuela Nueva**

- Student-centered learning in conflict-affected regions

Conclusion

- ▶ Building a resilient future requires societies to embrace the transformative power of education. By equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and values needed to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, education lays the foundation for societal renewal.
- ▶ **Summary:**
 - ▶ Education as the cornerstone of resilience and societal renewal
 - ▶ Importance of integrating educational solutions
 - ▶ Call to action for collective commitment.

Recommendations: Collaborative Approaches for a Resilient Future

- Public-Private Partnerships
- Community Involvement
- Global Cooperation
- Access to Technology
- Inclusive Education
- Gender Equality in Education
- Commitment to integrating educational solutions
- Empowering students as problem solvers and leaders
- Working together for a resilient and sustainable future.

- I sincerely appreciate the Faculty Management and the LOC for this timely topical conference. I wish you happy deliberations at this conference.
- Thanks and God bless you richly.

THANK YOU

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This material and other viable materials for self-improvement are available at <https://www.positivepsychology.org.ng/>