



Digital Literacy Programmes and Rural Youth Empowerment in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Three-Year Community Engagement Study

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Published: 19 October 2012 | **Received:** 30 June 2012 | **Accepted:** 18 September 2012

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18968079](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18968079)

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Abstract

Digital literacy programmes have emerged as a critical tool for empowering rural youth in developing countries, particularly in challenging socio-economic environments such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A comprehensive search strategy was employed using databases such as PubMed, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Studies published between and were included, with an emphasis on qualitative and mixed-methods studies focusing on rural youth in DRC. Data synthesis followed PRISMA guidelines. A key finding was the significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) in digital literacy skills among participants over a three-year period, indicating sustained learning outcomes despite initial challenges such as limited access to technology and resources. The review underscores the importance of community engagement, tailored training programmes, and supportive policy frameworks for effective rural youth empowerment through digital literacy initiatives in DRC. Future research should prioritise longitudinal studies with robust evaluation methods, promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, and integrate technology access support into programme design to enhance long-term impact. Model estimation used $\hat{\theta} = \underset{\theta}{\operatorname{argmin}} \{ \theta \} \operatorname{sumiell} (y_i, f\theta(\xi)) + \lambda l \operatorname{Vert} \theta r \operatorname{Vert} 2^2$, with performance evaluated using out-of-sample error.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, Digital Divide, Participatory Research, Empowerment Studies, Community-Based Education, Youth Development, ICT Accessiveness*

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