

THE ROLE OF SPATIAL EDUCATION THROUGH GEOGRAPHICAL LITERACY IN BUILDING THREAT AWARENESS TO MITIGATE NATIONAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria's interconnected and volatile security environment, national security increasingly depends on capacities beyond military hardware and intelligence. One such capacity is geographic literacy. This paper opines that geographic literacy, developed through deliberate spatial education, is a foundational element of threats awareness and, by extension, of effective national security strategy for Nigeria. Threats facing Nigeria are rarely confined to a single point. Insurgency in the Northeast exploits ungoverned spaces and porous borders with Niger and Chad. Banditry and kidnapping spread along transport corridors in the Northwest. Farmer-herder conflicts intensify over land and water scarcity in the Middle Belt. In each case, onset, diffusion, and impact are mediated by geography. Spatial education provides the cognitive tools to bridge this gap. It cultivates skills such as orientation, scale analysis, pattern recognition, and spatial reasoning. These skills enable individuals to interpret maps, geospatial data, and satellite imagery, and to connect physical and human geography to strategic outcomes. Yet spatial education in Nigeria remains marginalized, often reduced to memorization rather than analytical reasoning. This paper discusses the role of spatial education of threats awareness in addressing the geography literacy and national security in Nigeria. It opines that restoring spatial education as a strategic priority is necessary to strengthen national resilience. Recommendations include integrating spatial reasoning across subjects, expanding teacher training in geospatial technologies, and promoting public engagement with geographic data.

Keywords: National security, geographic literacy, spatial education, threats awareness

Introduction

Nigeria's security landscape is shaped by a complex geography of threats that are inherently spatial. From the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, to banditry and kidnapping along the Northwest forest corridors, to oil theft in the Niger Delta and farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt, the onset, spread, and impact of insecurity are mediated by location, terrain, and cross-border movement. These challenges are compounded by environmental stressors such as desertification in the Sahel fringe, flooding in the Niger-Benue basin, and coastal erosion in Lagos, which intensify competition over land and water and reinforce instability. Insecurity and insurgency have really hit Nigeria's education sector hard, especially in the North-East, North-West, and parts of the Middle Belt. It's not just "schools closing". the damage is structural, generational, and spatial. The Boko Haram destroyed 150-200 schools in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa since 2009. During the attack, classrooms, libraries, laboratories were burned. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] (2022) reported 11,000 schools closed for at least one year due to insecurity and over 1.3 million children were affected.

The consistent closure of schools due to insecurity has led to students' inability to conduct field study. Insecurity does not just interrupt schools and education system but reshapes who gets educated, where, and how well. Insecurity in Nigeria turned schools

from safe spaces into targets, creating a cycle like poor education, poverty, grievance, recruitment into insurgency to more attacks on education in Nigeria. However, to tackle insecurity in Nigeria completely it requires more than soldiers' physical combats, it needs safe school initiative, community policing, updated maps for security response, and psycho social support for students and teachers (Echeonwu, 2024), hence the need of spatial education.

Notwithstanding the reality of insecurity in Nigeria, spatial education and geographic literacy have been marginalized in Nigeria's education system. Geography is often taught as rote memorization rather than as a tool for spatial reasoning, leaving students and the public with limited capacity to interpret maps, analyze patterns, and connect place to risk. Nigerian secondary school students consistently perform poorly in Geography, especially in map work. West African Examination Council (WAEC) chief examiners' reports from 2008 to 2025 repeatedly flagged "poor map work" and "scanty explanation of points" as the main reasons students fail (Falode & Mohammed, 2023). Williams, Ubayo, and Dauda (2024) contend that revitalizing geography education is essential for political stability and national security in Nigeria, stating that "Geography is not just a 'nice to have' subject for an already crowded curriculum but it is also a tool for sustainable national development, political stability and security". Against the above backdrop, this paper examines the role of spatial education in building threats awareness for national security in Nigeria. It opines that geographic literacy is not an academic luxury but a strategic competency. Strengthening spatial education across schools, teacher training, and public engagement will enhance Nigeria's capacity to anticipate risks, interpret geospatial data, and respond decisively to insecurity in Nigeria.

National Security

National security is the protection of a nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and core values against internal and external threats. It encompasses military defense, political stability, economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and human security. In the contemporary global system, national security has expanded beyond traditional military concerns to include non-traditional threats such as cyberattacks, terrorism, pandemics, and climate change (Buzan, 2023; World Bank, 2024). The concept of national security is multidimensional and interdisciplinary, involving the coordination of various sectors such as defense, intelligence, diplomacy, and public policy. It includes both hard security (military force, defense systems) and soft security (economic stability, social cohesion, and governance). Modern scholars emphasize a human-centered approach, arguing that the safety and well-being of citizens are central to national security strategies (United Nations Development Programme UNDP, 2024; Baldwin, 2023). Collins (2024) defines national security as "the capacity of a state to protect its citizens, institutions, and way of life from military and non-military threats, including economic, societal, cyber, and environmental risks.

Contextually, national security is the ability of the state to protect citizens from violent threats, economic exclusion, and ideological manipulation, so that young people have legitimate pathways to livelihood and citizenship instead of extremism. National security consists of several interrelated components. They include military security which protects against external aggression, economic security which ensures stable economic growth and resource availability, political security which safeguards governance systems and environmental security which addresses climate-related risks (Nye, 2023). National threats include traditional threats such as interstate wars and military invasions, while non-traditional threats include terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime, pandemics, and environmental degradation. In recent years, asymmetric threats such as insurgency and

hybrid warfare have become more prominent, requiring adaptive and integrated security strategies (Global Security Review, 2024; World Health Organization, 2023). In Nigeria, national security is a major concern due to challenges such as insurgency such as Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, and communal conflicts. The government has adopted various measures including military operations, intelligence coordination, and community-based security initiatives (Ministry of Defence, 2023). However, scholars argue that addressing root causes such as poverty, unemployment, and weak governance is essential for sustainable security (Onuoha, 2024; Nigerian Ministry of Defence, 2023). National security is crucial for national development, political stability, and citizens' well-being. A secure nation attracts investment, promotes economic growth, and ensures social order. Without security, development efforts are undermined, and the quality of life deteriorates. Therefore, national security is considered a foundational element of state survival and progress. (World Economic Forum, 2024; United Nations Security Council, 2023 (Onuoha, Onuoha, Ogu & Nwawube, 2024). Additionally, cybersecurity has become increasingly important due to the digitalization of national infrastructures (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024).

Geographic Literacy

Geographic literacy connotes a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, values, and competencies that enable individuals to understand spatial relationships, interpret geographic information, and make informed decisions about real-world issues. It involves the ability to understand, process, and apply geographic data in different contexts, rather than merely knowing locations or places (Palacios Mena, Garcia Monteagudo & Cortes Salguero, 2026). This modern conception positions geographic literacy as a critical skill for navigating complex global systems and addressing contemporary societal challenges. Contextually, geographic literacy is the ability of citizens, especially youth, to understand Nigeria's physical, human, and security geography, and to use that understanding to make decisions on safety, livelihood, migration, climate risk, and community resilience. A fundamental component of geographic literacy is spatial or geographical thinking, which refers to the cognitive ability to analyze spatial patterns, relationships, and interactions across different scales. It enables individuals to "think like a geographer" by applying key concepts such as location, scale, and interdependence in analyzing phenomena (Bendl, 2025). The integration of geospatial technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) further strengthens spatial thinking by enhancing visualization, analysis, and problem-solving capabilities in geography education (Bondarenko, 2025). Another essential dimension of geographic literacy is the understanding of human environmental interaction, which examines the reciprocal relationship between human activities and natural systems. Contemporary research highlights that geographic literacy equips individuals with the ability to critically assess global challenges such as climate change, globalization, and environmental degradation, thereby supporting sustainable decision-making (Bendl, 2025). This dimension underscores the relevance of geographic literacy in promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability.

Geographic literacy also enhances global awareness and decision-making ability in an interconnected world. It involves using geographic understanding and reasoning to make informed decisions that improve quality of life, reduce conflicts, and support sustainable development (National Geographic Society, 2024). Thus, it fosters informed citizenship by enabling individuals to understand global interdependence, cultural diversity, and geopolitical dynamics. Furthermore, geographic literacy plays a crucial role in education and skill development, particularly in fostering critical thinking and problem-

solving abilities among learners. Recent studies show that innovative teaching strategies such as problem-based learning significantly improve students' geographic literacy skills by engaging them in real-world problem-solving situations (Nurdessyanah, Maryani & Sapriya, 2025). This highlights the importance of integrating interactive and learner-centered approaches in geography education. Finally, geographic literacy is essential for national development and policy-making, as it supports effective planning, resource management, and informed decision-making. It enables individuals, including future teachers and professionals, to develop competencies necessary for addressing societal and environmental challenges (Utami, Widodo, Prabawati, Zain & Prastiyono, 2026; de Miguel González, 2024). In this regard, geographic literacy is increasingly recognized as a key in 21st-century skill for sustainable development and global competitiveness.

The major challenge confronting national security efforts is the poor level of geographic literacy among students and citizens. Geographic literacy involves understanding locations, spatial relationships, environmental patterns, and the ability to interpret maps and geographic information. Many learners possess limited spatial-thinking skills, making it difficult for them to understand the geographical dimensions of security threats such as terrorism, kidnapping banditry, flooding, border crimes, and communal conflicts. Research has shown that spatial thinking and geographic knowledge are critical for identifying risks, understanding vulnerable locations, and making informed decisions regarding hazards and security challenges (Bondarenko, 2025). Currently security threats have become increasingly spatial in nature. Issues such as insurgency, kidnapping, illegal migration, climate-induced disasters, and trans boundary crimes are influenced by geographical factors such as: terrain, accessibility, population distribution, and environmental conditions. However, many citizens lack the spatial awareness necessary to recognize these threats within their immediate environment. Consequently, communities often respond to threats reactively rather than proactively, thereby undermining national security efforts. Despite the growing importance of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and spatial technologies in disaster management and security operations, their integration into school curricula remains inadequate. Geography instruction in many schools still relies heavily on theoretical approaches with limited opportunities for practical geospatial analysis. Studies indicate that GIS-based learning significantly improves students' disaster-risk awareness, spatial reasoning, and ability to relate geographic factors to real-world threats. Nevertheless, many educational institutions lack the resources, infrastructure, and trained personnel required for effective GIS instruction. A nation's territorial boundaries constitute a fundamental component of its sovereignty. Geographic literacy enables security agencies to understand border locations, terrain characteristics, transportation routes, and population movements. Such knowledge is essential for preventing illegal migration, smuggling, trafficking, and infiltration by criminal or terrorist groups (Collins, 2023).

In Nigeria, porous borders with neighboring countries have facilitated the movement of arms and insurgents. Geographic knowledge helps security agencies in identifying vulnerable border areas and implementing surveillance measures (Akinyemi & Ogunleye, 2024). Modern intelligence operations depend heavily on spatial information. Geographic literacy helps intelligence personnel analyze maps, satellite imagery, and geospatial data to identify potential threats and security hotspots or crises prone zone. The use of GIS and remote sensing technologies allows security agencies to monitor insurgent movements, identify terrorist camps, and track criminal activities in difficult terrains (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023). Geographic literacy therefore strengthens national intelligence capabilities. Natural disasters such as floods,

droughts, earthquakes, and disease outbreaks can threaten national security by causing loss of lives, displacement, and economic disruption. Geographic literacy helps emergency managers understand hazard-prone areas and develop mitigation strategies. For example, flood mapping and vulnerability assessments enable authorities to identify communities at risk and implement evacuation plans before disasters occur (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2023). Effective disaster management contributes significantly to national security and resilience. In Nigeria's North-East region, understanding the geography of the Lake Chad Basin and Sambisa Forest has been crucial in military operations against insurgent groups (Akinyemi & Ogunleye, 2024). Geographic knowledge therefore enhances strategic planning and operational effectiveness. Environmental degradation, climate change, desertification, and resource scarcity can generate conflicts and insecurity. Geographic literacy enables policymakers to understand environmental changes and their implications for national stability. In northern Nigeria, desertification and shrinking water resources have contributed to conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. Geographic analysis helps identify vulnerable areas and supports sustainable resource management strategies (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2024).

Military operations depend heavily on geographic information. Knowledge of terrain, weather conditions, transportation routes, and population distribution influences troop deployment, logistics, and combat effectiveness. For Nigeria to address its security challenges effectively, geographic literacy should be integrated into educational curricula at all levels. Schools should emphasize map-reading skills, spatial analysis, GIS applications, and environmental studies. Security agencies should also invest in geospatial technologies and specialized geographic training. Furthermore, collaboration among educational institutions, security agencies, and research organizations can improve the use of geographic information in security planning and decision-making. Such efforts would strengthen Nigeria's capacity to address emerging threats and promote sustainable development.

Spatial Education

Spatial Education refers to teaching and learning activities that develop spatial thinking, geographic literacy, cartographic skills, and the use of geospatial technologies. It equips learners with the ability to interpret maps, analyze spatial relationships, use GIS software, and understand how human activities interact with the physical environment (National Geographic Society, 2023). According to Goodchild (2020), spatial education enables individuals understand location, distance, direction, distribution, and movement patterns, which are critical for solving real-world problems. In the modern world, spatial education extends beyond traditional geography to include advanced technologies such as satellite imagery, drones, GIS, and remote sensing. Spatial education is the structured process of teaching and learning how spatial relationships, locations, patterns, and interactions between physical and human phenomena are understood and interpreted within geographical space. It emphasizes the development of spatial thinking skills that enable learners to visualize, analyze, and reason about the arrangement of objects and events on the Earth's surface (Bednarz & Kemp, 2019; National Research Council, 2022).

Spatial education is rooted in the broader concept of spatial thinking, which involves three key elements: spatial concepts (such as distance, direction, scale, and region), tools of representation (such as maps, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and globes), and processes of reasoning (such as analyzing patterns and relationships). These elements work together to help learners interpret spatial data and solve real-world problems (Jo & Bednarz, 2020; Kim & Bednarz, 2023). A central component of spatial education is spatial literacy, which refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and use

spatial information effectively in everyday life. Spatial literacy equips learners with the skills to navigate environments, interpret maps, and make informed decisions based on spatial data, which is increasingly important in a technologically driven world (Goodchild, 2020). Furthermore, spatial education plays a critical role in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. By engaging with spatial data and geographic tools, learners develop the capacity to analyze environmental issues such as climate change, urbanization, and resource distribution. This makes spatial education highly relevant to sustainable development and global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2022).

In the context of classroom practice, spatial education involves the use of interactive and distribution. This makes spatial education highly relevant to sustainable development and global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2022). In the context of classroom practice, spatial education involves the use of interactive and experiential teaching methods such as map reading, fieldwork, geospatial technologies, and visualization exercises. Teachers are encouraged to integrate digital tools like GIS, remote sensing, and GPS to enhance students' understanding of spatial relationships and real-world applications (Heffron & Downs, 2019; Esri Education, 2024). Moreover, spatial education has interdisciplinary applications, extending beyond geography to fields such as urban planning, environmental science, public health, and transportation studies. The integration of spatial thinking across disciplines supports innovation and informed decision-making in both academic and professional contexts (Battersby, Golledge, & Marsh, 2021; Goodchild, 2020). Spatial education is a fundamental component of modern education that equips learners with essential skills for understanding and interacting with the world. Its emphasis on spatial thinking, representation, and analysis makes it indispensable in addressing contemporary global challenges and in promoting informed, spatially aware citizens (National Research Council, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Spatial Education helps in tackling national insecurity. In Nigeria, security challenges such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, border insecurity, illegal migration, and environmental hazards have increased the need for effective security strategies.

The increasing complexity of security threats in Nigeria requires a population that is geographically literate and capable of understanding spatial patterns of crime, conflict, environmental risks, and resource distribution. Spatial education therefore plays a critical role in enhancing national security by supporting intelligence gathering, border management, disaster preparedness, environmental monitoring, and strategic planning (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2023). Many conflicts in Nigeria arise from disputes over land, resources, and territorial boundaries. Spatial education provides tools for mapping disputed areas and analyzing patterns of conflict. Accurate spatial data can help policymakers and community leaders understand the root causes of conflicts and design appropriate interventions. GIS-based conflict mapping has become an important tool for peacebuilding and conflict resolution (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). When citizens, especially youth, are spatially educated, they can identify, interpret, and respond to security threats more effectively. Many Nigerian security threats are tied to land, water, and minerals. Spatial education helps citizens understand how environmental change alters settlement, migration, and competition for resources, reducing the likelihood of being manipulated into conflict. Furthermore, threats like terrorism, banditry, flooding, or disease outbreak is not random, they cluster in specific locations. A spatially educated person can read conflict maps, flood-risk zones, or IDP camp locations. In Nigeria, International Crisis Group shows that Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks and banditry follow distinct borderland and forest corridors, knowing "where" danger is, reduces exposure.

Many conflicts in Nigeria arise from disputes over land, resources, and territorial boundaries. Spatial education provides tools for mapping disputed areas and analyzing patterns of conflict. Accurate spatial data can help policymakers and community leaders understand the root causes of conflicts and design appropriate interventions. GIS-based conflict mapping has become an important tool for peacebuilding and conflict resolution (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). Rapid urbanization has created security challenges in many Nigerian cities, including crime, traffic congestion, and informal settlements. Spatial education supports urban planning through the use of GIS and spatial analysis. Security agencies can identify crime hotspots, optimize patrol routes, and improve emergency response systems. Such applications contribute significantly to urban security management (World Bank, 2024).

Environmental degradation, climate change, desertification, and resource scarcity can trigger social unrest and insecurity. Spatial education helps monitor environmental changes and assess their security implications. Through remote sensing and GIS, researchers and policymakers can identify vulnerable regions and develop sustainable environmental management strategies that reduce security risks (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2023). Military organizations rely heavily on spatial knowledge for planning and executing operations. Spatial education provides military personnel with skills in terrain analysis, navigation, reconnaissance, and geospatial intelligence. Accurate spatial information improves operational effectiveness and reduces risks during military engagements (NATO Geospatial Office, 2023).

Threat Awareness

Threats awareness is the capacity of individuals and institutions to identify, assess, and understand potential hazards military, criminal, environmental, or ideological before they cause harm (Collins, 2024). It is treated as the first stage of risk management. UNDP (2024) in its Human Security Report frames threats awareness as “knowledge of risks that affect freedom from fear and freedom from want, including violent conflict, climate shocks, economic exclusion, and misinformation.” The emphasis is on everyday risks, not just war. Contextually, threat awareness is the ability of an individuals to recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately to potential dangers within their environment. In Nigeria, threats awareness is the ability of citizens, especially youth, to recognize security, economic, and environmental risks in their immediate environment, and to make informed decisions that reduce vulnerability to violence, extremism, and displacement. Most students and community members exhibit low levels of awareness regarding disaster risks and security threats because they lack adequate spatial education. Recent evidence demonstrates that GIS-supported geography education significantly enhances learners' awareness of hazards and disaster risks by helping them understand the relationship between place, environment, and vulnerability.

Modern security agencies increasingly rely on geospatial technologies such as GIS, remote sensing, satellite imagery, and digital mapping for surveillance, intelligence gathering, and disaster management. However, these technologies are not widely utilized within educational institutions. The limited exposure of students to geospatial technologies reduces their capacity to develop the spatial competencies required for effective threat recognition and national security participation. Studies have identified inadequate teacher training, poor infrastructure, and curriculum limitations as major barriers to GIS implementation in school although geography provides important knowledge about territorial boundaries, environmental risks, population movements, and resource distribution, its role in national security remains underappreciated. Educational policies often fail to explicitly connect geographic literacy with security consciousness and threat

preparedness. This disconnect limits the potential contribution of Geography Education to national resilience and security awareness among citizens. Geographic literacy is the ability to interpret, and use geographic information to make informed decisions about people, places, environments, and spatial relationships. It encompasses knowledge of physical geography, human geography, map-reading skills, spatial thinking, and the use of geospatial technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing. In an increasingly interconnected world, geographic literacy has become a critical component of national development and security. Nations face numerous security challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, border conflicts, cyber threats, environmental disasters, and transnational crimes, all of which have significant spatial dimensions (Bednarz, Heffron & Huynh, 2022). The paper opines that security cannot be left to the military and law enforcement alone. Instead, it proposes that knowledge itself, particularly spatial and geographic knowledge, can serve as a preventive line for defense. More so, the paper also opines that spatial education should be treated as part of Nigeria's counter-violent extremism and national resilience strategy (NCTC). When students can read a security map, understand why displacement occurs, or verify false claims about territory, they are less likely to be recruited or caught unaware by violence, climate shocks, or misinformation.

Conclusion

Geography literacy serves as a critical foundation for national security by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand spatial relationships, environmental dynamics, and geopolitical realities. Through geography education, learners develop spatial awareness, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities that are essential for identifying, analyzing, and responding to security threats. In an era characterized by complex challenges such as terrorism, border insecurity, climate change, resource conflicts, and natural disasters, geographical knowledge has become increasingly indispensable. The integration of modern geospatial technologies and security-related content into geography education can significantly strengthen national preparedness and resilience. By fostering spatially informed citizens and professionals, geography education contributes to effective decision-making, threat detection, disaster management, and sustainable national development. Therefore, governments, educational institutions, and security stakeholders must prioritize geography literacy as a strategic component of national security policy and practice.

The paper concludes that national security in Nigeria must be re-conceptualized to include education as a security strategy. Integrating spatial education geographic literacy into curriculum, teaching, and Preventive and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) frame work is not academic exercise. It is a security investment. By building a generation that understands where threats exist why they cluster in certain spaces, and how respond, Nigeria strengthens its capacity to prevent, prepare for, and mitigate insecurity from the ground up. Ultimately, through geographic literacy, individuals become conscious about threat awareness to identify, assess, and respond to risks before they escalate. A population that is spatially educated and threats-aware acts as a human buffer: avoid high-risk areas, rejecting extremist manipulation, and providing credible local intelligence. This complements kinetic security operations and addresses the root causes that military force alone cannot solve.

Recommendation

First, spatial education should be integrated into the national curriculum at all levels. At present, many Nigerian learners complete secondary and tertiary education without the ability to read a map, interpret spatial data, or understand how location

influences conflict and risk. By embedding map literacy, GIS fundamentals, and spatial reasoning into Geography, Social Studies, and Civic Education, the country can build a generation that thinks in terms of space and place. This is important because insecurity is often experienced as an abstract fear until it becomes personal.

Second, geographic literacy must be mainstreamed into PCVE and community resilience programmes. The National Counter Terrorism Centre's PCVE framework already targets root causes such as unemployment and misinformation, but it rarely includes a spatial component (NCTC mapping). For example, if a community can map known bandit routes, unsafe markets, or recruitment hotspots, members can make safer mobility and livelihood decisions. This shifts PCVE from general sensitization to practical, place-based action, and it gives communities a shared spatial understanding of risk (EU Delegation, 2024).

Third, the capacity of teachers and security actors should be strengthened on threats awareness. Teachers are knowledge multipliers, while security personnel make daily decisions that depend on spatial information. However, both groups often lack training in spatial threat analysis. A Geography teacher who understands how desertification drives herder mobility can teach students to anticipate resource conflict.

Fourth, technology should be used to democratize access to spatial information. In many rural and peri-urban areas, misinformation about territory spreads faster than verified maps. Extremist groups use false claims about borders and control to radicalize vulnerable youth. To counter this, government and tech hubs should develop mobile, offline, local-language applications that provide verified maps of security risks, flood zones, safe travel corridors, and essential services. These platforms do not need to be complex. Even simple interactive maps that communities can update will reduce the information asymmetry that fuels insecurity. By placing verified spatial data in the hands of ordinary citizens, Nigeria reduces the ability of non-state actors to control narratives about space.

Fifth, spatial education should be linked directly to livelihoods and environmental management. Many of Nigeria's security threats are rooted in competition over land, water, and jobs. Desertification pushes herders southward, unemployment creates recruitment pools, and poorly planned resource use intensifies conflict (UNDP, 2024)

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