Beyond Lunch Money: Teenagers Mastering Digital Money

Thousands of teenagers are increasingly using digital money services to receive money, make payments and save for future needs. As digital finance becomes part of everyday life in homes and schools across Kenya, financial experts are urging young people to learn how to use these services safely and responsibly. The growing use of digital money among teenagers has sparked discussion about both its benefits and risks that come with easy access to financial services.

For basic necessities, majority of Kenyan youth rely on digital currency. Bus fares, lunch money, pocket money or emergency funds are sent through mobile money. When airtime or data runs out, some use e-loans to make up the difference. Beyond spending, more people are learning to set goals, such as purchasing a new book or funding a school trip and saving modest sums of money.

Mobile money is already a part of life for Kenyan teenagers; the question is whether it will become a tool for self-reliance or increase debt for the users. Preparation is the key to power. Young people should set a savings goal, no matter how small, keep track of every shilling they borrow or receive and never consider an overdraft as "free money." It is important to encourage adults to have honest conversations about digital finance with youth. A generation that saves early and borrows sensibly will not only survive the digital economy, but also lead it. The phone is our wallet and a learning tool.