



FRONTLINE
YOUTH CREATIVITY
INITIATIVE



Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

An e-magazine with FYCI's **World Youth Skills Day
Competition** entries

Short Stories | Poetry | Essays



Frontline Youth Creativity Initiative



@fycinitiative



www.fyci.org



About the Magazine

BACKGROUND

In commemoration of **World Youth Skills Day 2022**, Frontline Youth Creativity Initiative launched a competition to give young people an opportunity to demonstrate their creative writing skills. Participants were tasked to write short creative pieces on the theme “Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria”.

The competition was aimed at the following:

- Giving young people an opportunity to showcase their skills
- Harnessing youth creativity into positive messaging
- Stimulating discourse around youth political participation ahead of the 2023 elections

We received 69 entries from participants in 21 states across Nigeria. Entries were assessed according to the following criteria:

- Powerful messaging focused on promoting youth political participation
- High level of creativity and innovation
- Strong writing skills

As the 2023 general elections in Nigeria are fast approaching, this magazine compiles all entries into the competition to further generate discussions around youth political participation.

WINNING ENTRIES

We initially sought to select five winners, but we were so impressed by the quality of entries that we increased the number of winners to six. Two winners were selected in each category – short story, poetry, and essay – making a total of six winners.

Winners in the short story category:

- Toriola Basit Opeyemi – Yellow Trumpet (page 2)
- Chinonso Marymartin Okoabu – Changing the Rhythm (page 3)

Winners in the poetry category:

- Isidinma Nnamdi – I am the Nigerian Youth (page 11)
- Deborah Chinwendu Anukwu – Sweet Melodies that Resonate (page 12)

Winners in the essay category:

- John Adinoyi Victor – We the Youth! (page 21)
- Emmanuel Victor Oziegbe – Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria (page 22)

Learn more about the winning entries on bit.ly/youthskillsdaywinners.



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SHORT STORIES



WINNER

Yellow Trumpet

Toriola Basit Opeyemi



Papa's thick baritone voice suited his fat belly well. Whenever he's with his friends slurping dry gin and smoked mackerel, it often seems to me that he was the more upbeat, more waggish one.

"Instead of pestering us here, don't you think your slum regeneration ideas would be better at the local secretariat?" one of his friends had once shot at him.

Papa didn't understand why his friends think he'd be a fit for Makoko chieftaincy. He didn't like the idea and he didn't hide it - his downright apathy for politics - from anybody.

"You think politics is for us... young men? Do you even think I'll ever get my hands on that dirty game? Tufiakwa!!," he had spurted back while snapping his fingers over his head.

During that year's dry season, Nigeria whimpered in dystopia. Prices of commodities, even garri, soared. Everybody complained. Makoko streets started drying up. More kids strapped in tattered pants were on the streets rolling old bicycle tyres. Some of them ran after real bicycles. Women spent more time roasting fishes, gasping smoke through every inch of their skin. Men, even Papa, stopped being idle. They opened vulcanizing shops downtown and started pumping bicycle tyres. And at night, whenever their wives abandon them on cold beds, they cuddle their pillows and foolhardily rain curses on the government.

"When, for God's sake, did our men become so sooo wide-eyed? Even you, Emeka of all people... ehn. The one we voted 4 years ago. What did it bring us?" I heard one market man lament.

"Maazi... I see you still have this your trust issues. Look, we can't just fold our arms. Besides, INEC is automating everything. We should have high hopes that the election would be fairer than 1983's," the other man gently said. In between his pauses, he gauged with his mangled hands two Tilapia fishes, lifting them up and throwing them sometimes.

The few rich men in Makoko did not engage in these kinds of talks. Perhaps it's because the roars of youths on the streets do not, in any way, alter their lives. If anything at all goes awry, it's easy for them to shut their tall gates, power their generators, and still keep minding their businesses. How disheartening!

At home, Papa added the recession to his list of excuses. When I remind him of my school fees, he'd drape one arm across his paunch and tell me, "Nwa, you see your Mama's crayfish business is not going well, and the ministry has refused to pay grandpa's pension."

When it's lunch I ask him, he'd point at one of the kids outside kicking dry lumps of sand and say to me in hushed tones, "that's my friend's son. He's not eaten, but he's playing. You should join him."

Soon, brown brooms crammed the street. Perhaps it was time for a change. Politicians danced along the street to hip-hop. On the TVs and radios, they rained down on us promises. Market women raised red-green umbrellas up and up. News later reached us that some these women had sold their priceless voter's card for ten thousand and fifty naira.

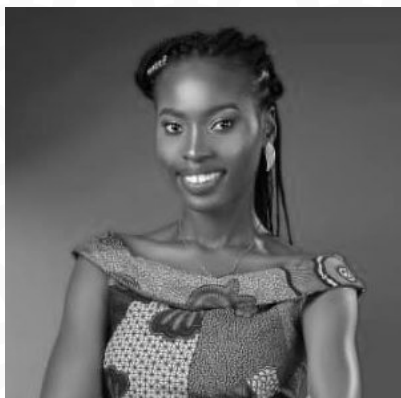
One night, under a pale moon, my teary young red eyes wobbled and wobbled around as though searching for where my country had lost it. I took a second look, closer this time, at the sprouting yellow trumpet flower careening gently to the sea breeze just at my feet, and asked her, "when will I become 18?"



WINNER

Changing the Rhythm

Chinonso Marymartin Okoabu



An uproar descended upon St. Stephen's Catholic church. It shook the walls of the small building, threatening the sacredness of the Holy Mass. But, one thing stood

out, at the centre of the sanctuary- the unsmiling face of Fr. Okigwe, the parish priest.

"Ana m eme egwureegwu? Am I cracking jokes?"

Nervousness slowly gripped the church at the gruff voice of the parish priest, sending the members into a sudden silence, just as the noisy excitement had started.

Parishioners shifted on the pews, and nursing mothers held their babies, closer to their underarms, as if to make them understand the need for the silence. At the centre of the church, a straight-faced Nkechi focused on the moving lips of Fr. Okigwe. The embarrassment of the parishioners sat heavily on her cheeks. The tears stung the corners of her eyes and something hot moved in her abdomen, threatening to crawl out of her tightly-clenched thighs. Why did they laugh? Didn't they know they were not supposed to make noise during Mass? Father Okigwe never joked, not even outside the Mass, he even banned clapping within the Sacrifice.

"What's funny?" Father took his right arm up and passed the microphone to the left, his chasuble following the movement. Is it funny that only 20 youths here have their PVC? What's wrong with the youths of this day? Is this how you want to become leaders of tomorrow? Tell me? Are you satisfied with how the country is?" Father Okigwe was close to screaming.

Shame washed over Nkechi, tightening the muscles of her abdomen. Father was nowhere done.

"Do you all prefer to lament without action? Youths, it's time for action! It's time to change the story! And it's a must! No one should come for communion without his or her PVC from next month except you're a child. Ekwugo m." He turned swiftly, the chasuble billowing in the air- straight to the altar of Sacrifice and began preparation for the liturgy of the Eucharist. The Mass continued in a tense silence afterward.

Father's steaming face and oversized chasuble remained glued in Nkechi's head as she took the long walk home after the close of Mass.

The next day, Nkechi couldn't leave the house. Her period had started. She remained in bed all day, reading Chimamanda's "Half of a Yellow Sun" and chewing bitter kola to ease nausea. Tuesday, her sister informed her the youths of the village were registering at the Igwe's palace. The Igwe had invited the registration officers. She never knew about these things. Nkechi left very early that Tuesday morning to meet a large crowd at the palace. She was the 100th person on the list. Parishioners of St. Stephen's church were there. The youths were in their numbers. She strolled to a quiet place and sat under a tree to wait for her turn.

It was 6:00 pm when Nkechi started for home. She hadn't been able to start her registration. The people complained of a poor network. They, however, got to the 90th person on the list.

I will make sure to arrive earlier. She mused.

As Nkechi neared home, her ears picked the conversation of two girls a few feet from her.

"I thank God I have done this. That professor no try. How can he ask us not to submit assignments without PVC?"

"But that's a smart move," the other girl said. "Professor Chima Offor is not a bad man. "This has made us get our PVC, you see?"

Nkechi smiled. She needed to tell her father he was smart.



It's Youth O'clock

Othman Amina



The sounds of the droplets of water on the roof continued, It kept on sounding like the seconds of a clock

Tick-Tock, Tick-Tok...

Grandma was facing the window, She sat down there for hours facing the window since the rain started.

And today is my 18th birthday, but grandma only wished me a happy birthday and also said some prayers but something was different today, She was cold and had sat down there all by herself.

I sat down on the stool watching her back but didn't utter a word for the fact that today is my birthday and grandma is not in a delightful mood kept me shivering in my thoughts, While there was silence all over the room.

Oh lord I miss my groovy grandma when she will gather me and friends from the neighborhood to tell us fascinating tales by moonlight.

Grandma clears throat and said;

Now that the rain has settled the dust! it is time, grandma is 92 years old and she is a brave woman, I have learnt a lot from her, she always told me to stay true to myself and be the best version of me.

She called my name in a stiff manner, Nandi, Yes grandma I replied

She continued, I want you to give me all your attention and listen to me carefully and attentively.

Look at you my girl, you have turned 18 today and I am so proud of the woman you are becoming, you see this is my 92 years on earth, I have seen Nigeria

in different forms, different shades and different ways.

My eyes are sunken,

I have wrinkles on my face,

My hair turned grey, all this cannot happen for no reason I have seen life, I am old, I have past through experiences

But regardless of the present situations happening in Nigeria, Nigeria has been a great country and forever will be even if it looks like one nation bound in freedom is now bounded in insecurity, our educational system slowly sinking into dregs, hardship becoming our daily dose...yet we are not supposed to give up at this point.

Nandi my dear, Remember I always told you to be strong, be the voice of the voiceless, never give up, life they say is a swinging pendulum, you have to keep trying no matter what, as long as you can still breathe, there is hope, hope they say is the ability to hear the music of the future.

Nigeria has lost the real orators, those that fought for our decolonization, they had no selfish interest what they had and showed was the love for all, they fought tirelessly, regardlessly and endlessly

The likes of Anthony Enahoro, Obafemi Awolowo, Dennis Osadebey, Tafawa Balewa, Nnamdi Azikwe, Samuel Akintola and many more...

They didn't waste their prime ages procrastinating, they were active youths, they fought for our interest beyond all underestimation, they never relent unlike most of the leaders we have now that believes in passing down generational wealth to their families.

Nandi, Regardless of the situations do not feel weak, there is hope, I see so much potentials in you,

You are young

You are energetic

Go out and educate your fellow peers, friends, families, let them know that;



It is time we wash away the layers of procrastination
venturing into our circle

Tell them there is power in our thumbs

Tell them to stop selling their birth rights

Encourage them to go get permanent voters card

That is the key to promote vital change

Encourage them to go in search for knowledge

Tell them their sophistication can bend metals like
petals

Tell them to disown that apathy

Encourage them to build their enthusiasm

Tell them to keep evolving until they begin to re-
solve

Be a patriotic representative of Nigeria

Because you are Nigeria and Nigeria is you

You can change the narrative

Change begins with you.

Promoting Youth Political Participa- tion in Nigeria

Oladimeji Oluwakemisola Daniella



“On today’s episode of politics in Nigeria, we would be focusing on youth political participation in Nigeria and its reality” the anchorman, Mr Babalola Samson said as I watched my favourite news sta-

tion ‘Arise TV’.

Mr Babalola beamed from ear to ear as he turned to Miss Chioma Adegboro, the leader of the Youth:

one voice group. “Miss Chioma, you are highly welcomed and we appreciate you for accepting our requests and joining us today to discuss the issue

of youth participation in politics in Nigeria and its reality, so what’s your view on this issue”

“Thanks for having me. First of all, I will define the word ‘youth’. The word youth is associated with vibrancy, innovation, creativeness, knowledge, energy, hope and so many more and not what our culture has defined youths to be as ‘inexperienced’ and ‘nuisances’. Most youths in Nigeria are willing to be represented in the decision-making process of the country but they have been denied this access by so many wrong stereotype beliefs, before I go into the depth of the topic I will give a definition of youths by the Nigerian Youth Policy, ‘youths are those within the age of 18 and 35’. Youths have been regarded as the leaders of tomorrow but are still largely underrepresented in politics”

“They face different stumbling blocks in their quest to participate in politics of which are, but not limited to; Age restriction, age has been a major problem youths have been facing in the country. The law placed the age ‘18’ to be the valid age to vote but also placed the age for running for elections at ‘40’ until the recent changes due to a youth movement in 2018, which resulted in the adoption of the ‘NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN BILL’ which provides for the reduction of age for the house of representatives and the house of assembly from 30–25, senate and governorship from 35–30 and president from 40–30 years of age. Also, the issue of political apathy, lots of youths have lost interest in politics. Recently I asked my friend if she was going to vote and she responded ‘what is the need to vote or come out to campaign when at the end of the day, it is the ones *who know who* that will win.’ I was short of words because of how her expression carried her words and I thought to myself that there are a lot of youths with the same mindset as my friend. Some have lost the zeal; some others believe that they cannot represent a country that sheds people’s blood daily.”

“Lastly, youths are faced with the problems of poor educational system, unemployment, poor utilities etc. and these make some youth indifferent towards politics. The issue of high-priced nomination



forms. This year APC set their presidential form for their primaries to be 100 million naira. This creates obstacles in the participation of youths in politics." While Miss Chioma spoke, I told myself that there are lots of hurdles which youths face but I wouldn't let that stop me. Miss Chioma's words made me realise that if we don't stand up and fight for good governance by voting and coming out to be represented politically, the issues we face will keep increasing. If Akomolafe Bankole age 29 can win Ekiti state house of rep. election, then most youths can. I am a final year student but I have been at home for 2 years while some of my mates are already working, so I wouldn't let this system continue. So, I said out loud "Nigeria, be ready for the emergence of the youths, we are ready"

What We Really Think

Olutade Oluwabiya



A bunch of adults are arguing outside about coming Presidential elections and I can't help but roll my eyes. I hear the same thing over and over again. President Bukari is bad, the economy is bad, candidate

Tinuke has shaking hands and we should be obedient. Nothing new and nothing useful.

"Biya, are they fighting outside?"

I turn my attention to my group of friends. It's my birthday and many of them have come to celebrate with me.

I shake my head. "Nothing serious oh. Just the adults arguing about Politics again."

Mary rolls her eyes. "Oh please. All the adults tell us about Politics is how the government is bad and what not."

I nod in agreement and so do the others.

"Apparently" John chirps in. "Tinuke has a Muslim running mate and the people are angry."

"Isn't that supposed to be unlawful? Madam law; there should be some kind of law against having two Muslims running" Glory says referring to me.

I bite my lip and try to recall. After a few seconds, I reply.

"It's more of a convention than a law. Just so there would be peace and equal representation, that is the way it has been for years."

"Ahan. Biya, you seem to know about Politics oh." Glory remarks.

I laugh. "I know a thing or two from the **Political topics covered in our course content**"

Just then, Ada emerges from the kitchen with a can of soda in one hand and her phone in the other.

"Ada, watch your step before you fall. You're always on social media"

"Which Youth isn't on **social media** these days?" she asks as she settles in a chair. "Ehen, have you guys gotten your PVC?"

We all shake our head. It isn't a surprise. Youth's aren't particularly thrilled about the spending their time to get PVC's when our votes don't even count.

"What's the use in getting a PVC when the results are already decided beforehand?" Ekene says bitterly.

"It isn't. I think that's just a fallacy adults believe and want us to believe too." she replies. "Come and see this **ad that keeps popping up on my social media.**"

We gather around her to watch the ad.

"It's Wizkid" John notes with excitement. The only people youths want to listen to these days are **celebrities and influencers.**

In the ad, Wizkid explains to us how every vote matters. He explains the importance of youth participation and tells us that we all have a role to play in making Nigeria better. Voting was one of them.

After the ad, we all stare at each other thoughtfully.



"I guess it won't hurt to at least get the voters card first." I say.

"I think so too. I mean, it's Wizkid, I'll do anything he says" John says with a bright smile.

"Try passing your exams first mumu" Glory jokes, cracking all of us up, except of course John himself.

"But wait " Aisha, who has been silent all this time says. "Let's say I suddenly have interest in politics, is there a place where I can get information about it? Like updates on the candidates, tenure statistics and other related information"

"There is this **information and consultation website for Nigerian Politics.**" John says. "So all political information is just one click away."

"That's nice. The **easier it is to access information,** the more willing I'll be to participate."

"What of the news?" I suggest.

"They only invite elderly people for **political conversations.** It makes me feel like our opinions don't even matter."

He was Right

Susanne Emmanuel



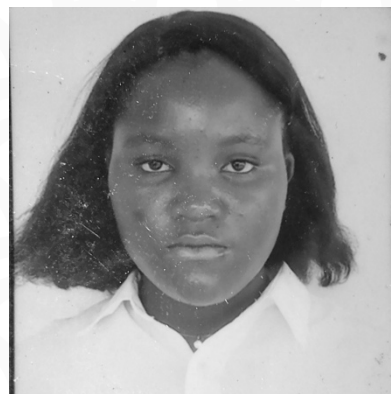
I could overhear Demola from where I was seated as he conversed with someone beside him. "What have you been up to lately?" He asked. "Work, and more work" the person

sighed. "Elections are also coming up", Demola retorted intuitively. "That's not my concern at all", the guy snapped back. I could in no way object to his statement. Politics is never a concern for youths. Demola chuckled "But you're Generation XYZ" I wondered where he was headed with this and the connection between that and politics.

My interest was keen as I listened on "You're a Gen Z, but you're ruled by millennials, it's time to have a power shift from that generation, don't you think? We're not just Gen Zs in Tech and Twitter alone!" His words stood to reason and he sure was right!

Dear Daughter

Oluwatomisin Opeyemi Ajayi



Dear Anjolaoluwa, Your father was a hero, he'd never let a day pass without talking about how much Nigeria blooms and how she will be great again

Whenever you get to read this, I might be there and I might be gone, I want you to know that the righteous will obey the rules the wicked will make, if they don't get involved in politics and leadership

You will take after your father, I know this for a fact. Do you know that you protest every time I unintentionally discomfort you? That's how he started too. He was a student leader while in school, and joined every movement that promoted equity and fairness. He never sleeps on election day, even when he is done casting his vote. He'd sit with undivided focus, staring at the TV screen.

Did I tell you he made his parents relocate to Nigeria?

"How do you neglect your home country to live in a country where its citizens built? You love the system but you don't care about the process. If everyone gets out of Nigeria because she's broken, who will fix her?"

"Those were the words he said when he got back home from school, completely agitated." His father narrated to me.

I wanted to write this to you to let you know a few things about your father. I wanted to give you a chance to see through the windows of my heart.



Anjola, this might sound familiar to you but I want you to know that life is a battle, it's not a battle between humans, it's far more complex.

It's a battle we fight against life, from the moment we take our first breath till when we take the final one. It's not a battle of arrows and quivers, it is one of tactics, words, ideas, power, and the quest for fame.

Thus, the instruments for fighting are not physically visible but they are tangible and palpable. They are determination, courage, willpower, wisdom, and loads of love.

You're first Nigerian before you're Yoruba or Efik- you will have to decide which one- you are the first human before you're a woman. Embrace your identity, don't run from it.

Heroes don't do it for the fun of it. They do it because they want to see evident progress and cause positive changes in their community. Your father was brave, he died while at it, and I want you to be braver.

I will not give birth to a coward. Anjola, be clever no matter the matter.

Politics is not a man's game, and neither is it a dirty one. Anjola mi, I know society will whisper meaningless banter in your ears, they might not understand now, but they'll understand later, that they need millions of you or maybe thousands or maybe just a few solid souls like you who are willing to die, if need be, for the good of this country. Nigeria will be great again but we have to work for it.

Leadership is great, but don't get into it because you want to be served, because leadership in itself is service, a leader is a servant that leads.

For you it is genetics, but for others, they have to learn the mathematics of service and teach them.

Anjola, teach them!

P.S. Your father died on the 20th of October 2020. Read about it in history. Your father is Yoruba and I am Efik, we met at NYSC camp in Abuja. Ask granny for other details.

With LOVE from Your Mother.

The Silent Menaces

Olamigoke Kehinde



Daniel had grown up in a community where people see political participation as a thing of no relevance. Daniel, At 19 years old, was a teenager who grew up to live with the mindset that

our vote doesn't count. Daniel is a boy who loves to read and double research a lot of things. Soon became inquisitive about the political system. And one day he came across a note. It was a poem.

The Silent Menaces

The silent cry.

The desperate cry.

The loud cry.

The pleading cry.

The people cry.

The strength of a man is in his youth.

The strength of the country is the youth.

The voice of the country is the youth.

The hope of the country is the youth.

The slow menace also the youth.

The daily unraveling of the youth's atrocities.

Coupled with the political leader's affairs.

The state needs the youth mechanism at this point.

The strength of a man is in his youth.

The youth act oblivious of their strengths.

They ignore their rights to material things.

Refusing to voice out because of a temporary opportunity.

This slain for the wicked for daily bread.

They've forgotten the need for contemporary participation.

They are in deep slumber in their apathy.

Awake, o ye youths, from temporary comfort of the cunny.

Awake from a deep slumber, the hope of the state.

Awake now for ye are leaders of today.



*Awake from the temporary bread being tossed
from the filthy table.*

Awake now and take up the mantle.

Awake from the caress of the wicked money.

*Awake from the dog's cage that has been fur-
nished.*

*Awake from the deceit of the old position occupi-
ers.*

*Awake from the imagination that is yet to be ful-
filled.*

Awake from the sly words of the serpent.

The political positions cry for a change.

The roads mourn the daily blood.

Silent menace eating deep into the root.

No more shift blame-shifting for temporary relief.

*It's time to make choices between creativity if
challenged.*

Arise now for this is the time for a change.

Arise now and lead the state back home.

Arise now and bring in order and harmony.

*Arise and restore the once begotten patriotic na-
ture.*

Arise and make a home our home again.

This poem made Daniel realize the state of help the nation is. The need for the youth to arise and take up the political system of the country to participate in the political activities of the country.

And he also realized that the youth have a lot of power in their hands because the crimes happening in the country and the atrocities that are being committed are mainly committed by the youths. And in a way or two, the youths can make their standard of living better. Some of them blame the government because of unemployment in the country. If only they realized the fact that if they participate in the political activity of the country, they could change their situation and turn the situation of unemployment around, Daniel noted a lot of things and make sure I even get a copy of the poem to himself.

Then Daniel decided within himself to be a change in the community. And even amongst youths. He began to participate in the political activities that occur in his community and tries to enlighten anyone that sees political activity as a waste of time. He even went further to write an article weekly on the need for political participation among the youth and the massive benefits of having a responsible government. He also made sure to give his story as examples and made sure to share the poem he came by to also serve as a persuasion for the youth and he always ends his stories and articles with **"WE YOUTHS ARE THE SILENT MENACES AND WE MUST MAKE A STAND NOW FOR OUR NATION BY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION"**.



POETRY



WINNER

I am the Nigerian Youth

Isidinma Nnamdi



This is Who I Am...
The faceless One
with 33 million
Faces,
one body and one
existence

I grew up playing
"ten-ten" in a me-
dium-sized Nsukka
home

or lying with the dirty dumpsters of Ajegunle's ran-
cid ghettos
Upon a pillar of roses called Childhood, I harbored
cherry-colored dreams
Dreams of building a greater Future
Of becoming a Doctor, a Lawyer, an Engineer...
With my soulful eyes,
I harbored Dreams which lay on a bed of Naïveté
and were quenched by a fast flowing river of thorns
titled Nigeria.

This is Who I Have Become...
a bearer of Those Dreams which are now but dust
whose ashes were lit
by the matchsticks of the Green-White-Greened
Authority
Dreams whose ashes burnt in the endless fire of
Corruption, Greed and Mismanagement
I have become a shadow of my former self

Somewhere in the North, 6 years without jobs have
turned my heart into stone
In the West, the endless battle for food leads me
astray
South, North, East, West
I struggle to live everywhere

And so, when the trumpets come again, I simply
scoff and laugh
*"Why should I Vote?. It doesn't matter. I don't mat-
ter!"*
*"Why would I even think of joining a Party?. Am I
crazy or I just want to Die?"*
Just like that, with age-old frustration and bitter-
ness behind my words,
I walk away.

And the cycle runs deep, deep and deep

But This is Who I Should Become...
an eternal fighter
Because my fight runs not only for my sake
but also for the betterment of my generations to
come
Because my Dreams were not meant to be mere
ashes in the wind
thrust to and fro by the carelessness of a failed gov-
ernance
Because survival should not be a luxury but a ne-
cessity
No longer Shall I hide away while I die in Silence.
If They shoot me down, I will rise

When next the trumpets come calling again, I shall
embrace my smile
Because in my hands I have gained the right to bet-
ter my future
With one small card I can change a glimpse of my
reality

When it comes time to assume Power,
I shall chase my dreams by thrusting myself
onto the Green-White-Greened Authority
My mission does not end tomorrow
But it begins today

My future, my reality and my Dreams...
they are all my Fight
and Fight for them, I shall
Because I am the Leader of a new era, the rising sun
in the sky...

I am the Nigerian Youth



WINNER

Sweet Melodies that Resonate

Deborah Chinwendu Anukwu



Like a garden at
the mercy of the
gardener,
I am of my lead-
ership.
Will I be involved
in the planting
process?
They told me the
age of 18 will in-
fluence the deci-

sion.

Will this be a license for a part in democratic gov-
ernance?

More young heads are better than one headship.

Like a singer, I develop a voice so I can speak a word
to the world,

When a chance I've got can shape the outcomes of
many.

Though I be a strong nut, the sweetness I evoke
when cracked satisfies the soul.

Learn to be with me, sieve the goodness in my
bosom, then add a fragrance to the world.

How can you tell my story better than I do?

Let me and I will lend a voice to a generation yet
unborn.

A bird in the cage can do no better but sing of sor-
row.

Why there be sorrow when sweet melodies can res-
onate with the world?

Like an arrow in the quiver of the fathers, I will stand
at the gate and challenge the enemy.

At the dawn of my age, tons of strength I wield.

The day is bright, a mistake I can fix before dusk.

Forget me, and you will forget the sweet melodies
that resonate with the world.

Youths, Arise: A Call to Action

Okoli Queendaline



The youths
they say, are
the future
leaders of to-
morrow,
They grow up
hoping to take
on the reigns
of power on
the row.

But they are

stupefied to find the oldies deftly holding on to it,
Even their fellow citizens mock them saying, there's
nothing for them in it.

They are told they are not too young to rule,

But they are not even afforded the opportunity to
step in and rule.

Having had enough of the deception, they take to
the streets to protest,

But their effort is made feeble through killings and
arrest.

Oh, how badly they had craved for a change,

But not this sort of scandalous and growth-stifling
change.

Oh ye, beacons of hope, do not settle only for the
PVC,

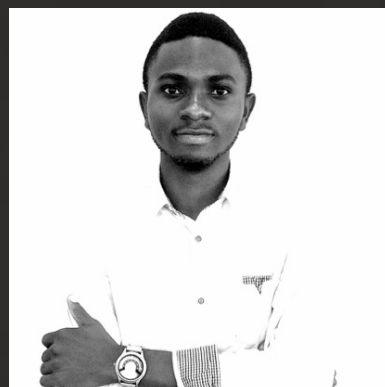
But be resolute and open thy eyes to see.

That there might be hope to attain your lofty aspi-
ration,

To bring about transformational and effective
leadership to the nation.

Hands of the Young

Chisom Charles Nnanna



Here you say the
word "youth"
and a thousand in-
jured dreams
congregate ar-
ound you.

Oh is anything
scarier than a
mother
who pleasures in

burying her own children?



What is a country without its young if
not an ellipsis staggering towards its final full stop?

Cramped on our governing table are cutlery
as old as the colour after sunset. So old some
cannot see ahead any more,
and they cuff the youths with policies
and demands that keep them from bringing
dawn to the governing table. I mean,
have you seen the cost of acquiring a presidential
form,
or any form into public offices?

In yesteryears it was the young who
fought for our flag to fly high without
colonial whirlwinds.
Or have they forgotten this so soon?

Now, every four years, the country drags herself
through mud and sharp stones;
she shoots herself again and again out of longevity
by
excluding the young from decisions of the future.

But should she ever wish to camp on
the side of posterity,
then the hands of the young must be allowed on
her governing rudder.

I am Nigeria

David Segun-Peter Oluwafemi



I am Nigeria
Some days I like
to believe I am
On other days, I
dissociate
And associate
with my own na-
tion
My nation of
one, my nation
of I.

I am Nigeria
Except when I am content
But when she needs me,
I hide in I's tent

I am Nigeria
I play on her soil,
Ebony twiddles on my back
Yet a clarion call makes my blood boil

I am Nigeria
The moral landscape is blurry
Right and wrong divulge into the grey
And the good is only found in how many building
stories

I was Nigeria
Until a week ago
When they asked for my ballot
And I asked for a coin throw

I was Nigeria
Till her people beguiled me in my day to day
Now conscience is far removed
This is my repay

Yet I am still Nigeria
I hurt myself inadvertently
When I hate her, I hate me
And it all ends expectedly
With death and violence
With brimstones and ashes
And as many orphaned children as lost souls within
the confines of godfathered fence.

There is one solemn realization that must creep in
as one stares deep into this abyss that we call a na-
tion
We are complicit and we are to blame
How shall we console ourselves and our innova-
tions?
The murderers of all murderers
How shall we explain?

That the day was too hot
Or the rain was too cold
Or we feared for ourselves
That life could not be retained and we could not be
bold

How will you look in that suffering child's eyes with
conscience undaunted?
When life and death were in your hands you threw
it and recanted

We are to blame and we will continue to suffer
Unless that one vote is placed under the right name



Unless the same young man that walks under the sun
Leads with a heart untouched by corruption's black burn

And as the vote is placed on paper
So is pen, put to fate
A tale of life and death where you chose life whilst
risking death.

Matters that Matter

Igwe Ifeoma Precious



I have a tale to tell
A tale of Gen-Z without
boldness
Youth on the verge of
greatness
Without the power to be
great
But with the

power to vote for those they claim to hate.
All for two cups of rice.
Or not voting for a single candidate
All to break the ties.
His ties to the country he still dwells in
But how do you break a tie, when you are knotted
in its centre?
How do you break off of a country, when you still
dwell on its matters
Matters that affect you, even as you claim they
don't matter.
Occupying the space of your heart
As you strive to beat down inflation
Having weight at the back of your mind
As you get a job to water down the effect of
ASUU's forced vacation.
In an instant,
The leaders of tomorrow have become
The victims of today's borrowing that burrows into
tomorrow's purses like a harrowing depression.
We have become
The vanquished of yesterday
Not realizing that we are finished
If we do not furnish
These political seats ourselves
Directly or indirectly,
With people with the right agenda

Instead we follow the propaganda

Of those we've called founders and fathers of our
sorrows
We gather them in warm embraces, as we narrow
the economy down some more,
A repeated cycle of this year and the next leap year
to come.
I think, we think you think
It's just four months of eating rice
Sticky notes by our sides
Jotting down how many bags gotten from another
lying person.

This will probably not be the last time this happens.
But it could be the first time we take a step to de-
termine what happens.
Until we take enough steps to make a ladder for
higher levels,
The only thing on our way being the frightened and
fearful.

Feed a man lies
And watch him swallow
Greedily
Place truth before his eyes
And witness his spirit mellow
Instantly.

The People Buried Alive

Blessing Anaso



breaths of the orange,
Peeking through the soil.

Our parents told tales of affluent rains-
Polished silver from ruling butterflies,
Of true winds that stirred every petal,
And armies of bees that kept them safe.

We are all flow-
ers here,
trapped under-
ground,
A hidden garden
spiralling petals
of potential.
Tribes of fuchsia
and yellow with
smooth velvety
crowns,
That catch small



In limbo, all us flowers are budding.
Our leafy hands intertwining to raise the hedge,
All of us here, pushing to the surface.

Where the orange shines on ever-green plains,
That stretch to infinity.

A Call to Rally

Omobolaji Olofinnika



Ji—Wake up!
For how long
shall we
slumber?
Until the very
home where
we lay our
bed is taken
right from
under us?
For how long
shall we lay
quiet?

Untill our voices are stolen and we totally become
mindless automatons?

Fear has made us to stalk the shadows. Bandits by
day, kidnappers by night.
Then when you think you're safe, trigger happy po-
lice friends turn on you in a rain of death.
Rivers of blood has become wine, pain and suffer-
ing our daily meal.
Till when shall we dread the thoughts of home?

Masun—Don't sleep!
The rallying cry of our heroes past.
Warriors of words and pen who wrested govern-
ment from evil colonial masters.
Awo to the west, Zik to the east, Tafewa to the
north.
With blood, sweat, and ambition, freedom was
claimed.

Surplus food for the belly, free education for the
mind.
A thousand jobs and shiny Peugeot cars for those
who followed the path of books.
Bursting fertile farms and enabling economy for
those who followed the path of harvest and trade.
Tall tales of a generation who have now gone rogue
and silent.

Soro—speak!
The Song of a new generation who must bring the
change.
To stay silent is to die, to talk is to die, to run is to
be lost in the rivers of time.
And so we must strive...
As one we must rise to the government—our gov-
ernment.

Soke—loud!
With our PVCs blaring our cries for a new epoch,
Our thumbprints securing our future from the vul-
tures of doom
We must arise as heros of time now!
Taking legitimate power for ourselves to deliver the
present from all shackles.
For if we all run, where can we call home?

Ji Masun — Wake up don't sleep!
Soro Soke — Speak up now!

The Crying Blood

Amasiatu Amarachukwu Peculiar



An inanimate ob-
ject is one who can't
feel, touch or re-
spond to stimuli.
Yes, you may say I
am a good example
of such category
But, I am here to
prove definitions
and grammar
wrong.

Though dead, yet do I cry!!

Yes, I scream at the top of my voice
so those at the back won't say they can't hear.
I, soro soko!!!
Oh yes, I am the voiceless voice

I sound like the sea and at the same time like an an-
gry black woman.
Oh! how my freedom came through death,
too much silence killed me,
I am the crying blood.

Like a relay race, where the batons are passed from
set to set



This was how political apathy was passed from generations to generations
Like a rejected baby, it was tossed from mother to nurse, from nurse to social workers and from social workers to society.
This deadly communicable disease kept being transmitted
Till the need of a cure became the need of all who still lived

Now is the time, this cure we all desire
is political participation.
Among all, but mostly among the young
Whose feet's are still swift,
We would both run for positions and also choose the elects
We are no longer the leaders of tomorrow
Because tomorrow has become today
We are the leaders of today.

If I Were President

Amammata Isah



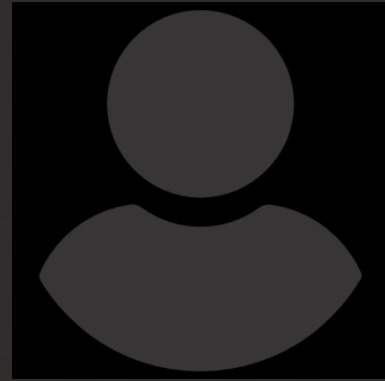
The day I step my feet on
the source of the stampede of disasters.
The buffaloes of terror are ought to know that I have been registered.
Fully equipped,
And ready to be

administered.
Into the jungle that binds and deteriorates
One that joins and suffocates.
The sociable society.
Of man , woman , child , ladies and gentlemen.
My motto "transparency " plastered atop the gates.
Single handedly or even with help .
Creating a bright new tomorrow for me and the human race .
Water , Food, education, security and even electricity.
Will be the order of the day , all day and everyday.
In my youthful spring .
My promises have promised to bring a new age and era .
One Where the leaders of tomorrow take a stand
and bring an end to this stampede.

And if I were president of this great nation.
Then my win will surely be a win , indeed.

Our Now

Akinlua Oluwaseun Mercy



O' God of creation
...Help our youths
the truth to know
That we may be
fearless and dauntless.
Here is why;
Every fifty meters
ride, an 'ágberò'
stretches his
hands, askance

Anticipating due wages for several gruesome hours
spent in the scorching sun,
Chasing after vehicles, stick in hand, like a lunatic.
This energy expended on wasteful living; a potential currency for wealth creation
Or perhaps, It's the hastily taped fifty naira notes
Tucked into the waiting hands of the policeman
taxing weary drivers
whilst passengers sigh knowingly, giving each other cursory gazes.
Every two years, we are forced on a compulsory maternity leave
Knowing we're not pregnant with certificates required for a proper paying appointment
Still, we face the cold reality that not everyone 'go jápa'
And tomorrow, their hands may remain stretched out even wider, 'owó mi dà'.

Politicians with ever increasing belly size
Girth measuring that of a thirty two week old pregnancy
Stole our youthfulness, gave us drugs, made us political thugs and pawns
For these 'thirty pieces of silver',
enough for the purchase of weary souls, the Stalin's allegory
We lament lack, dwindling economies,
Yet, we sat at the gates and were fed by the hands of those for whose cause,
we have towed this course of retrogression
Ears defeaned to our cry for help
Sat and sprayed unrepentant bullets through our skulls



Arms unworthy enough to break us free from this
prison of insecurity,
Whilst bandits unceremoniously orchestrate prison
breaks.

They taught us to sing
'Parents listen to your children, for we are the lead-
ers of tomorrow'
But reluctantly passed the 'Not too young to run'
bill.

We fear, we may not be leaders tomorrow, if we
are denied our today
Policies affecting our present, our future, lacks in-
clusiveness and transparency,
While, every process has progressively become
heavily monetised.

But,
We'd go again
Apathy is simply denying ourselves a chance
Our pens would become useful arms,
Our music would tell our unheard stories,
Social media our artillery and (Permanent voters
card) PVCs our voices
Political parties, our platform to birthing the
change we so desire.
Because our future is now
And though, silver and gold we have not
All we have, we'd give, for this is our now. Selah!

If The Youths

Grace Nwafor



In a society where
poor governance is
the order of the
day,
A place where peo-
ple live in uncer-
tainty,
Report of kidnap,
rape, banditary and
killings heard every
day.

Voices are heard,
Voice filled with misery and pain,
One engulfed by hopelessness, seeking to be
heard.

Questions seeming rhetorical pervade the air,

One demanding to know the hope of the poor
masses,
Anticipating an environment dear and fair.

Oh! just in a bid to save our nation,
The Not Too Young to Run Law was made,
A step to call youths to action.

An avenue to set good governance right,
One that would give ear to the grassroot voices,
One that would give the nation a ray of hope and
light.

If only the youths will see their role,
The role to influence good governance,
And speaks for a positive societal goal.

If only the youths will engage in partisan politics,
If only they will use their knowledge for good lead-
ership,
Only then we can affirm youths in Politics.

It is a Clarion call for all youths,
And the time is now to make our mothers land
peaceful and welcoming.

People Voting Conscience (PVC)

Isaac Daniel



Today as I try to
press my hands to-
gether in prayer, I
feel a pain on my
chest
The kind that pops
up on our breaking
news and headlines
to remind you that
you are still in Nige-
ria

...
Hands on my chest
This pain is a raging tempest
Hands on my chest
I pledge to Nigeria my country
I am fighting for the best that is yet to come
I believe after these bad nights and mourning cries,
comes joy in the midst of the chaos, the sun will rise
in the morning

...
We are the VIPs



The Persistent Victorious Citizens
Choosing our MVPs with our PVCs
We are leading a revolution
that will stand the test of time with
People Voting Conscience, it is time for
Proper Vital Change, that we
Produce Very Competent leaders, so go get your
Personal Voters Card, and this time
Please Vote Correctly

The Future is Youth

Aisha Muhammad



Arise O, useful
youths,
Nigerian youths
call obey,
To serve our fa-
therland,
Those who fought
with their last
breath
for the survival of
not only the man

on seat,
But the masses in whole.

No to the grey's,
the sun will rise,
not from the west but that ignored cardinal point
treated like a trash seen as the source of all crash.
The youth must rule for the green not to be grey.

Where is the future?
what is the future?
And who is the future?
The youths are the future.
No more will fear wear us like clothe,
Making us seat at the back of the world with our
back against the wall,
Blindly sighting the glooming brightness of aspir-
ing but expired future.
We say no to the greys.

We are just like cubs, meant to seat by the side of
the throne, building wall that will be our shade in
time, not waiting for departure of expired future,
day dreaming craving and yearning for change and
power.
we say no to the greys.

you see, our ages do not say we should be cage.

here is a secret untold.

Queen Amina of zazzau at sixteen began conquer-
ing the conquerors of this great green fertile moth-
erland.

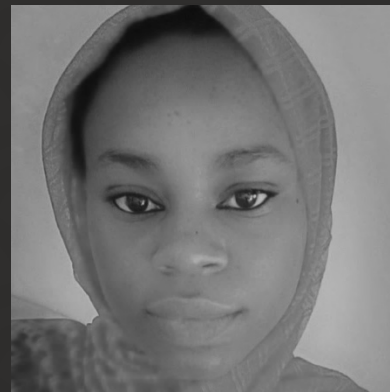
Sir Ahmadu Bello at thirty five build the wall of
these land.

Nana Asmau Danfodio at twenty, used words as her
greatest weapon to fight for the voices we claim.

Dear Son and Daughters of Nigeria,
it is time to spread our mirth not to ravel our birth,
come one come all
if not now then when?
If not we, then who?
let's shoot our shot now that the sun is here to wit-
ness our goals.
The youth must rule for the green not to be grey.

The Time is Here

Oteeyho Iro



what shall be done
to save this na-
tion?
to resurrect the
greenness our fore
heroes fought
& nurtured to life
through sweat &
bones.
they said the an-
swers lies with the

oldies
but we've seen pack & pack of gluttonous wolves
sucking our nation dry- their bellies rounded.
promises & promises that never gave birth to a
child
with their claws they tramples the young.
does a flower simply dies because it's trampled?
for how long do we carry the weight of their blun-
ders!
pay the cost of their inaction & greed with our
sweat & tears.
for how long do we sleep on our rights!
sell our rights for token gestures-political thugs to
cause menace,
when do we metamorphose into the the wildflow-
ers
we are that survived the claws of the wolves
perhaps the time is here
the time is here



lets vote & be voted for- naija await the new dawn
we foresaw.
but know that change isn't rush- it doesn't move
with the storm
rather in the flight of that lone feather slow but
steady.

Addendum:

weither youth, or old, same tribe or religion
let not be gullible & shallow with our votes
integrity matters
& integrity is the answer - the orange glow
of the new dawn that await us.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Shalom Adaoma John-Shedrack



Arise o
youths,
Aren't you
tired of the
injustice,
the insecurity,
the unemployment,
the depletion of
the economic sector?

You don't have to leave politics in the hands of the
godfathers, who determine who gets what and favour
their cronies,

There is already a law- 'NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN
LAW' of 2018

This NTYTR Law already permits you to occupy that
presidential, governorship, senatorial position as it
so pleases you

Do you wait until there is another Massacre?

Do you wait until more churches are attacked?

Do you wait until more Catholic Priests are killed?

Do you wait until there is another Owo Attack?

Arise O youths, this is your generation

Let's not talk about just running for a position,
I am pretty sure you know participation entails vot-
ing,

How many of us above 18 have gotten our PVC,
Maybe you think the process of getting it is tedious,

Well, sorry to burst your bubbles,
I have gotten mine and it was stress free because
there was an online procedure,
You could have easily followed that process, you
know,
It was easier and more convenient,
But not to worry, the physical process is still on and
it's not as stressful as you think,
WAIT!
Maybe it's because you think your vote will not
count?
Think about it, if we all live with this mentality, who
then will go out to vote,

Let's not talk about just voting,
I bet you forgot apathy also entails ignorance
about political issues,
Are you well informed on the current political hap-
penings of the state?
Do you even know who won Osun State and Ekiti
State Governorship election,
Ademola Adeleke and Biodun Oyebanji respec-
tively,
Wow! You are in awe,
What were you expecting,
Off course it was the godfathers, because you left
it in their hands,
This is your time!
You have got to take this opportunity,
You have been silent for too long,

Maybe finance is the problem,
Inadequate money to purchase the form?
Well, start by joining a political party,
Join that House of Assembly and air your opinion,
You have a voice that needs to be heard,
Talk to them about the exorbitant amount of the
form,
Encourage your friends to vote, to belong to a
party, to run!!!
Enough is enough
It's time for a CHANGE!



ESSAYS



WINNER

We the Youth!

John Adinoyi Victor



There is this well-known anecdote on Nigeria's social media platforms. It's something like this: *They say that youth are the leaders of tomorrow. Yet, when I was born, Nigeria's president was Muhammadu Buhari. He is still president, 35 years later, as are many of his generation. They reigned yesterday, continue to govern today, and are likely to do so in the future.* This very well sums up our condition as youths who have been on the sidelines for far too long. This essay examines the subject youth political participation and how it can be promoted in Nigeria.

"Youth political participation" combines two concepts: youth and political participation. Youth has been defined in a variety of ways in the literature, but this essay embraces the 2009 National Youth Policy definition of youth as those aged 18 to 35.¹ Political participation is described as acts by private persons aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or their actions.² Youth political participation refers to the involvement of young people in political activities, active citizenship, policy making, and civil life.³ This can take the form of voting, participating in or organizing campaigns, volunteering, civil responsibility, demonstrations, membership, and community participation. Online lobbying and protesting, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, clicktivism, and so forth are all modern instances.⁵ Recent studies have shown that youth political participation positively correlates with excellent governance and inclusion,⁵ further stressing the need to promote youth involvement in politics.

The Nigerian government can do a lot to encourage youth participation in politics. She must reaffirm her commitment to the "Not too young to run" legislation and the establishment of Leadership and Development Institutes (LDIs) in all federation

states to prepare and train youth in the art of leadership and governance.

The curricula of primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools should be modified with the aim of including political, governance, and leadership education (PGL) courses. The Ministry of Youth and Sport can employ the technology skills of the youth to develop an Online Leadership Orientation Agency (OLOA), a platform that can give free leadership courses, orientations, and webinars on the art of governance.⁵

Whether the current political climate is favourable to youth participation or not, it is up to us, the youth, to take responsibility. In view of 2023 elections and our intended future for Nigeria, what better time for us to realize that we account for about 40% of the population⁶ and deserve to be heard? What better time than now that we are fed up with gross inequality, poverty, low living standards, insecurity, a rising unemployment rate, and corruption at the helm of affairs?

The #EndSARS demonstration proved our ability to organize for societal change in more resilient ways. It shows that we will no longer sit still in the face of governmental abuse and dysfunction, and that we, the youth, have realized that change must be demanded for, fought for in every legal way possible. We've had enough of the adage '...leaders of tomorrow'. We believe in participation—today, in impact and leadership—today. It is up to us to stand up and utilize the potential power in our dreams for the future and the actions we take—today!

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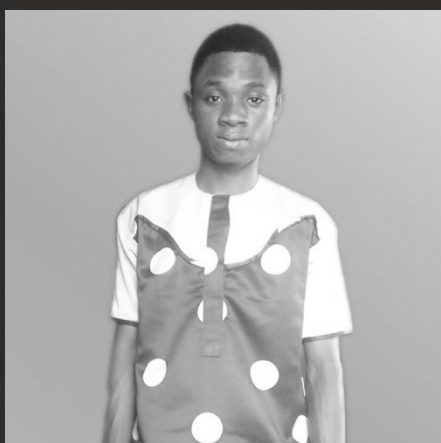
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WINNER

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Emmanuel Victor Oziegbe



With a teeming population of over 33.6 million, the youths constitute a major force within the Nigerian society.^[1] However, our political culture is largely patrimonial and

gerontocratic. This trend is lamentable as the nation has been a victim of failed government. As we seek to break out of the vicious circle of bad governance, it becomes imperative to seek alternative

solutions. This is because only a fool, they say, does the same thing repeatedly and expects a different result.

Nigerian youths are continuously being marginalised from politics and they literally have no say in their own future.^[2] This obviously violates the tenets of representative democracy, because true democracy is also *a government by the people* - and that includes the youths! Our political system paints politics as a game exclusively for gerontocrats. Hence, youths are largely apathetic towards electoral processes and political leadership. Even the few who show interest have been stifled by the inconducive political atmosphere of discrimination, corruption, 'godfatherism', etc. But we seem to forget that inclusive politics is not only our right but also pivotal in establishing peaceful societies.^[3] Now, we may begin to ask ourselves the million-dollar question: HOW CAN WE PROMOTE YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS?

Firstly, we must realise that politics seems like a luxury to youths who are still struggling to sort out their lives. More often than not, they will always choose their personal concerns over political participation.^[4] Therefore, if our country wishes to witness an increase of youths in politics, our economic insecurities have to be squarely addressed.

Next, political apathy thrives solely by ignorance and a corrupted mindset. Many youths feel their voices will never be heard and so political participation is a waste of their time. Thus, if this mindset changes, then their political orientation also changes. This can be achieved through meticulous education systems and capacity building programmes that expose youths to the possibilities of political activism.^[5]

Also, there should be proliferation of youth clubs and parliament forums to mobilise youths' involvement in political processes.^[6] Additionally, we can leverage social media as a powerful tool to stir up a mass reformation of our political space like the popular #EndSARS movement on Twitter.^[7]

Another critical issue is the "money politics" syndrome in Nigeria. Nomination forms for political offices run into millions of Naira and this deters most youths. Parliament should push for bills that will cut down these fees to promote youth participation. An example is the NotTooYoungToRun law



of 2018 which resulted in a 13.2% rise in youth participation between 2015 and 2019 national elections. Alternatively, youths can form their own parties with less burdensome financial demands.^[8]

In summary, promoting youth politics involves two major processes: creating a conducive political environment and actually pushing the youths out there. As youths, we should remember that we cannot stand aloof and expect to take charge. We must become active in politics if we wish to seize political power. In light of the forthcoming 2023 general elections, we can choose to make it a momentous season by changing the narrative. The more youths are in politics, the more options we have, and the more our chances of getting into government. All hands must be on deck to formulate holistic strategies to actually achieve this. We must re-orientate ourselves that politics is not a dirty game, but an avenue to make lasting impacts and build the Nigeria of our dreams. Let us rally together as we sing once more:

*“O God of creation... Help our youths the truth to know...
To build a nation where peace and justice shall reign.”*

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The Leaders of a Tomorrow That Never Comes

Chidiebere Ogbonna Faith



There is an aphorism that proclaims that the youths are the “leaders of tomorrow”. Even though originally true, this saying has not come to actualization in Nigeria since the

time of her independence. Nigeria as a nation has been continually ruled by men and women who passed their youthful years, which begs the question, “Are youths really the leaders of tomorrow in Nigeria?” or “Has our tomorrow not come?”.

Before recent times, youths in Nigeria have left the ruling of the country in the hands of the older generation while waiting for their tomorrow. I would like to think that the reason for this was because of the teachings of our traditions that our elders are wiser and more experienced than we the young



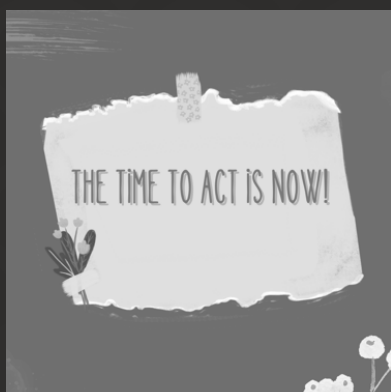
ones, and also it must have been thought by the youths, that the older generation would have our best interest at heart. But a lot of happenings in the country has shown that the older generation do not have our interest at heart and that our 'tomorrow' never seems to come, as the governance of the country has been recycling within the same group of people that has been in power since Nigeria's independence.

No one stays still and let their neighbor keep on putting pepper in their eyes, Nigerian youths have become aware that they need to stand up and make today that tomorrow famously talked about. Just a few youths has come to this realization, starting with the "Not too young to rule" movement, then the peaceful protest in the recent years, such as Endsars. Now, currently the advocacy of getting our PVCs is being pushed by youths all over Nigeria. But the work has only just began, only a few youths has pushed the above movements, more youths needs to get involved.

We've believed in our elders, and all we've gotten in manifestoes and now action, it time to take the reins of our country and create a society that is not filled with hardship of people, especially those at the grass-root level. We need to create a country where every youth is not trying to run out from to seek greener pastures in another country. For if this tomorrow promised to us never comes, then we must make today our tomorrow.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ireoluwa Agunbiade



"It is the duty of youths to war against indiscipline and corruption because they are the leaders of tomorrow." ~Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha

People can share their opinions and influence decisions directly impacting their lives by getting involved in politics. This discussion attempts to answer the what and why of youth

political participation and show how you and I can cause positive change in our country, Nigeria.

Political participation is the cornerstone of democracy. It involves taking action as a citizen to influence the public policy of your country and decide who makes these policies. When you participate in politics, you can decide who gets what, when, where, and how.

We, as youths of this country, have the right to be actively involved in the decision-making process in our country. You can use your power to demand better welfare, improved healthcare, safer streets, and quality education.

It might have crossed your mind that because you are "too young," your voice will not be heard, or you will not be taken seriously by the government and the general public. But if we must build a stable and peaceful Nigeria, you need to take a stand and realize that your active contribution can lead to the destruction of oppressive practices in Nigeria. This country is useless without its youths.

When you participate in politics, you have a say in formulating today's and tomorrow's politics. You and I can help bring about social reform and improvement in our society. We can make a long-lasting difference. Most importantly, when we participate in politics, we enrich our sense of connectedness, belonging, and feeling of being valued, which can contribute to positive mental health.

You can participate in politics by voting and working on campaigns like Davido did in the Osun state 2022 election. You can also donate money to candidates or causes and join protests like the 2020 EndSARS movement. Running for political positions in our various schools and communities and involving ourselves in community services are other ways to participate in politics. You can also use different social media platforms to air your opinions and actively fight against every form of oppression from the government. Ultimately, get your Permanent Voters Card (PVC) to participate in the electoral process of Nigeria actively.

Anything can be achieved if you utilize the vigor that comes with your youthfulness. The government might be Goliath, but you are David, and the stone you need to end the constant misery this country has put you in, is your voice. It is your right



ask for a better Nigeria. I am sure you are tired of the poor quality of education, worst still, the endless ASUU strike. Your only offense was to attend a federal university. You deserve better. Also, no one should be locked behind bars or extorted because of their hairstyle or outfit choice.

Spend less time on entertainment and prioritize what truly matters: your well-being as a citizen of this country. Every vote counts; your vote counts. Your voice accounts for something. The term "leaders of tomorrow" sounds cliché, but it is the truth. You are destined for so much more, and you can only get what is truly yours by actively participating in politics.

Take that bold step today and participate in rebuilding this country through politics.

Advancing Youth Participation in Nigerian Politics

Cosmos



The age range of individuals who fall within the classification of Youth vary significantly from one nation to another. While some believe it goes from 18 to 55, others say it

begins from your early twenties up to 45. In all this, the main idea still remains the same. A youth is a young member of society who is believed to be the striving work force responsible for the growth of the economy.

In Nigeria, the youth account for about 60% of the total population. In various sectors of the nation, youth participation have been the determining factor that facilitates the growth of the said sector. In agriculture, the strength and innovation of youths boosts crop productivity. In security, their strength and courage is what makes us all sleep soundly at night. These further show that youth involvement leads to advances in society. But the societal and

economic growth of Nigeria somehow is still below international expectations. This, I believe, is due to the extremely low inclusion and participation of youths in the decision making process in Nigeria.

Before we move further, politics in Nigeria must first be understood. Commonly expressed is the idea that "politics is a dirty game". Politics in Nigeria is often believed to be ran by unscrupulous men and women with highly questionable characters heavily bent on embezzlement of public funds and corruption. Most politicians fall within the ages of 60-above thus making them excluded from the age range of youths.

Nigeria politicians who were in power or at the helms of affairs in the early 2000s or late 1990s still control political offices till this very day. The common mantra "leaders of tomorrow" that was sang in those days are still being said by the same people in power.

A nation's growth cannot be initiated by those who do not understand the changes in the world at large. Many first-world nations in Europe and the Americas had in the past advocated and chosen young people to hold power as high as on a national level. This changes in governance led to progressive growth in their economies.

The first step we need to take as a nation to increase youth participation in politics, is the realization that without the youth, we can never grow this can be done by continuously advocating for youth inclusion in decision making. The second is the constitution review that places a mandatory age restriction for those in politics. Indeed with age comes experience, but one cannot overlook the fact the old must give way to the new.

Another way of getting youth involved in politics is by having a constitutional reform every 20 years to fit in the needs of the present generation. This will create a sense of belonging that will lead the youths into politics.

The last point to breaking whatever political apathy that exists within the hearts of the youths must first be instigated by those in power. By actively deciding to include youths and taking a back seat for them to take the wheel, older Statesmen can facil-



itate the advancement of youth participation in politics.

Politics in Nigeria is a dirty game because we have allowed dirty people to play it. A major reason youths stay away from politics is because corruption and abuse of power have become a norm instead of a vice. The Nigerian youth will gravitate into politics when we take steps to rid it of corruption and injustice.

Comrades of the World

Winner Onyinye Nnamani



We live in a country where a lot of things are neglected and yet we are told to focus on the bigger picture. Who is calling the shots?

Nigerian politics takes place within a frame work of a federal, presidential representative democratic republic, which means Nigeria is a federal republic, with executive power exercised by the president and the federal government, state and local government aim to work corporately to govern the nation and it's people.

Money politics is definitely a term to the average Nigerian, or a common narrative is that politics is a dirty game. When it comes to elections and appointment, and this is very critical, since we are preparing for one of such come next year, there is bound to be tension, conflicts and everybody in every place can relate to this concept. The pain is usually too personal to be shared, some loose money, others loose their time or worst still their lives. But more heartbreaking is the fact that young people back down because of this, for safety obviously, leaving the positions for older people and developing political apathy over the night. Despite making up more than half of the population, young people are often marginalized from mainstream politics and decision making that would certainly affect their future. Whereas young people provide an excellent source of human and social capital within countries.

Nigeria is having an episode and young people are expressing their discontent. There is so much pressure on the average young Nigerian, male or female, black or fair, rich or poor and in our age of knowledge, ignorance is a choice, yet some people have chosen the path of least resistance which makes all rivers and some men crooked. This path makes them turn a blind eye to politics. But currently, it's all most as if all of a sudden, it has dawned on the Nigerian youth that this thing we spend too much mental real estate trying to figure out has always been there for the taking and that this fear we feel is a result of the badly scripted hypocrisy of the leaders we have. Therefore, first way to participate in politics as is with every other endeavor is knowing who you are and believing that you can do it.

Whereas this can only be done by the youths themselves, the rest of this principles are tasked to the older people ruling the nation and the society and everyone who loves the youth.

Here are the ways to promote youth in politics, to snatch them away from involving in other irrelevance like drug abuse and then going down that rapid hole of uncertainty and depression and to help them fit in.

- Accept young people's ideas for nothing births courage and creativity like a sense of belonging and appreciation.
- Support young people for with all support we can make positive difference.
- Give young people a voice for then they can stand.

The incoming general presidential election could arguably go down as the most exciting since Nigeria's 1999 fourth democratic journey, for diverse reasons but especially one, that youths have taken their position as comrades both to vote and to be voted for, and that because their father's gave them wings.

So keep on showing up and taking stands, young comrades of the world.



Promoting Youths Political Participation in our Country

Silvernus Emmanuel Ebi



Introduction

Political participation is the process where people are willingly involved in political activities such as belonging to political parties,

contesting elections, sponsoring political parties, holding public offices and voting in an election among others. It's an integral right in any democracy and the people's participation is ensured by the Constitution. Unfortunately, most Nigerian youths are not engaging in politics regardless of their numerous demographic range in the country, and this lackadaisical exhibition is induced by some challenges that seem insurmountable. Failure to participate in politics will dwindle the present and the posterity wealth.

The importance of youths in all spheres can not, therefore, be overexpressed as **Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe** unveiled emphatically in his immortal words requesting, *"Give me back my youth and I will pay anything for It."* I observed It's an approach to incite the future generation.

After the political conscious spirit in the pre-independence era, independence, and first republic, the spirit began to diminish. The perspective is that youths are only used as politicians' aids which is an aberration compared to the former. Also, the age limitation clause generally disabled some youths from actively participating in politics which makes many assume that political offices are exclusively designed for the aged.

The political setting in Nigeria is crowded by the youths of yesterday, ruling today which makes it a gerontocratic system of government. It's no doubt that the aged have occupied all the political spaces

in Nigeria, employing the youths to serve as gatekeepers and cleaners.

Especially the age limitation aroused the agitation for **not too young to run bill** which was signed into law on May 31, 2018, by President Muhammadu Buhari to enable the youths to fully participate in the political domain. After passing into law, the movement gave rise to another call, 'Ready to Run', to motivate the youths to fully participate in Nigerian politics, regardless, youths' political participation in Nigeria becomes hard.

For youths to be inactive in Nigerian politics, it's a problem because they are not part of decision making and it will continue to affect their future.

Yiaga Africa 2018 observed that youths have been the dominant demography in the Nigerian electoral process, constituting over 50 percent of registered voters in the country. It adduced to the fact that youths are most populated in Nigeria, but not populated in decision-making and political space. It's a problem because the pursuit of national development, security, infrastructure, and well-being of the citizens will fail if we do not put our hands on deck to move the nation forward.

It's pertinent to know that there is a solution to every problem. The youths' reluctance to politics can be transformed and the passing of the **NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN bill** shows that youths can actively participate in politics. Therefore, measures that can serve as solutions are;

- Orientations
- Campaigns
- Collaboration to sponsor ready-to-run youths

Conclusively, participating in politics will broaden their political horizon, redress the wrong of those in power, make unprecedented decisions and harness our resources for national development. It's no use crying over spilled milk, all we need is to massively participate in politics and build solid structures because actions speak louder than words. In the nick of time, we will benefit from the importance. The writer will drop the pen with **Professor Wole Soyinka's** words, "It desperately needs a committed idealist who can build a team



around himself or herself and just tell these old fogies to go and take a rest."

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Owoyemi Ejiwunmi Ruth



The importance of the youth's participation in politics cannot be overemphasized. It is extremely important, especially as the coming 2023 general election is drawing close, for every citizen, the

youth (ages 18-30) in particular to be actively involved in participating in political activities.

Political participation refers to the involvement of the citizens of a country in its political activities. It is an important feature of democracy. Political participation takes various forms like voting during elections, contesting for political offices, campaigning, volunteering to organize electoral processes, joining political parties, and funding electoral processes.

As stated earlier, youth political participation in Nigeria is very important. Some of the benefits include that; it promotes accountability, transparency, and due process in government administration, it provides an avenue for people to express their opinions about the government and how it can be improved, it enhances democracy in the country, it gives room for young people to not only air out their opinions, but to also implement and enforce such opinions, also through the participation of youth in politics, they develop leadership skills, teamwork abilities, and better perceptions about politics.

The youth are the newer generation and according to the older generation, they are the "Soro Soke" generation. They have a broad knowledge of the problems facing the country and how these problems can be solved. However, they are not ready to engage in anything politics related especially with the way the government has poorly played out

over the past five years. Therefore, the youth must be encouraged to actively participate in political activities in such a way as to effect the necessary changes needed in the Nigerian government. This will not only benefit them and the older generation but will also benefit the future generations to come.

The big question now is how then can youth political participation in Nigeria be promoted? There are several ways in which youth political participation can be promoted. Some of which are as follows;

Youth political participation can be promoted by educating and creating awareness among the youth on the importance of their participation in political activities. Awareness can be created by visiting public places like marketplaces, offices, churches, mosques, and even on social media like Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Twitter. This should be done regularly and efficiently to convince them why their political participation is important.

Also, it is important to ensure that highly influential and charismatic people campaign and encourage political participation. For instance, in the recently concluded gubernatorial election in Osun State, the victory of Governor Ademola Adeleke was greatly attributed to the campaign of his nephew, Davido who is a popular musician in Nigeria. As a result of his involvement in the campaign, a lot of people especially the youth were more involved in the voting process. This was a result of his influence and how he was able to encourage them to exercise their rights. Thus, more influential people and celebrities need to be more intentional in ensuring that they encourage the citizens, especially the youth to participate actively in political activities especially by voting.

Another important way in which youth political participation can be promoted is that the government should ensure that the political processes such as registering for the permanent voter's card, voting, and contesting for political offices are easy and smooth without any form of difficulty and unnecessary stress.

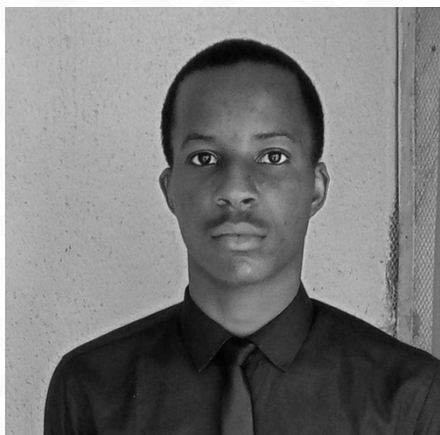
These will serve as a means of encouraging and enabling the youth in participating actively in political



activities affecting Nigeria and will help greatly in moving the country forward.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Chukwuma Chisom



When, in 1953, Anthony Enaharo moved the motion for Nigerian independence at the age of 30. Followed subsequently by Generals Gowon and Mohammed

being Heads-of-State at 31,37 respectively to Nwodo becoming a Minister at 28. What became apparently clear was youth readiness to take over their country. Past in to the present, how the number of ministers, governors or senators below the age of 45 equalize the numbers of human residing in Mars still serve as shock to many.

Before diving into ocean of strategies to promote youth participation, we first need to understand the obstacles holding them back. The discouraging atmosphere of our political space seems to be the greatest Achilles' Heel preventing youth participation in Nigeria. In a country where 95 million people are living in extreme poverty¹, 42% youth unemployment rate,² the ticket of the major political parties is a cash-and-carry affair for the highest bidder. The presidential ticket range from 45 to 100 million.³ How many youth can afford such amount and still go on with expensive election processes, including the shambolic culture of vote buying? Also, unemployment, insecurity, incessant strikes, Police brutality, high cost of living, harsh government policies etc. saddened the youths, little wonder many prefer to go through hell in Sahara Desert or see their death in Mediterranean Sea trying to cross to Europe for greener pastures than to participate in rebuilding their country.

We need to start challenging the status quo by promoting youth participation in politics. INEC should issue a directive that parties ticket for elective offices should not exceed five million naira while the National Assembly should make law allowing independent candidate to stand for election. Security agencies should stop vote buying by dealing decisively with anyone caught buying votes. The government should fight poverty, unemployment by investing largely on the projects that aid youth capacity building including but not limited to education, industry, health, sports which aid them to be independent thinker that will contribute to national development.

Furthermore, government should build a youth empowerment centers in all local government. The centers should be responsible for training youths through seminars, short courses with practical aspect like the Youth Parliament to teach youth participation not only through contesting election but through voting, protesting against the policies of government, recalling law makers etc. The National Orientation Agency should take advantage of the teeming population of youth on Social media to create an online course that focuses on promotes political participation. Also, Civic education curriculum should be reviewed to include practicality of governance and nation-building, championing civic advocacy and social activism with student parliament, press club, voters, and civic rights clubs as practical sessions in civil education compulsory for every student in primary and secondary schools.

Elected political office holders should also encourage youth participation by appointing them into crucial ministries and agencies not always the traditional phenomenon of making them bags and phone holders all in the name of special assistants. They should be entrusted with real jobs where they will use their vitality to bring novel ideas. It is disheartening that since 1999 no minister for youth has been a youth.

All in all, Promoting youth participation in politics should be a collective responsibility. Celebrities who have large followers among the youths should use their works, religious leaders should use their pulpits, traditional rulers, all should use their works and good offices to promote youth participation in politics. Parents should encourage their children to



be politically conscious by encouraging them to have political discussion, read newspapers and listen to radio at a very tender age. The best time for the Soro-Soko generation to start being the leaders of today is now!

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Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Chilaka Precious Chisom



According to Nigeria's National Youth Policy, youths are persons of age 18-35 years. Youth political participation entails the involvement of youthful people in political conditioning, civic life, active citizenship, and policy making.

The population of youths in Nigeria is 52.2 million (about 28% of the entire population), (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2018). Despite the prospects, this number holds, the participation of youths in politics is low. The low percentage of youths holding political and leadership positions in the country substantiates this assertion—a great concern, as they are not involved in decision-making processes, leaving them helpless in the fight against exclusion.

The political engagement of youthful people has been generally lower in comparison to the general population. As the National Youth Policy (2019) would have us believe, Nigerian youths are faced with a myriad of challenges including poverty, increased cost of forms/campaigns, multidimensional discrimination, unemployment, barriers to education, and limited opportunities—a bane to their political participation and inclusion—therefore leading to a lower proportion of youths holding political and leadership positions.

Youth participation depreciates as the cost of nomination forms and campaign escalates: they lack the fiscal capacity to contest and would remain slaves to older politicians. Nigerian youths are not financially buoyant, this contributes to their disenfranchisement.

Embarking on state subventions for youths would promote their representation in political institutions. Proper regulations for donations and campaign expenditures should be in place to ensure youths have access to backing for electoral campaigns. Otherwise, power and access remain concentrated among those from established political families. Nigerian youths are ready to be actively involved in politics, especially as the world is beginning to beam its light on youth conditioning in Nigeria. Hence, all that is demanded to promote youth participation in politics is an enabling environment.

Structures and mechanisms can also be created to promote youth participation. These can be developed for institutionalizing youth active participation in making decisions that affect them, similar to establishing youth premonitory groups, youth networks for positive civic engagement, etc. This can also be achieved by investing in youth participation by supporting programs for young people's communal engagement initiatives, networks, and associations.

A crucial factor for low youth political participation is the gap between the minimal age at which youths can vote and the minimum age at which they can run for political offices. This gap is also responsible for elected leaders having limited responsibility towards the youth electorates. Lowering the eligible age for candidacy leads to greater diversity and



more choice for voters; fresh ideas and perspectives; equal representation for youthful people who are expected to assume adult responsibilities at voting age and greater youth participation.

Without information and knowledge, meaningful participation in politics becomes difficult. Youth-friendly information and materials can be developed through traditional and other inclusive media.

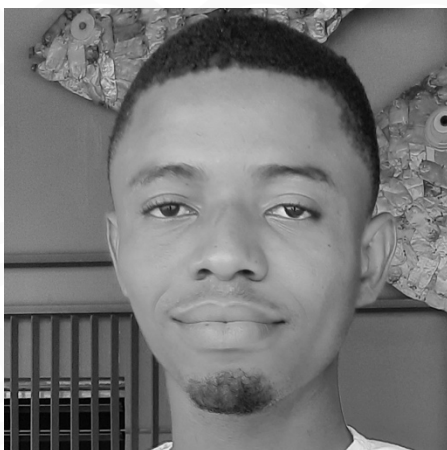
Equal opportunities should be given as nepotism and favoritism are becoming the order of the day. Youths must be given the chance to prove themselves worthy. Participation can be strengthened by including youths in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of instruments, strategies, and programs without discrimination.

Government should make registration and/or voting in elections compulsory. This, although contentious, increases the participation of registered citizens, including youths. Also, to ensure political representation, there is a need to reserve a percentage of the seats at the local, regional and national levels for youths.

Active youth political participation correlates with good governance. Youths are the future and have better perspectives which must be channeled properly to make the nation flourish. Hence, attention must be paid to youth involvement in politics.

Changing the Narrative of Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Michael Anayo James



Skimming through the rich and glorious years in the history of Nigeria, a trend of wide and active youth participation in governance, civil service and policy model-

ing stands out. However, this trend took a quick reverse in the subsequent years. Contemporary Nigerian youths are detached from the country's political progress and rarely see the interplay of their success in life with national progress.

A clear perception of the concept of youth political participation is necessary at this juncture. The African Youth Charter defines 'youth' as persons between the ages of 15-35 years. Political participation connotes actions or expressive activities towards influencing the selection of government, the policy-making process and services provided by the government. They are observable, manifest and voluntarily taken. These actions could be protest, strikes, signing a petition, joining a party and casting a vote in an election. Consequently, youth political participation is the voluntary involvement of youths in deciding and shaping governments.

Fuelled by interplay of socio-economic and political challenges, the participation of Nigerian youths in politics has been subpar. Football will rather be played on the streets on an election day than going to queue under a scorching sun to vote. However, the Nigerian youth is not immune from the adverse effects of their apathy to civic engagements. To change this narrative, we should:

Revive the spirit of nation ownership (citizenship) and patriotism: Young Nigerians must resolve to recollect their right to joint ownership of the country by the display of patriotism and concern on national issues at all times. Typically, Nigerian youth grows up to experience a ruling class of middle and old-aged individuals. They are ex-communicated from important phases of decision-making but remembered during elections. However, these ills will change when the youths are aware that their recognition is not tied to economic prosperity, but the timely display of concerns about the structures and operation of government, and the display of dissatisfaction when the government is not living up to its duties and promises.

Spread the message of the effects of sitting on the fence: In political participation, actions and inactions are equal but of opposite effects. Many a time, youths have been encouraged to vote during elections as a duty to the country. What happens when they do not vote, or physically express dis-



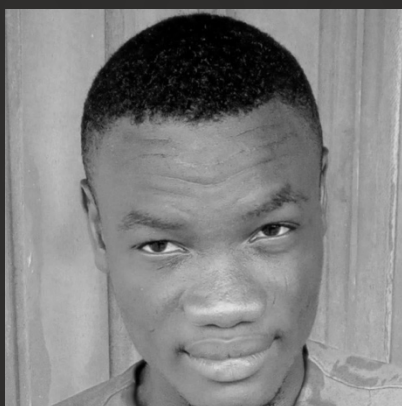
satisfaction with government policies? Sitting on the fence, instead of active political participation, births a retinue of aftereffects that affect the Nigerian youth. These aftereffects which include economic mismanagement, lack of policy on human capital development, government indifference to critical sectors important to youth development e.g. education, and the persistent exclusion of the youth in the formation of administration of government will continue unabated until they are brought to light as results of youths inactions in politics.

Rethink awareness and information dissemination strategies: Information dissemination to the youths must be programmed to achieve the targeted populace. Nigeria is a diverse country. Also are the Nigerian youth diverse. In spreading ideas aim to promote youth participation in politics, regional nuances must be considered. Some Nigerian youths are not on social media, while some cannot cope with the sea of information there. Also, the digital gap and dialect nuances predominant in Northern Nigeria and many rural parts of the country must be considered in awareness campaigns to achieve successful communication.

Finally, economic success is important to youths. However, there is no meaningful economic success in the absence of national economic stability and development. Therefore, we must be aware that our involvement in politics is an interest in achieving sustainable development and lifetime success.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Goto Emmanuel



Introduction

Political participation is a basic right in a democracy, without which democracy is ineffectual.

Apolitical people would invariably give chances to incompetent leaders to perform abysmally. Involving in politics encompasses sponsoring a political party,

belonging to a political party, standing for elections, signing a petition, holding public offices, public consultation, etc. The Nigerian Constitution in sections 7 and 14 ensures the participation of every citizen in political activities.

On this background, indecision to participate in politics portrays admittance to any determination of the people in governance. Nigeria has a population of over 180 million people, 60 percent of whom are between the age of 18 and 35 years old; regardless, there is a wide chasm between the aged and the youths in politics. The youths inactive demonstration is as a result of poverty, inadequate orientation, zero political structure among other challenges. Thus, there is no better solution than participating in politics to change the narrative.

There is a popular statement in the social media that was trending which captured, "they say the youths are the leaders of tomorrow, yet when I was born, General Muhammadu Buhari was the president of Nigeria. Now, 35 years after, he is still the president; and so have many in his generation been – they were in leadership yesterday, are there today, and are also likely to remain there in the future; as such, how much of a tomorrow, as leaders, do the Nigerian youths really have?"

The said quote contains all the elements restraining youths to be active in politics.

Why youths are not active in political participation?

Presently, Nigerian youths are generally inactive in politics because of diverse reasons such as;

- *Poverty*
- *Low political structure*
- *Insufficient influence*
- *Inadequate education or orientation about politics*

How is it a problem?

Participating in politics will enable effective representation, bring government nearer to the people and other political benefits. Hence, failure to engage in the administration can lead to mismanagement, and when such occurs, the masses will not circumvent from revolt.



It is worthy of note that Nigeria is sweeping back when it comes to corruption as a result of politicians who are governing without observing the norms provided to guide their conducts. Bad governance is prevailing in our country. Can you see why we need to fully participate in politics? Our participation can bring tremendous transition.

How can we promote youths political participation?

Upon the fact that the aged have laid strongholds in politics, it does not chase the youths from building structure. Albeit, the Not too young to run bill has bolstered the youths participatory capacity to an extent.

In encapsulation, the solution to this problem are;

- **Target on specific youths**
- **Orientation on political participation such campaigns**
- **Building of collective structure and**
- **Full participation.**

In a nutshell, participation is paramount. Just recently, former President Olusegun Obasanjo proffered the same solution as urge that, *"My advice for Nigerian youths is that never let anybody tell you that you are the leaders of tomorrow. If you wait for tomorrow before you take over leadership, that tomorrow may not come. They will destroy it. This is the time, youths get up and make it happen."* Therefore, it's better to be late, than never.

Conclusion

It's no doubt that the political space in Nigeria is overtly occupied by old people, and has encumbered the young generation to enjoy the fruit of politics as anticipated. However, active participation is the only panacea in the country. It is politic for the youths to participate in politics because it will enable adequate representation and good governance in Nigeria.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Alabi Ismail Abiodun



Governance, being the pivot of change in any political culture in every society, resonates with the general well-being of the people. The system of political culture ex-

ercised in a certain domain determines the level of development of democracy. According to Aristotle, he said, **"man by nature is a political animal"**, it is therefore inherent in man to show and participate in political activities to satisfy their instinctive nature as a political animal. The quantum of participation of the people in the political system has been observed to reverb the orientation of its citizenry. Nigeria as a nation supports the participation of the youth in its politics. Ostensibly, it is important to nurture the ways of promoting and fostering the development of the participation of the Nigerian youth in politics, which is the whole onus for this essay.

Invariably, it is trite that the youth possesses the wherewithal necessary to achieve the growth and development needed and expected of any nation. The youth form the major labor force of any society, and they are one vital element that certifies the concept of society. The promotion of youthful participation in Nigerian politics is, therefore, needed by the way of supporting the aspirations of the clairvoyant youths with achievable aims and goals. This can be done in multifarious ways which, inter alias, involve sponsoring youth with apparent aims and strategic goals, orientating and enlightening these youth about the importance of their participation in politics.



Measures should be taken by the inclusion of leadership intelligence orientation courses into our educational curriculum at all levels of education by the government, not just as an esoteric elemental course to be taught by private bodies. This measure will imbibe the whole Nigerians including the minors to be interested in how the affairs of the state are coordinated. Like other courses or subjects taught in school, leadership courses should be incorporated into the various levels of our educational institutions.

Furthermore, it is worth more than gratitude that our constitution is lenient to place the age requirement to contest for any governmental post at a minimum age. For instance, the prerequisite age to contest for any political post is delimited to the least age of 30 years of age (**Sec.65, 106, 131,177 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**). With the general voting age of 18 years and the aforementioned measures, it is technically possible that youthful participation in Nigerian politics and a better Nigeria is guaranteed.

Hitherto, the true concept of democracy can be said to become operational, as can be rightly seen in the just concluded Osun State Gubernatorial Election, though with its flaws, the beneficial features of true democracy were displayed in that election, and the people exhibited active participation in that election right from the outset of the election processes to its end. They even waited for the feedback of the election, it was a perfect epitome of a free and fair election. This is to profess that novel innovations, initiatives, opinions from green and young minds, as well as, leadership orientation programs, are adequately needed for a proper involvement in Nigeria politics.

In conclusion, the promotion of youth political participation in Nigeria is necessary during these trying times. Even the that the now Nigerian youth are now branded as the “*sorosoke generation*” which motivates their morale and hones their participation in politics, there is a need for a plan for continuity to maintain the adequate participation of youth in our political system.

Changing the Narrative

Fatima Zahrau Abdulrahman



I can still hear my voice screaming more than singing, our favorite matching song on assembly grounds Monday mornings; "We are the leaders of tomorrow..." I remember us matching vigorously to

our classrooms with so much energy envisaging ourselves in the tomorrow where we lead as young vibrant youths.

Tomorrow became today and from children we have become youth but not vibrant ones that are to lead, the energy we used to match from to our classrooms has somehow been lost as we matched to our future.

This story is probably the same for every Nigerian undergraduate in public universities; we don't know when we will graduate with the endemic strike seeming not to have a cure.

After the long journey through tertiary institutions, the road to prosperity just gets blurry. The ever busy labor market full of youths who are in need of Jobs, showcasing dry credentials to be absorbed into any paying jobs gets more choked. A large percentage of these youth end up in the streets with complaints as tall as themselves, protesting and fighting with one another over a failed system.

But the Narrative remains the same just as the failed system, the youth will rant for change but then not participate to build a change.

"Wait until it's your turn?"

The older political fathers would continue to speak with action, but for how long will the young be banned from sipping from the same cup with the elders?

The youth makes the majority of Nigeria's population; they are a sea of untapped potential and talents. It is only right that they are given a space to create a positive difference, that the culture of waiting to be old to lead be forgotten.

With good potential, it is never too young to lead. Having a great majority of youth participating in politics would create more youth leaders.



The new trend for young Nigerians is "Japa" to run to countries of seemingly greener pastures, but for how long will we continue to run from our problems, when will we change the narrative. The rate of migration from Nigeria is on a rise, every day there is a youth who is fleeing illegally from frustration only to be swallowed by the Mediterranean Sea along his dreams.

As the popular saying from the last general elections goes,

"change begins with you."

Let us (the youth) revive the energy we used in singing our favorite matching song "we are the leaders of tomorrow..."

Let us participate in politics to better our country for our land is green enough to build our greener pastures.

But the Narrative remains the same just as the failed system, the youth will rant for change but then not participate to build a change.

Promoting Youths Political Participation in Nigeria

Oringo Bamidele



INTRODUCTION

The pre and post-independence epoch In Nigeria witnessed a surge in political participation by the youths. Thus, Chief Anthony

Enahoro was only 30 years old when he moved the motion for independence in 1953 and the likes of **General Yakubu Gowon**, **General Olusegun Obasanjo** and **General Murtala Muhammed** all became heads of state below the age of 40. Back then, the Nigerian political arena witnessed dogmatic and vibrant youths, the likes of **Fela Kuti**, **Wole Soyinka** and their contemporaries serving as oppositions and watchdogs against bad governance. Accordingly, this political paradigm, fostered an economic boom, grassroots political represent-

ation and the construction of factories, schools and an influx of foreign investors into the country. This clearly shows that there has always been room for youth representation in governance. Regrettably, nowadays, there is a tectonic shift from that reality. Youth political participation has taken a nosedive in the country; there's massive political apathy and a lack of inclusion of the youths in politics.

In the light of the foregoing, we shall analyze why there is political apathy among the Nigerian youths, and how can we promote political participation in Nigeria.

WHY IS THERE POLITICAL APATHY AMONG THE NIGERIAN YOUTHS?

Firstly, there are several reasons stifling youth participation and representation, chief among them being the simple fact that Nigerian youths are economically disenfranchised to afford the absurd cost of running for any office during elections in Nigeria.ⁱ Secondly, the youths are viewed as inexperienced and too younger by the elderly ones in politics. Thirdly, there's a widespread belief that votes don't count and thus participating in politics/ voting is viewed among the youth as a dissipation of one's energy in an irrelevant activity. Finally, the Nigerian youths are not vehemently enlightened about politics, a large portion of the youths have zero knowledge about politics; they are just floating around the surface of politics.

HOW TO PROMOTE YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

Constitutionally, the political rights of Nigerian citizens are guaranteed in **Section 14(2)(c), 40, 77, 117, 132, 178ⁱⁱ** and Inter alia of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These Constitutional provisions align with the **African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act in Article 13**. Thus, to ensure that Nigerian youths participate fully in politics, the following must take place: (1) The youths should unify among themselves and form an active political party, then, contribute amongst themselves to finance the party's activities. (2) Adequate security of lives and property must be ensured as the Nigerian political space is not safe.ⁱⁱⁱ (3) De-monetization of politics through vote buying and exorbitant



sales of forms. Indubitably, politics is very expensive in Nigeria, so indigent but educated youth cannot afford the requirements of standing elections in Nigeria except sponsored.^{iv} (4) Digitalization of some electoral processes like voting. The need to introduce electronic voting into the electoral process no matter the cost is imperative.^v (5) Constitutional reforms. For instance, the need to recognize zones and rotation of political positions are necessary. Reviewing qualifications and ages for political offices considering the youth is also important.^{vi} (6) Appointments of qualified youths into many positions of authority.^{vii}

CONCLUSION

The youths are the future and present of any society, therefore it is pertinent and apposite they are included in the political process of any nation that seeks growth and development. Hence, the youths should be appointed to positions of authority, political awareness should be created among the youths and government/ organisations should render financial aid to youths with good political interests.

ⁱ <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thisday-live.com/index.php/2022/05/26/on-youth-inclusion-in-nigerian-politics-2023-and-beyond/amp/>
Accessed 30th July 2022

ⁱⁱ 1999 Constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria, vol. 3, Cap C 23, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, with specific reference to Section 14(2)(c), 40, 77, 117, 132, 178

ⁱⁱⁱ Youth Political Participation in Nigeria: A Theoretical Synthesis written by Bariika Nornubari Vite, Essien Blessing Stephen, Nenbee Simeon Gbimoie, Kpaa Kabee: US-China Education Review B, April 2020, Vol. 10, No. 4, 155-166 doi :10.17265/2161-6248/2020.04.002

^{iv} Ibid

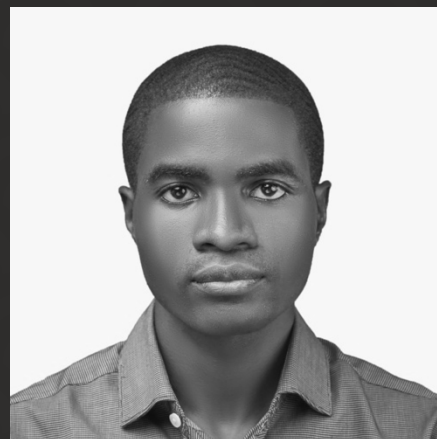
^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Ibid

The Young Nigerian and Political Participation

Nater Akpen



The exclusion of the youth, given their large population, in formal political processes undermines or even threatens the very legitimacy of the political infrastructure.

With exclusion from formal political processes, the youth are unable to give voice to their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

As it is said, if you do not have a seat at the dinner table, you are on the menu and you would be eaten. The youth, being absent from the political table means they are on the menu and have their hopes, dreams and aspirations eaten by those on the table. With greater electoral participation and digital activism, young people can begin a migration away from the margins of political life to its mainstream.

In what has been described as a "crisis in citizenship", the levels of youth participation – which were already low – are declining. Disillusionment, occasioned by unemployment, has been largely fingered in this trend. As a result, more and more youth have turned away from joining political parties. "If young people do not vote," writes James Sloam, "they are more likely to be ignored by politicians and policymakers".

By educating young people on citizenship and democracy, they would come to view electoral participation not as an ineffectual process but as a pathway for attaining their rights. This would set in motion a virtuous cycle: by voting in people, the youth would be able to influence the policy direction for youth-favourable schemes.

In every election, there are those who vote and those who are voted for. It is conventional to think of youth participation in connection to the youth being the ones doing the voting. This need



not be so. Youth must also be able to contest elections and be voted for. This way, they can get to be partners in the development process. With this partnership, young people would “not only be supporting but also leading global efforts and processes.” The visibility of youth in politics would lead many others to actively participate in it. Visibility in politics gives rise to a virtuous cycle.

The young people of the present age are the “digital natives” as they have been born in and are immersed in digital technology. Digital activism is a pathway the natives have taken to force themselves to the very centre of the world that has marginalized them. The rise in digital activism has caused the evolution of the phrase “participatory politics”. Participatory politics is defined as “interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern.”

Through digital social networks, young people can launch campaigns that capture the world’s attention. These campaigns can range from advocacy for a particular agenda or policy or lobbying against the same.

Most importantly, digital campaigns would serve to educate lesser informed citizens – young or old. Through this education, social networks would give individuals the basis upon which to make intelligent and informed decisions.

Political participation is a duty that young Nigerians owe, first, to themselves. In politics, they can begin to write the history of their futures. Out of politics, and unable to create the future, their future would only be one of self-betrayal – with no worthwhile history to write. But the future can be made bright.

Call to Obey; Rise and Shine

Emmanuel Oderinu



**Arise, O com-
patriot. Nige-
ria’s call obey.**

**To serve our
fathers land,
With love and
strength and
faith**

**THE LABOUR
OF OUR HE-**

ROES PAST SHALL NEVER BE IN VAIN

To serve with heart and might

One nation bound in freedom, Peace and Unity.

There is a popular saying that “*when the purpose of a thing is not known, abuse is inevitable. And the greatest tragedy in life is not death, but life without a purpose.*” This is in relation to our national anthem. There’s a national duty call the youths have to obey, there is a felt- need the youths have to arise and satisfy. We have the love; we have the strength and the faith to see life through, but how can we serve with our heart and might when we don’t know what we are fighting for or the need to fight in the first place? There is gap in knowledge of the labours of our heroes past.

This gap has to be filled for their labours not to be in vain. Knowledge and cultural heritage(property) that is passed down, which creates a sense of belonging and strengthens cultural ties between generations is missing and gradually diminishing amongst the youths of today. *how will they go if not sent? How will they know if not taught??* Most of the youths are not patriotic because they are not aware of the labours of our heroes past, that why our youths thrive outside the country, but careless about Nigeria as a country, they all just want to leave.

It’s only the known labour of our heroes past that won’t be in vain. I tell you, only if our youths knew what it took those who “fought tooth and nail” to bring about independence, freedom of rights, how



each state/ towns came into being, how we receive help in putting an end to the killing of twins (especially in the western parts of the country) and other remarkable dealings. Its certain that those labour of love shall never be in vain.

Just like in the advance western countries, we can promote youth participation in Nigeria by **enabling capacity development within the youths, the children and younger adults that will energize the ability of individuals to adjust to changes within their communities, cope with consequences of past political apathy and take advantage of the (present-future-continuous) opportunities that abounds within their communities to bring about the needed change in their communities.**

There is a **call to obey for our youths to Arise and Shine**; from the tertial institutions down to the primary level, courses on leadership skills and knowledge on our cultural heritage, political history particular to each state and the national at large should be taught. **The power of the youth is their strength**, strength to fight for what is right, strength to birth forth Innovative and creative ideas for their cherish communities and the nation at large. Nigeria belongs to Nigerians and Youths are the leaders of Today and Tomorrow. Its time to:

Arise, O compatriot. Nigeria's call obey.

To serve our fathers land, With love and strength and faith

THE LABOUR OF OUR HEROES PAST SHALL NEVER BE IN VAIN

To serve with all our might

One nation bound in freedom, Peace and Unity.

Apathy Towards Apathy

Michael Paul



It is becoming increasingly evident that the present administration has lost its popularity amongst the masses. The poor handling of the EndSARS protest, incessant labour

strikes, free fall of the naira and rising insecurity, among numerous other failures have led to this development. Sadly, the same can be said of the previous governments.

However, the citizens should also share the blame for the trend of failing leadership. After all, Nigeria is a democratic society, meaning that the citizens are responsible for electing their representatives into power. It is safe to say that Nigerians have failed woefully in this regard. Most Nigerians are disinterested in politics, as is seen in the dwindling voter turnout over the past elections. Also, political posts are usually contested for by a small sect of people, resulting in the same group of people being elected into these offices.

This political apathy is usually attributed to political violence, votes manipulation, ignorance on the importance of political participation, age restrictions in political offices and failures of past governments. Nigerians have, however, learnt the hard way that apathy is the antithesis of national development. Hence, it is imperative to find ways to tackle this growing apathy, for the betterment of the nation.

The youths constitute over 50 percent of the electorates; therefore, it would be strategic to channel the efforts to improve voter participation towards this demographic. Individuals, organisations and even the government should embark on nationwide sensitisation campaigns, especially in rural areas, on the importance of political participation. Also, social media should be utilised to reach the large population of youths that use such platforms. Contests – which could be in the form of essays, spoken word pieces, skits or short stories – on



topics emphasising the importance of political participation should be regularly organised. These will greatly improve youth political participation.

Also, the citizens should clamour for the installation of surveillance cameras at every polling unit. This will enable the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) monitor the conduct of the elections. These videos should be published on the INEC website for every citizen's perusal. This will help reduce irregularities, promote transparency and ultimately, improve political participation.

In addition, the constitution needs to be revised to give any Nigerian citizen, who is eligible to vote, the right to contest in elections. It seems hypocritical to prevent young adults from contesting for political posts whilst allowing those who are past the official retirement age in Nigeria to freely contest. The masses should be allowed to decide, with their votes, if a candidate is unfit for a political office. If this law is overturned, many youths will develop interest in politics.

Furthermore, in addition to students being taught about politics in classrooms, the schools should organise political activities so that the students can acclimatise themselves to the political landscape. Interested students can compete for school posts and test their public acceptance among their colleagues. The performances of the elected representatives should be monitored by an independent body of students, and the ineffective leaders should be impeached. This approach will spark political interests among the students.

No matter how bleak things may seem, there is hope for a better Nigeria. The power rests in the hands of the masses. Reports have shown that there has been a surge in youth voter registration in 2022. While this is a step forward, we must not let up in our efforts. With concerted efforts, our voices will be heard, and we will create the Nigeria we want to see. **Silence is no longer an option.**

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Abasiekeme Eshiet Eshiet



In recent times, due to the emergence of a new Nigeria that is full of social injustice, corruption, maladministration and other vices, there is need to

promote youth Political participation among Nigerian youth.

Youth Political participation is the active involvement of young people in the political activities of a country. A youth is a person between the age of 15 to 35 regardless of gender, who is able bodied and full of strength and energy. Youth are ambitious, enthusiastic, energetic and promising, Youth are backbones of the society, therefore due to high dependency on the youth in the society, promoting youth Political participation is a task that all must do.

Furthermore, due to the fact that youth are victims of failed system in today's Nigeria that encompasses corruption, insecurity, substandard education, lack of power supply, bad road construction, limited space for Political participation, non inclusion of youth in public policy formulation, lack of youth empowerment programs and workshops and other vices. The youth should be encouraged to play their roles in nation building by taking part in several political activities like joining in electoral campaigns, taking part in opinion poll, contesting for position at grass root levels, voting and being voted for and so on .The youth should organize programmes on television and radio stations as well as on social media platforms and these programmes could be based on their social, political, economic or educational needs.



It is quite heartbreaking to see a number of youth who have been cut in their prime by those who were supposed to protect them. Taking into cognizance, the period of ENDSARS protest in 2020, Nigerian youth rose up for justice and they took a bold step in standing up for their right and this indeed, was a time of reckoning in the history of the country. With the horrific stories of pain and brutality by the Police especially it's notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) a lot of youth were shot and wounded because of standing up for their right. In the midst of all these, law enforcement official still attacked peaceful youths and protesters, but the Nigerian youth played their role and continued to resist government overtures and still maintained their domination of public space and their right to take partake in the governance of the country by peacefully protesting to show that they are uncomfortable with certain happenings and decisions taken in the country. And this, indeed, is a form of youth Political participation and should be strongly promoted.

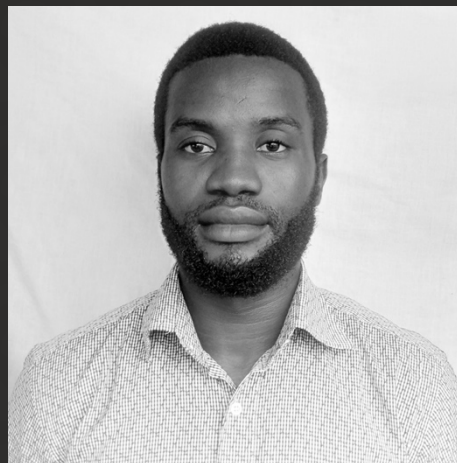
Another way of promoting youth participation in politics is by organizing workshop and seminars through which they can be exposed to several political activities that can be involved in because most of these young people believe that they cannot play any role in politics. So, from these seminars, they will be exposed to a wide range of ways to be involved in the political activities of the country. Thus, they will be promoted to take part in politics.

Furthermore, well-to-do individuals can help to promote youth political participation in Nigeria by deciding to sponsor young people who have the aspiration to contest for a position in government but do not have enough funds to get through the process.

In conclusion, since the future of Nigeria depends on its youth, therefore, the youth should be allowed to take part in Political activities without any form of fear or bias. With the active involvement of youth in Political activities in Nigeria, the future of our country will be more brighter.

Youth Political Apathy; Causes and Solutions

Alli Atilola Oni



When we were children with strong determination and big dreams, we sang and chanted "we are the leaders of tomorrow" but when 'the to-

morrow' dawns on us as youths, we keep drifting away from the reality of our dreams. Consequently, the destiny of our great nation keeps resting on the weak shoulders of past leaders who are unwilling to cede power. The two big questions are why do the political interests of youths keep waning? And what can we do about it?

Firstly, the political system in Nigeria has been 'politically' altered to favour the rich. The Federal Government raises the bar for the nomination fee too high for the youths to scale through, and party tickets are usually given to the highest bidder, whom they think has the surest chance to win the election. "Not too young to run" but their inconsideration makes us seem too poor to throw our hats into the ring.

Evidently, these are stumbling blocks demoting youth political interests that need to be removed. Therefore, youth political parties or young interested candidates should be considered regarding the fee for nomination form whereby a fair percentage reduction is made as incentives for competent young candidates. Also, some political posts like the office of minister and commissioner for youth and sports should be allotted to only young politicians.

Furthermore, crimes and insecurities such as killing, kidnapping, and hijacking ballot boxes rampant in our political system are terrifying youths from participating in politics. In a country where justice and security are unstable like its electricity, no youth would want to risk his or her young life playing the



dirty and gory game they have turned politics into in Nigeria.

Concerning this problem, Security Agencies should put more effort into curbing insecurities often perpetrated by political miscreants, especially during elections. Likewise, political parties vying for posts should stop having desperate intentions for their candidates to win elections by hook or by crook. They should allow more youths to become members of their parties by giving them a fair and considerate chance to run. These will erase the fear and threat instilled in youths' minds and also motivate them to contest without the trepidation of dying young.

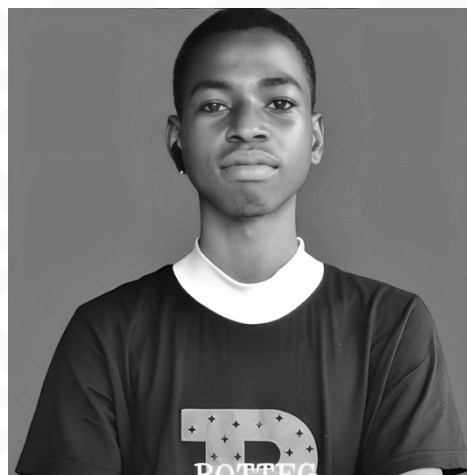
Moreover, social media is a great tool to boost the enthusiasm of youths to participate in politics. Unfortunately, today, social media has been an iron fist in a velvet glove leading young people indirectly into political apathy. They usually use social media to vent and throw political banter or post long expressive epistles about politics, but when an election comes, this set of youths do not have a Permanent Voters Card (PVC), let alone come out to vote.

To address this, it is necessary to keep sensitizing the youths who are 'e-politicians' that Twitter or Facebook is not the National Assembly, and only the voices projected through the PVC will count in ballot boxes, not the well-crafted epistles posted on social media. Similarly, different youth organizations should utilize these platforms to educate youths on the right and peaceful way to participate in politics, and also, young fellows who are being manipulated as political thugs or machinery should be called to order.

Finally, dear 'Obidient' youths, it is time we stopped watching like a 'BAT' and 'Atikulated' the synergy in our voices. Let us 'sòrò sòkè' louder than we ever did before. With our young and beautiful minds, we can right the wrongs in our political system, and I believe this is the only ray of hope we have to end the vicious cycle and save our nation from the old hands.

The Youths: The Ideal Leader Nigeria Needs for a Positive Change

Sunday Saheed



Politics in Nigeria has been argued to be more of a game than it's a ruling system. To describe Nigeria's political system is to dress it with

an adjective of dangerous, tricky, or precarious. But can one say this is enough as validation for youths' lack of interest in politics? No, I believe.

To begin with the age restriction of the Nigerian constitution, we could see how from the outset the country has given much more opportunity to the old than the youths. In fact, from the previous records of presidential and gubernatorial history, the conclusion that Nigeria practises a gerontocratic system (where the old people rule) is not baseless.

Sometimes, I wonder if democracy in Nigeria is democratic after all. The political system is meant to be of the people, by the people, and for the people. But such is not the case, herein. This country has given a different perspective to what democracy should mean, a reconstruction perhaps — wherein the elected representative becomes the head of the people, and not necessarily by or for the people. What I mean, in short, is that gaining a political seat in Nigeria is more about affluence and influence. It does not really matter if the candidate is an exemplary one and if he is right for the country or not. How then do the youths, who are meant to be the future of this country, participate in politics? And what will be the importance of the youths' political participation?



First is the recognition of education as an all-round developmental factor, and its dynamism too. It is obvious that things improve and upgrade, education included. This means that the kind of education the youths have been screened through isn't the same as the elderly ones. There is a wide gap in educational infusion, political knowledge included. What I mean is, the youths have more information about the current politics and from the interest that has been built in them with regards to books, they have the knowledge of the past politics too. Now, the combination of their knowledge of both the present and past systems of politics will yield a massive positive change. Are you beginning to see why the youths' political participation should be promoted?

One of the virtues that make the youths better candidates for politics in Nigeria is their eloquence and persistence to enforce radical change. This was perfectly portrayed during the resistance against the SARS in 2020 – the EndSars movement. The youths' eloquence and strong will were seen in vivid light. Why? To get rid of what they believe is more of a tragedy than a blessing to them. Now, all we need is a strip of imagination. Let's imagine if these youths, with their eloquent voice and strong will, rule the nation. The result will be positive, of course. From historical references, we have seen how world leaders with eloquence (verbal skills) have influenced their subordinates into action for the betterment of the society. Look at Mark Anthony in Julius Caesar, the Roman Emperor; Adolf Hitler of Germany; Winston Churchill, etc. and you will understand the power of voice, which predominantly belongs to the youths.

In conclusion, the youths' (by the virtue of their eloquence, education, strong will, and youthful vigor) political participation should be promoted, as the importance of their participation is a positive change in the country.

Youths as Powerful Instruments for Political Change and Socioeconomic Development

Arowolo Seun Samuel



My grandmother once told me a story of how she and other villagers danced around the village when Nigeria gained independence. According

to her, the joy that accompanied this event was overwhelming as people of all ethnic groups came together to celebrate the eventual freedom from the claws of colonial leaders. Having witnessed the servitude, discrimination, and brutal killings of white men, they considered it a thing of joy to gain freedom after years of slavery. The country is now free from the shackles of white men and can now run its own affairs. There were high hopes that the country's much-needed growth and development would soon begin.

My grandma, who has lived on this planet for more than 80 years, lamentedably stated that the colonial period in Nigeria was preferable to the post-colonial period. She has seen decades of poor leadership. Although I wasn't born during this time period, the hurt in her voice caused me to nod in agreement with her conclusion.

Youths in Nigeria, like me, inherited a nation that had been destabilized by military rulers who ruled with terror and subjugation, and the nation is today being kept captive by politicians who use prestigious political positions for their private profits. The nation's democratic leaders have frequently been flummoxed, clueless and complacent about moving the country ahead.

The youth are most impacted by Nigeria's poor governance and incompetent leadership. Soro-soke, which means "speak up," is one of the catchphrases used during the #EndSARS movement.



Youths in Nigeria have long endured dehumanizing treatment from political leader who don't care about the welfare of the populace. For a better future, young people must speak out. To ensure effective change, accountability, and good governance, there must be an adequate supply of clear and coherent strategies. The youth population in Nigeria presents a great opportunity to influence the emergence of a new generation of leaders who are able to address and solve the chronic problems that have eaten deeply into the country, with more than half of registered voters in Nigeria falling within the youthful bracket of 18-35 years. Engaging the existing political and economic leaders strategically to promote intergenerational conversation would help to ensure a smooth transition.

Since young people make up the largest portion of the electorate in the nation and have the ability to select deserving leaders, active involvement is the power of youth that has the greatest potential for transformation. Octavia Butler rightly said, *"Choose your leaders with wisdom and forethought. To be led by a fool is to be led by the opportunists who control the fool. To be led by a thief is to offer up your most precious treasures to be stolen."*

Furthermore, Nigeria's young population offers a significant chance for rapid and long-term economic growth and development. As a result, young people must make an active effort to foster a culture and environment that supports the creation of the future they see. As the development of human capital is essential to Nigeria's revival, the youth must band together and create a value system for responsibility, integrity, implementation, and teamwork. Truly, the change we desire must begin with us.

The youth are trustees for the future and have a significant influence on how the nation will be shaped. Today's young must take action or they risk passing down to future generations the same painful story my grandmother told me about how Nigeria changed leaders without accompanying improved governance.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ogbaga Sunday Thomas



The need for youths to participate effectively in the political affairs of their nation can never be over-emphasized. This is because youths are

still in their fullness of energy and intellectual capacity which could be leveraged to promote good governance, accountability, strong institutions, citizens' empowerment and so much more. Unfortunately, in Nigeria today, youth political participation is like a lost ball in the high weeds. Only infinitesimal few care about the political affairs of the nation, and in very rare cases are their needs taken into consideration in decision and policy-making processes.

There are many factors orchestrating this menace. Top on the list is the gradual but consistent marginalization of the youths by older generation politicians, which has over time dampened the interest of youths in political activities. Others include ignorance on the side of the youths, lack of political support from youths to their fellow youths, and indeed, poverty.

The impact of this poor participation has become a major drawback for Nigeria. Our politicians and people in the position of authority now do anything and get away with it because the youths who are naturally supposed to hold them accountable are either uninterested or being manipulated. From yesteryear's *"Giant of Africa"*, we are now left with a nation that has gained global notoriety for bad governance, grand corruption, man-made poverty, insecurity, dwindling economy...among others.



These prevailing situations do not offer us the luxury to continue to stand with arms akimbo. Our future is at stake! We must begin to participate actively in political affairs of Nigeria and lead the fray for our country's redemption. In view of that, my widow's mites are:

Advocacy for Unconditional Reservation of Political Positions for the Youths: It is a collective insult to our intelligence that youth-oriented positions such as minister/commissioners of youth affairs, Diplomats, Ambassadors, etc. are given to grey-hair politicians whereas there are countlessly qualified and able youths. If for anything, the #END-SARS protest has shown that notwithstanding our leader's laissez-faire attitude on matters concerning youths, our demands can still prevail when we are resolute and act in one accord. It is high time we demanded that certain percentage of political positions and appointments be reserved exclusively for youths.

Use of Social Media for Political Education: since its advent, social media has tremendously aided major revolutions, reforms, and social change across the globe. As a matter of urgency, we must start using social media to enlighten, educate, and mobilize our fellow youths towards participating and promoting accountable and responsive governance. Alas, the recent social media campaigns for PVC registration and the subsequent influx of new young registrants is a loud demonstration that we can do more as regards using social media to promote youth political participation in Nigeria.

Support for Our Fellow Youths: Politics is a game of numbers. Thankfully, we constitute majority of the Nigerian population. We must begin to support our fellow young people vying for political offices.

Strive for Financial Independency: It is said that *"He who feeds one controls him"*. The older generation politicians have created and weaponized poverty across the country as their clandestine means of getting the youths to dance to their tune. That is why they could pay hungry youths peanuts to serve as political thugs or praise-singers. We must strive to legally liberate ourselves from abject poverty. Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship is the surest pathway to that.

It was Fela Anikulapo-Kuti who rightly said *"If the society is not fit to live in, then our job is to make it fit."* We truly need to stop being onlookers and start taking the lead!

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

James Eneojile



The world map tells a little story. On the map, Africa is shaped like a gun, and right on the trigger of that imaginary gun, is Nigeria. This in itself fore-

tells that Nigeria would in the years to come, propel Africa into global dominance. But if this must ring true, then we must lend our voices to our stories.

There is no denying the fact that the ultimate story of Nigeria to come has for long been written by others; there is a need for us to now own our problems, proffer our solutions, and write our own story. Nigeria is blessed. The country is strategically placed, geographically, with the necessary resources and tools to propel itself into socio-economic stability because it has an abundance of both renewable and non-renewable natural resources which in normal conditions should transcend into economic tranquility. It then begs the question: why is the nation still plagued with typical developmental problems? We can at least be very honest enough to understand that on that bright and bubbly Thursday of October 1st, 1960, when the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo shared a hug in victory for our Independence, this was not the Nigeria they dreamt of.

Truthfully, as Nigerian youths, up to the level we are willing to admit, we find ourselves as the architects behind this downward spiral. We have mortgaged our futures for the stipends we receive every four years, and it looks like a narrative unwilling to end. Youths have become more interested in trends and



hashtags than in the politics that decide their futures. The consequent factor of this very familiar narrative is the bad leadership that accompanies it. It is truly time for Nigerian youths, to snatch the pen, own our stories and write them, ourselves.

Firstly, we must all collectively understand that any form of apathy we possess towards politics and the electoral process is simply an empowerment of the bad governance that has been seemingly legalized within the Nigerian system. Also, we must secure a progressive leadership littered with young men and women with the will to serve and leadership acumen to match it. Leadership is the focal point of any universal bid at transformation. To this end, every nation effectively resembles the exact kind of leadership it receives over a sustained period. We must agitate for a youthful leadership ruggedly tailored with the interests of the people at heart above everything else.

One very practical method to secure youthful participation in politics is a heightened political sensitization among the youthful populace. Core in this bid will be civic education. Our educational syllabuses must reflect our bid to ensure that the true meaning of being Nigerian resonates with every youth on the street. The youth would likely want to be part of something they have developed a passion for. Let us restore a resonance with the Nigerian identity.

Another route we could take is to agitate for a clear-cut legal framework that supports youthful participation in politics and more importantly, secure its implementation. The youth should feel part of the electoral process. The leaders of tomorrow must be allowed the opportunity to lead when that tomorrow finally comes.

Beneath the mask of reticence that the average Nigerian youth seemingly wears is a dream of a better Nigeria. But if anything will change within the Nigerian landscape, we must do away with the political route of old, crooked politicians determined to woo us with their sugar-coated tongues and hypnotising manifestoes. With youths, Nigeria has a chance!

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ajayi Elijah



At exactly 11am every Saturday, the doorbell would ring.

I intuitively knew who was at the door

I wasn't a magician neither did I

have any superpower

I just knew it.

Opening the door with the brightest smile on my face, I'd grab the papers, yes the newspapers, greet and say 'thank you sir' to our vendor. I loved reading the newspapers. In fact, I loved reading anything that was "bigger" than me.

Scrawny five year old me would sit on the sofa, literally devouring the pages of what I wasn't sure I could even pronounce. The newspaper was my only means of connection to the outside world, it was the portal to all information; health, tech, sports, academics, and of course the news.

A decade later, things are not the same anymore and yes there was no alien invasion or maybe there was, I had suddenly lost interest in what seemed to be the unique aspect of my childhood and just like me, there are millions of youth out there who have lost interest in the politics of our country, Nigeria.

"Politics is a dirty game"

"Politics is strictly for the rich"

"Politics is not worth participating in"

I have heard all sorts, even from supposed leaders of the country, some utter it directly, others prove it by their actions and deeds.

Participation is a fundamental human right and every youth out there cannot be stripped off of



that privilege. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a key role in their own development as well as in the community they find themselves. Participating actively will help teenagers to learn vital life skills, develop an all round knowledge of the happenings in the society and also in the long run promote positive civic actions.

It is however sad to learn that this right has been taken away by old cabals in their various offices. To tackle and defeat the low participation of youths in politics in Nigeria, We must first identify the root cause.

Why are youths disenfranchised from politics?

Lack of interest?

Lack of information?

Hopelessness?

Skepticism?

Whatever it is, there will always be a solution.

Here are a few nuggets I'd like to share in hope that one day, our leaders at the top will be a transparent reflection of our choice:

GO DIGITAL

Technology has made it easier and simpler for a concerned youth to voice out his opinions and ideas unlike a decade ago. We can therefore use this same technology, media outlets to inform and educate the younger ones on the need for political participation. Organize webinars and seminars on sensitive issues related to politics and spread the information across every social media platforms.

GO PERSUASIVE

Encourage us when we start our own movements, when we spearhead events related to things we deeply care about, do not discourage us by setting ridiculous requirements to participate, reduce the exorbitant costs associated with participating, support rather than silence us, lower the age of eligibility to run for office, stop the assumptions about

us being unintelligent and immature to make informed decisions.

WE ARE NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN, WE ARE UP TO THE TASK!

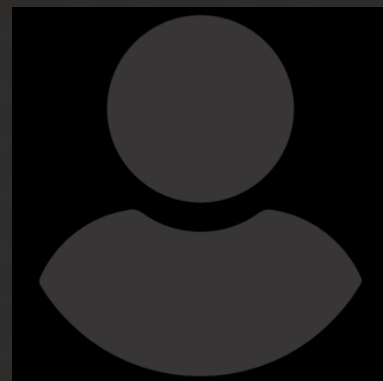
And finally,

GO SOFT

Maybe just like me, "aliens" have crept into our hearts, killing our interests in what matters now and in the future. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that if we are given the opportunity, the chance to prove ourselves once again, the change we hope for, will unfold right before our eyes.

Youth Participation in Politics in Nigeria; The Way Forward

Abifarin Fodlulah



Political participation refers to the activeness in the political affairs of a country. It is the involvement in the political policies and decision-making process of a country. Nigeria is a country with over

200 million citizens of which 70% of the population are under the age of thirty. Despite a large number of youthful citizens, the country lacks a lot when it comes to youth participation in the political affairs of the nation.

This issue of political apathy is not a national issue in Nigeria alone but in Africa at large. Despite the existence of multi-party systems of government in most of these countries, they still struggle with the issue of voting out old leaders who are incapable of handling the affairs of the nation. The likes of Paul Biya of Cameroon, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea all served as presidents of their countries for more than three decades. Among the three of them, two are active as the Presidents of their countries.



Since the inception of the democratic system of government in Nigeria, the youngest leader of the country was Goodluck Jonathan, who is 64 years old now. The current administration in the country has a president that is 79 years old, the youngest minister that is 46 years old, the youngest senator that is 42 years old, and the youngest Governor that is 47 years old. These facts explain how poor the political participation among the youths happens to be in many African countries. Nigeria is facing issues of insecurity, poor education funding, a poor economical system, and so on.

However, youth participation in politics is not even an issue in many countries outside Africa. Emmanuel Macron became the youngest ever president of France in 2017 at the age of 39. His administration has helped to rejuvenate the French economy by fixing major issues. Also, many financial analysts have predicted that his "Macron Law" will generate a 0.3%/0.5%/0.4% GDP increase in 5 to 10 years. Macron has proposed a law that bans corrupt practices and nepotism among political office holders. Before he was elected as the president, he served as the minister of Economics, Industry, and Digital affairs between 2014 and 2016. This explains why youth participation in politics is very important in any nation's affairs.

Another example of youth leadership is the system of government in Qatar. Even though Qatar practices a semi-constitutional monarchy system of government, the head of state is only 42 years old. He became the Emir at the age of 33 in 2013. Today, the country has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and it is the largest oil producer in the world. Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup in 2022 and that will serve as a major boost to the country's economy.

The solutions to youth participation in politics include the creation of age limits for many political positions, the provision of political positions that are strictly for youths alone, awareness creation and sensitization for youths about their right to vote and to be voted for, and strict punishments for leaders that fail to perform well in their positions after a given timeframe.

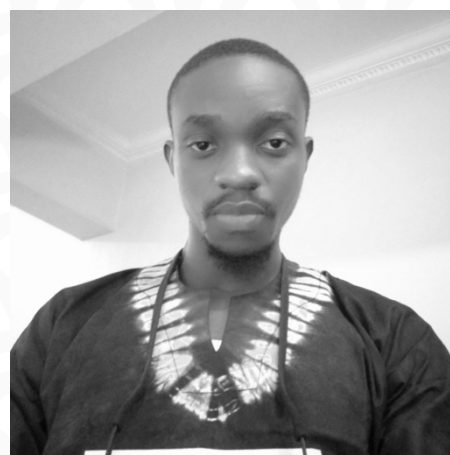
The words of Edem Agbana, a Ghanaian education activist, should be every youth's watchword. He

said, "Young people must have their voices heard every time. We cannot be passive participants in the conversation about our future". For any nation that truly desires a positive future for its people, youth participation in politics must be prioritized.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria: The Way Forward

Iwuagwu Ikechukwu

The youth is the hope of our future
... José Rizal



The growth of any Nation is dependent on the younger generations who are the future. It is appalling that in the Giant of Africa, less than 5% of youths are in

active politics, do we blame the ignorance of the fact that the youth is the most vibrant demographic of any given country? Since 1st October, 1960, Nigeria has recycled the same set of old, visionless leaders who are ignorant of the provisions of the 21st century, kleptomaniacs who have hampered the growth of our country with outdated policies. Currently, over 33.6 million (16.8 percent) Nigerians are regarded as youths (aged between 15 and 35). However, according to statistics, about 43.69 percent of Nigeria's total population were aged 0 to 14 in 2019. This means that in the nearest future, the youth will increasingly form the bulk of the country's population as children grow older into young adults.

For an active youth political participation to be realized, Nigerian youths must first accept that they are the future. Popular Filipino writer and polymath José Rizal underscores this via his assertion that "The youth is the hope of our future". Participation is a fundamental right and one of the guiding principles of the Universal declaration of Human



Rights, this must be fully accepted by every youth as it remains the only possible catalyst to inspire active youth political participation. They should be concerned with the fact that when one looks at youth representation in leadership roles, it paints a completely different picture. One of low, in many cases, no representation. Youth representation across board is penned at 1%. With 1% of the leadership positions across all levels and tiers of governance in Nigeria, there's no way this trend paints a good look for an emerging economy like Nigeria in a fast pace advancing world. Therefore, there are steps to be taken to ensure and promote active youth political participation here in Nigeria.

First, youths must join political parties and get involved in decision making as well as policies that affect selection of flagbearers at all levels of governance. Unfortunately, a contributing factor to poor youth political participation is political apathy, this is because they have been made to accept that politics is only for the elderly, hence, not of concern to them but if youth political participation must improve, then they must be actively involved.

Godfatherism is yet another clog in the wheel of active youth political participation due to its ugly dance that reeks of incapacitation, and must be shunned by the same youths who become arrows in the quivers of these political gods. Godfatherism turns a candidate to a puppet. Clearly, even if a youth is being elected into any political office, with the way the Nigerian political terrain is situated, he or she would be needing sponsors and these sponsors who dole out millions to sponsor his campaign will in the end require reparations upon assumption of office thereby incapacitating his or her political plans.

Conclusively, a wise saying has it that "one single stick of broom cannot sweep dirt, but when bound together, many broomsticks can" the rippling effect of revolution cannot be underrated, this is because many countries of the world that have been liberated from the shackles of bad leadership viz a viz corrupt practices and incompetence did so through revolutions. The youths should say 'enough' to the continuous recycling of grandfathers as Nigeria leaders in union, this will not only change the status-quo by enthroning active youth

political participation but also ushering in a new dawn into our dear Nigeria.

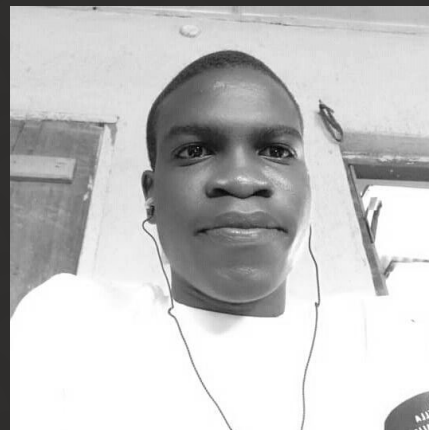
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Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Mayowa Adekola



It's high time we dejectedly cast aspersion on gerontocratic government in Nigeria, and heartily embrace politics operated by young brains whom liveliness and

humongous initiatives stream in their blood. It's utterly due for we, youth to brace up, eject, and ultimately dismiss decrepit administration and affirm the rulership of the youthful vivacity.

Many a country in Africa, Nigeria inclusive is being ruled by old politicians with ancient ideas instead of encouraging useful youths that will help navigate the paths that will lead to greater infrastructural development and technological progression in the continent. Nigeria, out of these African countries, is being ruled by aged men even in the past few decades, and the forthcoming election will assuredly, welcome another administration of the old. The outcry is when will the youth take charge and be the leader of tomorrow-today?

Notwithstanding, we, the vivacious youth are not to stay behind the wall with our hands folded and our palms covering our face, an expression suggesting giving up which will therefore, embolden the continuity of these aged personalities. In that



case, this essay will discuss on how to promote youth political participation in Nigeria. In other word, how to incite or support the youth in their political aspirations in order to achieve the long-term vision for this great country, and this will be subsequently expatiated.

To start with, participating in politics can be indifferent form ranging from campaigning for political party to sponsoring, from financing political party to belonging to political party, and especially holding of political position and voting at elections. The very first way to promote youth political participation is "catching the youth young". It is scripturally stated that "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he grows up, he will not depart from it". This can also be borrowed into politics in the sense that young minds should be made to understand the nitty-gritty of politics right from their childhood so as to make them politically active when they grow older. Is it possible for one to be cognizant on what one wasn't enlightened on, or can one be aware of what one is not trained on? Of course, no. And that is why we have the same lineage ruling us in this country all because their descendants had been nurtured on the relevancies of politics from time and this make them stay alive as they receive the baton of leadership to continue the race. Therefore, if the children as young as they are can be caused to understand the essence of politics, then youth political participation in Nigeria will greatly yield positivity and there won't be misconceptions about politics among the teenager.

Again, instead of only having minimum age for holding political offices in the constitution i.e. president, 35years, there should likewise be maximum age which should not exceed 60years; it is not a declaration anyway. This will make the youth to see the reason to engage their mind, have the foresight of involving in politics and then rule out the long in the tooth. In the same vein, the electoral commission of the country should be independently independent, neutral and impartial as they carry out their activities as they are the major determinant of electoral success and the emergence of a competent leader with charisma and not just cardigan.

Now, should PVC be considered for admission into higher institutions, for employment and job applic-

ation? I strongly support this with an unshakable yes! Many youth has relented in voting and has developed apathy to politics because there is no sanction to apathy and refusal to vote. If restriction to some rights are entrenched in the constitution as a way of making the youth to participate in politics and if this is stringently upheld, then I have no doubt that it would promote youth participation in politics in Nigeria, massive one at that!

In conclusion, effective political symposium and programme should be organised to sensitize, orient, and awaken youth political consciousness. Politically enabling platforms should be created for the youth to air their view in the political world. The interference of the old ones in their gathering should outrightly be debarred (godfatherism) as that will be a kind of intimidation and threat to their choice and expression on politics. Relatedly, parties that have been existing for quite a long time or the ones formed by the eldern should be exterminated and New hope from the New blood should be installed. With these, I, alongside with other optimistic dreamers affirm that this great "nation" will feel the breeze of the potency and the competency of a young purposeful leader having gotten rid of evil player and dabbler of power with archaic mentality and corrupt identity.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Stanley Sim



Have the youth washed their hands off politics or is there no provision for them to participate?

Our country has a population of over 260 million people dominated by youths (aged 15-39 years) of an estimated number of about 33.6 million (17%), which is always on the increase. The youth, have been heard across every sector of life, every field of profession, on every controversial topic, across every country and on every social media platform but is that all there is?



Do we only want to be on social media, writing and giving opinionated articles and tweets? Making videos and brand influencing? Do we only want to be the 'social media generation' as they call us? Isn't there more? Because I think it's about time we all got involved in politics like it's the only step left, because it is. Yes, we're tired but this is our land, we can't stop till Nigeria is the reality we all dream and hope for, till Nigeria is ours!

Political participation is the act of taking part in politics, aimed at changing or supporting government policy or officials. It simply means making a voice for yourself and others in politics.

Political apathy is no news in Nigeria, when the youth are disengaged from politics; a significant portion of the nation has lost her voice and the fate of deciding their future. Political participation is crucial for proper government. How will our tomorrow be if our voices aren't heard today?

The political apathy (having no interest in politics), of Nigerian youth could be as a result of **poor government, election malpractices, inadequate insecurity, bribery and corruption, government failure, lack of education, poverty, unemployment, drugs and addictions and other social vices.**

Other **causes** could include;

- Popular dislike of politicians.
- Belief that one vote doesn't count.
- Critical and negative media.
- Lack of variety in politicians.
- Dishonesty of politicians.

What are the ways to **discourage political apathy in youths?**

Education; education is the most powerful force on the planet and should be utilized; the youths should be educated on,

- Politicians and policies.
- Getting PVC for the **upcoming 2023** election.
- The importance of politics; it's the only way to take the future.
- Voting is a duty not a choice!

How can the **participation be encouraged?**

- Including the youths in government plans.
- Providing funds for businesses.
- Implementation; e.g. having PVC should be implemented.
- Programs which favor the youths should be provided by the government.
- Reporting and evaluation of funds used.

How can the youths improve the governments if in politics?

- Through (social) media and petitions.
- Through education.
- Helping to bring a sense of belonging.

Importance of political participation;

- It brings insight and another perspective on how to manage the country.
- Enhances development, self-discipline and self-esteem.
- Help to tackle problems of the youth.
- Boost productivity.
- Increase status and stature of the economy.

How the youths can participate in politics;

- Getting PVC!
- Casting votes.
- Running for government posts.
- Involvement in mass rallies that involves them.
- Participating in elections.

Our government function on feedback mechanism to function properly and effectively, it works like a two way road to formulate and implement policies. The pillars of good government include accountability, participation, predictability and transparency. It's important to note that good government and active participation work hand in hand. Whether you get involved in politics or not, politics has already gotten involved with you. To take our future we must be concise and deliberate, political participation is the future, the future is now!

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Youth Active Participation in Politics

Igwe Ugochukwu Kelvin



In previous years, The political structure of our country Nigeria was and is still being ruled by our parents and Grandparents who should have retired from the workforce but the reverse is the case, They still

exercise authority over the nation in various aspects of the government.

Moreover, over the last two years Nigeria Politics has started taking a new form in such a way that the youth are showing sheer determination to participate in all aspect of Politics even though with the recent shift in Political activities in Nigeria, A lot of challenges are met and yet to be overcome. Hope is not lost, The youth sheer determination shall remain strong.

However for full participation in politics, The youths have to change their mindset from this belief that Politics is a dirty game and have a better orientation on the basic principles of leadership and follower ship, This will help the youth to know what is expected from them.

Secondly, The youths should be encouraged to vote and join political parties across the nation, This process enlightens the youth on what they are to expect once they venture into politics and Politics is not a bed of roses, A lot of sacrifices has to be made for the development of our dear country Nigeria.

Thirdly, Conferences and Seminars can be organised by Government Institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations, Universities and Concerned individuals on the need for Youth Active Participation in Politics, that is the Pros and the Cons in Politics.

Finally, The youth should be and can be represented in the Decision making policy of the country. During the House of Senate Meetings, The Federal Executive council Meetings and The House of Representatives Youth representatives that represent their various constituencies can voice out challenges encountered in their constituencies and solutions are offered On how to overcome such challenges.

The need for Youth's Active Participation in politics is of the utmost importance as the 2023 General Elections are fast approaching and there is the need for a positive change in all areas of politics in Our Nation.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Abdullateef Azeez Adedayo



Looking at the present state of youths' political participation behavior in Nigeria, it is self-evident that democracy is undergoing a youth revolution. This situation

has bolstered the decision-making power of youth in determining who gets what, when and how in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, the 2019 general election is a reference point to the power of a focused and passionate youth bloc. They occupied 51.11% of the roughly 43 million registered voters in the country.

So essentially, the unfolding youth revolution is increasing in the way social media is being embraced largely by the youth to express opinions, exact influences and participate in the dialogue regarding political, economic, management and other social decisions. However, as per the Nigerian National Youth Policy (2019); a youth is a person between the ages of 18-29 years which make it clear that youth representation across board is barely 5%



where we have an estimate of 64 million youth in Nigeria as disclosed by the National Bureau of statistics. Hence, there is a need to promote youth political participation.

Historically, the basis of democracy gives room for youths' participation in politics considering their efforts in the achievement of independence in Nigeria. Dr. Azikwe, Awolowo, Enahoro were all youth when they championed the course of independence as student union activists.

Therefore, to ensure that youth become a beacon of new hope for political direction in Nigeria, several steps have been taken such as to mention but few; the Not Too Young To Run (NTYTR) law of 2018 which reduced the age of people running for elective positions to House of Assembly and House of Representatives from 30 to 25 years old, Senate and Governorship from 35-30 years and office of the President from 40-30 and to allow independent candidates to run for elections.

Also, the need to mentor youth and get them involved in political parties, parliament, political appointments, election process and civic spaces was recognized by the people of interest to arrest the neglect of youth development which has made the Nigerian youth unprepared for leadership. They resolved to organize a legislative mentorship initiative (LMI) program to develop the next generation of legislators and ethical public-sector leaders through equipping them with responsive leadership skills, knowledge and expertise.

So, in the words of Nelson Mandela "I appeal to youth and those on the ground to start talking to each other across divisions of race and political organizations" because they can be a creative force, a dynamic source of innovation and a catalyst for a progressive Nigeria.

Conclusively, Nigeria is the giant of Africa and will remain the giant only with functional and productive leaders.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ifeoma Deborah Nkemjika



Secretary-General

"If young people are not too young to get married, to serve in the military, or to choose the parliamentarian who will represent them, they are not too young to run." – Martin Chungong, IPU

The Nigerian youths must be encouraged to actively participate in the nation's building because they are the key agents of change and innovation.

According to the Oxford dictionary, to promote means to support or actively encourage or further the progress of something.

Yakine (1999), defined youth as "a young and aspiring person (male or female), ranging from the age of 18 to 35 years; that is the period of adolescence and early adulthood."

Briefly, political participation is any activity citizens engage in to influence the government of their country.

Nigeria is located in West Africa with over 200 million citizens. It is known for its multi-ethnicity; recording over 500 indigenous languages. Nigeria gained its independence in 1960 and consists of 36 states. The population of youths in Nigeria is about 33.6 million.

For decades, the average Nigerian youth has been politically apathetic including the Political Science undergraduates because of the corrupt political system owing to godfatherism, failed promises, violence, electoral malpractices, etc. They perceive Nigerian politics as a dirty game where the quest for power is bloody. So, they rather go about their daily lives exploring other ventures than risking their lives, resources, and values in politics.



According to INEC analysis, political participation (registered votes) from 1999 to 2015 has been staggering. The 1999 election summed 52.26%, 2003 - 69.08%, 2007 - 57.49%, 2011 - 53.68%, and 2015 summed only 43.652% out of about a 181.1million citizens at that time.

Recently, Nigerians, especially the youth, have shown promising interest in actively participating in the upcoming 2023 election because they are fed up with the repeated democratic disillusionment and this has brought about political activism and awareness.

President Buhari's regime has opened the eyes of the youths to the more dangers that lie ahead if a revolution does not ensue. The economy is not stable nor favourable for Nigerians, and this has led to national insecurities as a rise in criminal activities (e.g. robbery, kidnapping, rituals), strikes, and poverty leading to health complications. The primary incidents to mention a few include; the Boko-haram insurgencies, the Lekki massacre, and the religious violence at Owo Catholic Church. Thank goodness for the emergence of a visionary leader like Peter Obi.

Hence, the different ways to promote political participation in Nigeria include:

1. There should be a routine of awareness campaigns in public places such as schools, churches, markets, etc.
2. Voters' cards should be made compulsory for adults.
3. PVC registration and voting should be made online.
4. Security assurance throughout the election period.
5. The INEC officials should be a team tried and tested.
6. Elected candidates should fulfil their promises by improving the economy.
7. The national civic norms should be maintained at all costs and leave no room for nepotism.
8. Public influencers like celebrities and religious leaders should help sensitize the youths.

9. There should be an age range for contestants and official retirement age at all levels of government.
10. Electives should be held accountable and not immune to litigation.

In conclusion, there should be a strict implementation of the 'Not Too Young To Run Act' (NTYTRA) signed by President Buhari on 31st May 2018 that qualifies age 35 for president, age 30 for governorship and senators, age 25 for state assembly and the house of representatives. Prospective youths should use this opportunity to return the glory of Nigeria as the giant of Africa.

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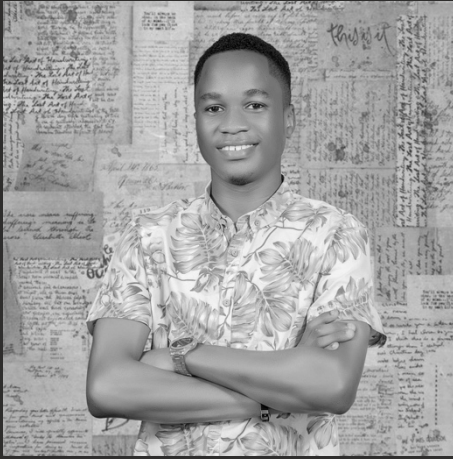
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Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Abasifreke Efiok Dan



"Our youth deserve a fair and hopeful future with government that values us equally" – Lady Gaga

In recent times, youth participation in the political system of Nigeria has recorded a positive and significant change, most especially due to the decades-long exclusion of youths by the gerontocrats who have controlled the political system of the country and for the purpose of creating a change in Nigeria. However, there are still needs to demote political apathy and promote political participation amongst the youths in the country.

Furthermore, every democracy in the world today needs a greater participation of youths for an effective execution of political strategies and ideas. In Nigeria today, the youths form a greater portion of "the people" which Abraham Lincoln posited in his dictum about democracy been "the government of the people, by the people and for the people." By implication, the political system of every democratic state like Nigeria should have a large number of youths in its records. Statistically, according to Country Meter, an online population clock in Nigeria, it is estimated that over 33.6 million (16.8 percent) Nigerians are categorized into the youth category. These massive figures of youths, if enlightened on the needs to participate in the political affairs of Nigeria, can go a long way in creating positive impacts in the country.

More so, discourses on youths' participation in the politics of Nigeria can promote the political interest in the youths, thus, leading to political participation. When youths participate in the political affairs of the nation, there is room for vibrancy and a desired change in our political process. Today in Nigeria, a greater percent of the citizenry complain of political disillusionment, failed leadership, poor

infrastructures and the dwindling economy. Most of these challenges are results of the poor political leadership structure of the country which is predominantly occupied by the gerontocrats. Chinua Achebe, in his book titled *"The Trouble with Nigeria,"* succinctly noted that "The trouble with Nigeria is squarely the failure of leadership;" and, a systemic study of the leadership system of Nigeria shows that between the youths and the gerontocrats, the latter constitutes a greater quota of the ratio. This, however can be reshuffled if youths' participation in politics is considered important and advocated for.

Comparatively, the promotion of youth political participation in Nigeria will be of great benefits to the country. This will give the youths and the nation at large the opportunity of creating a change in the country and it will also give them an accountability for the credibility or incredibility of their political leaders. For instance, in the just concluded governorship election in Osun State of Nigeria, fact-checkers of Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) revealed that the age category that forms the youth (18-34 years) recorded 39.7% of votes, while 32.5%, 19.2% and 8.51% were recorded by the middle-age, the elderly category and the older category, respectively. This shows the positive impacts that youth participation in politics can create in Nigeria and this can bring the desired national revitalization if this action (youth political participation) is unanimously extended to the forthcoming general elections in the country.

Conclusively, the concept of youth political participation and the needs to promote it in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Oftentimes, the youths have been tagged as the leaders of tomorrow, yet forgetting the fact that tomorrow starts today. However, for them to be effective leaders different from the ones we have in Nigeria today, then, the action must start today and political participation is the best way for the youths to become the great leaders of today and tomorrow.



Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Oluwatoyin Magbagbeola



Dear Readers,

My name is Oluwatoyin Magbagbeola. I'm a writer and activist who believes in the right to live, lead, and be led. These are three at-

tributes that I will be incorporating in my essay when discussing the promotion of Youth political participation in Nigeria. To give a definite meaning of what a youth means; "Youth is the time of life when one is young, and often means the time between childhood and adulthood (maturity). It is also defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit". We can call someone between the age range of 15-29, a Youth. Also, a British government poll has revealed that the age at which we should stop calling ourselves young is 40 years, eight months and two weeks, so the definition of being a Youth could mean many things. But I will have my focus on the age range I fall into which is age twenties. I believe that as Youth, we haven't been living the life that we well deserved. Majority of Nigerian Youths are facing injustice and impartial treatment in their own country. Judging by how the #endsars movement took over the world, people asking for the justice of many young Nigerians that died or were victims of corruptible police forces who saw them as nothing, or taking into consideration of students who hasn't gone to school for over six months now due to strike, but the government saw that has nothing crucial to deal with. It's only for the better that we start promoting the participation of Youth in our politics because it's only us that can define and fight for our rights and benefits. By including Youth participation would not only bring progress but also equality among all age ranges without discrimination.

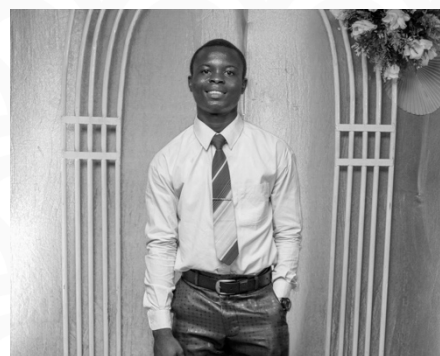
The right to lead is given to all. There shouldn't be any discrimination whenever someone younger is motivated to hold any political seats,

matter of fact, they should all be supported. Those holding onto political power today were once Youth when they started. I do not get why the inclusivity of Youth would be a threat to the present ones, isn't it better that we catch them young? We have sung multiple times that we are the future of tomorrow since we were little, but how come we still can't make a leader? By encouraging the Youth participation in politics because it's our rights will improve the social economy, as we all know that we Youth are the engine that drives a nation, and Nigeria is blessed to have the population of Youth, so why not make use of it?

The right to be led is also natural and it's our responsibility that we follow the leaders we chose. The participation of Youth in politics would trigger massive support from all Youth across the country. Seeing someone that is of our age range and inclusivity of gender will always motivate all young folks to become subservient. If we have a true leader that is ready to power the changes in a country, then we are in support all the way. The promotion of Youth participation in Nigeria Politics does have many social benefits and advantages to a country, and if only Nigeria could take clues from other countries who have indulged in the act and how they gained from it, the better we start now. I'm advocating for the change through this essay and I hope that everyone who reads this will be motivated to power up the change and give Youth a chance to be an element of positivity in our community through leadership.

The Role of the Youths in the Nigerian Political System

Adegoke Adeseun Oladayo



To build a working country, both the old and young have their responsibilities and one cannot take over the responsibility of the

other. This is no exception to the giant of Africa - Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation located on



the western coast of Africa. It houses over 250 ethnic groups with Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo being the dominant tribes.¹ Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with about 28% of the country's population representing youths aged between 18 and 35.² Therefore, it is no crime to say that the youths of the country have significant roles to play in the political system of the country.

One of the several ways in which youths in the country can play their roles in politics is to contest for political posts. It is disappointing that youths in the country exhibit political apathy with the majority not even being a member of any political party. The youths need to realize that they cannot continue to fold their arms and watch the old men take up a larger percentage of political posts in the country. The young, vibrant, and energetic youths need to invest their fresh vitality in the betterment of the nation. Even though they have been tagged "the leaders of tomorrow", they have to take up the leadership role now so that it will be certain they can truly lead tomorrow.

Another way youths can participate in the political affairs of the country is to "soro soke" [speak louder] with their Permanent Voters Card [PVC]. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC], Nigerian women and youths represent more than 75% of the registered voters ahead of the 2023 general elections.³ This shows that the youths of the country are a greater factor in determining the person who leads them. It is also fundamental for the youths to know that they possess the right to vote for a candidate of their choice.

Although, Nigerian youths are beginning to realize that they are a major stakeholder in the political system of the country. They, however, encounter some challenges which limit their political participation and one of these obstructions is the cost associated with running for political posts. Obtaining forms for political offices in the country is very costly. An example of this is the recent presidential form of the All Progressive Congress [APC] which was sold for N100 million.⁴ Most youths cannot afford this huge amount of money which makes the post limited to the old-rich-men in the society.

To surmount this challenge of the high cost associated with running for political posts, youths in the country can form a new political party. The political party will have an age limit for new members and only those who have Nigeria's interest at heart and have passed certain integrity tests should be allowed to join. The nomination form of this new political party should be made affordable for members with funding through donations by members. Also, existing political parties should have a strong youth arm with reduced costs for their nomination forms, particularly for the youths.

In conclusion, the youths need to participate actively in the political system of the country by voting and also being voted for as it is their fundamental human right. The coming 2023 general election is another perfect atmosphere for the Nigerian youths to make known that their "franchise" really counts in electing the leader of their choice - one who has the interest of the country at heart.

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Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ekundayo Leah



"Freedom isn't free. It shouldn't be a bragging point 'oh, I don't get involved in politics', as if that makes you some

how cleaner. No, that makes

you derelict of duty in a republic, liars and panderers in government would have a much harder time if so many people didn't insist to remain ignorant and blindly agreeable".

I am Ekundayo Leah an undergraduate of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko and I want to shed more light on how to promote the participation of Nigeria youth in politics.

It's a shame that our present youth in Nigeria in Nigeria

display lack of interest in politics which is in fact detrimental to the future of our country.

To begin with, when we were Young we were told that we are the leaders of tomorrow but we grew up to realize that most of our leaders in political positions are well aged, hardly will see any youth holding a key position in government. That's the factor hindering youth political participation in not Nigeria because there no one to look up to, there's no youth political figure e.g ' this person is twenty three and he got this position at a very young age, he's my source of motivation, I want to be like him', no example to imitate or follow. This has discouraged many youth from participating in politics and this problem can be solved by paving way for more political opportunities for the youths.

Also another thing discouraging about it is that it doesn't seem visible that if a young person aims for a political position now that he or she is going to win. Some would be like 'why should I even try, I am definitely not gonna win'. An end could be put to this if there's significant encouragement or backing and due to fact that election isn't free and fair goes on to worsen the situation. A young person going for an election does not have enough financial resources to sensitize and campaign to people compared to our present old leaders because they have the money yet they go ahead and buy our votes.

We youths have a lot of work to do on this, I don't think we should give our present political leaders the opportunity to buy our votes, it's our right to exercise our franchise . We shouldn't allow them to use us as means to disrupt peace during a free and fair election. It shouldn't be like that, we should Stand firmly against this act.

Aside from these reason that affects youths participation in politics we also have means in Which we can encourage youth political participation.

To begin with the ways political participation can be encouraged, sensitization is definitely a factor.

Youth need to be sensitized, informed and educated about political affairs, what it involved, what it entails, what it means to get into a party, basically all that would go a long way in ensuring they develop interest in politics.

Also, doors of opportunities should be opened for the youth and there should be assurance that these 'doors' won't be shut against them midway so they won't have to resort into undue means to win an election. There should be this assurance that they would be able to contest equally with another person without discrimination.

There shouldn't be any fear of being cheated or marginalized.

The most important factor is age limit that has been set to be eligible to participate in politics. The age limit set in Nigeria is a little better bit high. I would rather participate in politics and do something worthwhile for my country in my youth when



I still have the charisma, strength, wisdom and energy etc. The age limit needs to be reduced to enable youths as young as twenty five to participate in politics.

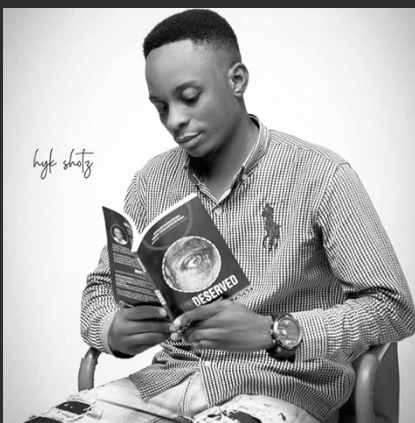
I don't think an age limit for when you aren't eligible to hold a political position which I feel should be implemented. Take for instance someone at the age of seventy shouldn't be in office at that age, he or she should leave that post for a younger person. A limit should be set, leaders above 60 shouldn't be in power again, this would definitely encourage the youth to participate without any fear of oppression.

Lastly, the lack of growth in Nigeria economy definitely youths would be interested because the lack of development and growth in Nigeria's socio-political economy is adversely affecting the youth because they don't see themselves making any impact, so the government should work on that.

Fellow youths let's remember that "the power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world", we have the power let's wield it positively for the betterment of our country.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Michael Chukwudi



A long-aged misnomer was that, 'the youths are the leaders of tomorrow.' If we could revisit the history of Nigeria, we'll understand that no time has the youths occupied any meaningful political position in the country. Yet, everyone still believed in that dim-time philosophy of the youths being the leaders of tomorrow. A tomorrow which I regard as a mere promise to take off the youths' minds in politics, hence they would believe that one day, their tomorrow would emerge from nowhere.

Notwithstanding, I will always say that for Nigeria to get better, the country should include the youths in all the affairs ranging from politics, education and decision making. A country who excludes her youths in its affairs is bound to suffer setbacks because the youths have the power to make and destroy.

Online Wikipedia however defined youthfulness as the time of life when one is young, and often means the time between childhood and adulthood. It is also defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, or characteristic of one who is young." If the revealing attributes of being young includes vigor and freshness, then it is obvious that the youths hold a very good position in changing man's society. And that is why we should all endeavor to promote youths participation in politics. Nonetheless, there are things to take in check for us agree to the notion of promoting youths in political participation.

To begin with, a youth is one who is with fresh mind and intelligent. Gone are the days when unintelligent leaders are elected to handle political position. An intelligent leader is full of ideas, very innovative and knows when to act. The youths of Nigeria are intelligent oriented and I am confident they have what it takes to build that Nigeria of our dreams.

Again, the youths of today are mostly technocrats. As we all know, a technocrat is an expert in technology and as well, always makes decision based solely on technical information and not personal or public opinion. If we look at the developed nation today, we will understand that technology is part of what makes their economy strong. Nigeria as a country has undermined the power of youths to change this nation. I believe if the youths should be promoted to participate in politics, those knowledge they use in perpetuating cybercrimes will in turn be used to build a better Nigeria if not the best. Perhaps, why go for better when best is obtainable and achievable?

Moreso, the youths should be massively supported to participate in politics because they do not procrastinate. One trait that is common to every youth is action. The youths tend to act with that vigor and freshness in them. In a typical Nigerian politics, what the masses usually get is fat political promises



which turnout that at the end, voices speak louder than action. This is because we have allowed people who lack the vigor, energy and freshness to contribute in building the Nigeria of our dreams. If we could recall what happened during the end SARS of 2020, all will agree to me that youths are set of individuals with one accord who are very energetic and focused. They are moved by their actions to create changes.

In conclusion, youths are like the powerhouse of every nation. When they are included in the affairs of that nation, they'll use their youthfulness to do something that generations will tend remember. It's now a clarion call for us to promote the participation of youths in politics if we want the country to be great again.

Why Youth Political Participation is Important

Maimuna Isah



Introduction

In many parts of the world, young people are often seen as apathetic when it comes to politics. This couldn't be further from the truth, and

in this blog post, we'll be discussing ways to promote youth political participation in Nigeria.

Nigeria is home to one of the world's youngest populations, with nearly half of its citizens under the age of 18. This makes youth mobilization and engagement a key factor in ensuring the country's political future.

There are many ways to get involved in politics, and in this post, we'll discuss a few of them. We'll also explore some of the challenges young people face when trying to engage in the political process.

The Current State of Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Youth political participation in Nigeria is still in its early stages, and there is much progress to be made. In recent years, there has been a slight increase in the number of young people running for office, but the majority of them still face significant obstacles.

One of the main challenges is that many young people are not aware of the process and how to get involved. They also lack access to information and resources, and they often don't have the financial resources to run a successful campaign.

Another challenge is that the voting process is often risky and dangerous, and many young people feel unsafe casting their vote. There have been cases where election monitors have been killed, and voters have been threatened and intimidated.

Despite these challenges, there are signs that things are slowly changing, and more young people are getting involved in the political process. We hope to see even more progress in the years to come.

Why Youth Political Participation Is Important

There is a common belief that young people are not interested in politics. However, this is not always the case. Studies have shown that there is a correlation between youth political participation and better governance.

In order to ensure good governance, it is important to promote youth political participation. This means giving young people a voice and empowering them to participate in the political process. It also means creating an environment where they can engage in constructive dialog and debate.

Ultimately, promoting youth political participation is about giving young people the opportunity to make a difference.



The Barriers to Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Despite the government's efforts to promote youth political participation in Nigeria, there are several barriers that still exist. The first is the lack of awareness about the process and what is required to participate. Many young people do not know how to register to vote or where to go to cast their ballots.

A second obstacle is financial insecurity. Many young people cannot afford the costs associated with running for office or voting, such as transportation, printing and advertising costs. In addition, many students are not allowed time off from school to participate in the electoral process.

Finally, there is a perception among many young people that politics is dirty and corrupt. This has led to a reluctance among some young people to get involved in the political process.

How to Promote Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

There are various ways to promote youth political participation in Nigeria. One way is to provide adequate information to the youth about the political process and their role in it. This can be done through formal and informal education, as well as through media platforms. It is also important to create space for young people to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making processes. Organizations and government agencies can create forums, workshops and roundtables to provide a platform for young people to share their thoughts and ideas on governance. Additionally, incentives can be put in place to encourage youth participation in politics, such as scholarships, job opportunities and other forms of social recognition.

Conclusion

Political participation is key to the development of any nation. That's why it's important for youths to engage in politics as early as possible.

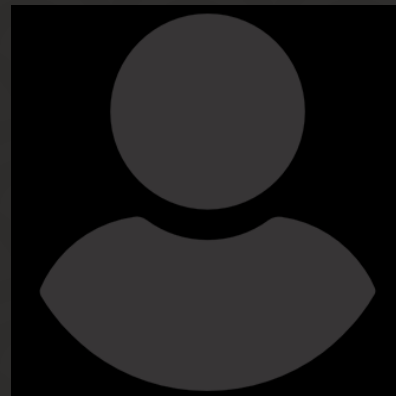
Unfortunately, political participation is often seen as something for adults only. This is a perception

that needs to change if Nigeria is to develop into a truly democratic nation.

Youths need to be encouraged to participate in politics so that they can have a say in how their nation is run. This is the only way to guarantee that Nigeria's future will be bright.

Political Participation on Social Media by Nigerian Youths

Olatunji Eniola



"Social media" and "youths" are two things that cannot exist without the other. The youths are the major users of social apps. Over the past few years, social media has proven to

be a powerful tool- a place for people to express their opinions and interact with others. Consequently, there has been an upsurge in political discourse on these social media apps, as youths use these platforms to portray their political views. Little wonder why political hashtags are the latest trends during this period. However, a pertinent question which needs to be asked is; do these views translate to votes? Do these views determine who wins and who does not win an election? The simple answer is no.

At this point it is important to explain what political participation mean in the Nigerian terrain. Political participation means going to register for your Permanent Voters Card (PVC), collecting the PVC, joining a political party, coming out to contest for political posts, coming out to vote, and other activities in-between. Political participation does not mean taking up your phone to talk about a political candidate, insulting those who oppose your views, condemning politicians, trending political hashtags and then refusing to go out to vote on election day. That is not political participation, that is simply a secondary form of political apathy. Political apathy can be defined as a lack of interest in political matters and not participating in it. It is the exact opposite of political participation.



Have you ever asked yourself why it is usually old people above the age of 60 that rule this country? It is because they recognize and know the value of politics while the youths do not. It is a shame that Nigeria is in the fourth republic yet nobody below 50 years of age has ever come out to contest and win the presidential seat. You want to blame the 1999 Constitution for the age restriction? Well, bear in mind that the Constitution is a reflection of what the people want, their actions and inactions.

To the crux of the issue, how do we promote political participation amongst Nigerian youths? First and foremost, the youths need to be reoriented on the subject of politics in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the word "politics" is a dirty name attributed to dirty activities. The general opinion is that only bad people engage in politics. However, if we leave the bad people with no idea of moving the nation forward to rule the country, why do we complain that the state of things is bad? The youths need to see the light in politics and know that it is a medium of serving your country and taking it to greater heights.

In addition, the masses need to shun stomach infrastructure. Stomach infrastructure means voting based on bribe received rather than the manifesto put in place. The cost of bribing the masses is what discourages young people from participating in politics, as only old men who have worked all their lives can afford it. For instance, the cost of nomination form in a political party in Nigeria was put up at a hundred million Naira. How many honest-working youths can afford these exorbitant fees?

In conclusion, the level of violence that plays out in Nigerian politics needs to stop. No reasonable youth wants to lose his/her life in order to get into office. The high rate of election violence is what discourages them from coming out on election day talk less of going to the polling unit. Politics is not a do-or-die affair.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Precious



It is no longer a new saying, that 'Youths are the Leaders of tomorrow'. However, despite making up more than half of the population in Nigeria,

young people (ages 18-30) often find themselves marginalized from mainstream politics and decision making. They struggle to gain the respect of public officials and are seen as lacking the skills and experience to engage in political activity and lead positive change in their communities.

Sadly, we mostly have men in their 60s and 70s standing as councilors in the local government councils; the lowest cadre of political leadership. Sadly more, we have old men of over 60 years of age serving as "youth leaders" at various levels in some Political parties leadership, quite funny right? Yes, it is. And, no nation can move forward under this circumstances.

When young people are disengaged from political processes, a significant portion of the population has little or no voice or influence in decisions that affect group members' lives. A key consequence is the undermining of political systems' representativeness.

To make a difference in the longer term, it is essential that young people are engaged in formal political processes and have a say in formulating today's and tomorrow's politics.

Nigeria youths need real opportunities to participate in political processes and contribute to practical solutions that advance development. When given an opportunity to organize, voice their opinions and play a meaningful role in political decision making, young people consistently demonstrate



their willingness and ability to foster positive, lasting change. They also become more likely to demand and defend democracy, and gain a greater sense of belonging.

Inclusive participation in politics is a fundamental political and democratic right; so youths must play an active part in formulating politics. Actively promoting the inclusion of youth in the political process is not only about norms, values and rights. It is also about practical politics.

All youths must be allowed to join the political and democratic process; become members of political parties, aspire for party offices and political offices.

The youths have proved themselves in sports, music, movie and IT in the global stage. They have shown ingenuity and capacity without support from the government, and there is no doubt they will bring capacity, ingenuity and energy to transform our nation and states.

Furthermore, participation in politics is not only to campaign for a political seat, but also to perform their civil rights by voting. Youths must get their PVC and mobilize many others to get theirs, vote during elections, and defend their votes like they're being mobilized to defend their country in an emergency or war.

We must reject politicians who use us during elections and abandon us immediately after the Election. We must vote rightly and make a decision to start rebuilding our Nation.

The youths should rise legitimately to be part of the ongoing political process by shunning violence, harmful protest, bribing and corruption and election rigging.

They must erase the selfish term thinking of "stomach infrastructure" but choose to participate in politics and the electoral process that protects sustainable socio-economic development in the country. This way, vote buying, vandalism and thuggery will be eradicated. Understanding that at the end of the day, electing the right people will do more to serve the youths and the country in general.

Finally, the need to promote and enhance the participation of youths in politics, therefore, cannot be

overemphasised. Nigerian youths must exercise their franchise by joining political parties, registering to vote, obtaining their PVC, and coming out enmasse to Vote the right candidates during the elections.

We must come together to take back our country, 'Nigeria'.

Promoting Youth Political Participation in Nigeria

Ekoja Okewu



"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are

left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies"-Koffi Annan

Introduction

According to statistical record, Nigeria is the most populous black nation, and have about 200 million people with an annual population growth of 2.61%. Presently, over 33.6 million (16.8%) Nigerians are regarded as youths (aged between 15 and 35)¹. Despite this statistics, political apathy still prevails among many Nigerian youths.

Definition

Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it's governed, and try to take part in and shape the decision that affect their lives².

Youth is the time of life between being a child and an adult³.



Case study

Recently, I embarked upon a survey to understand the reason for political apathy among Nigerian youths using the question, "why do youths dislike political participation?" Here are the responses received:

Youth-1 "Things are hard. The old politicians don't want to give way for the youths. Where will a young man get money to compete? Imagine the son of David Mark competing with him in politics"

Youth-2: "Because they have no money and do not know the use of joining politics"

Youth-3: "Because they are in poverty"

Youth-4: "Because they are afraid of being killed"

Youth-5: "Youths are not interested in political discourse because they feel betrayed by the older generation"

Youth-6: "Because they are afraid of being killed by rivals and they do not have money"

Youth-7: "Because they are not interested"

Youth-8: "They see politics as a dirty game"

Youth-9: "The youths have been smashed. The politicians have trampled upon the youths. How can a youth making effort to get ends meet have the opportunity for a political discourse?"

Promoting youth political participation

According to many political analysts, by equipping oneself with political knowledge, one builds a motivational force to achieve one's interests and make decisions that conform to one's preferences. Youths should be educated about politics.

Secondly, politicians should endeavour to keep to promises and provide good governance for the populace.

The money politics currently in practice should be eradicated, because it scares youths away from politics.

My brother has been looking for a PVC enrolment centre for over a month without success. INEC service should be available to everyone everywhere.

Insecurity and electoral malpractices plaguing the political-system should be addressed using technology.

Nigerian youths need to be exposed to their rights so that in case their political rights are violated, they can protest and be able to create petitions in court, thereby ensuring fairness.

Use of mass media/civil societies to educate and sensitize rural residents on political matters is very important.

In addition, funds should be provided to also support conventional and unconventional political participation to give the youths a sense of belonging.

Youths should be part of political parties and attend public functions to facilitate their involvement in the current affairs of the nation.

Furthermore, the ministry of youths should liaise with grass-root organizations to promote and strengthen permanent mechanisms of consultation with young people.

The country should create an accommodating political environment for everyone everywhere.

Finally, influencers should encourage youth political-participation. Dike Chukwumerije and Falz are already employing this strategy to engage youths in issue based political discourse⁵.

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When You Keep Silent, You Say Yes to Corruption

Egwu Kenneth Chukwuebuka



Introduction

Youths are great resources that every serious nation would invest in and have at her disposal for her growth. Without their contributions to a nation's affairs, that nation is likely to fail. They are the greatest asset any notable nation can have. Youths are the nation's source of life. Therefore, it is our shared responsibility to cultivate and establish Nigeria as the Eldorado that everyone longs for; because we are lively, youthful, and energetic, the energy we display for a new Nigeria should be one that invigorates and emanates optimism. This essay highlights steps that could be adopted to boost youths' participation in politics in Nigeria.

When one considers the presence of youths in political positions in Nigeria, a very different picture, one of minimal or, in some cases, no representation is presented. The pre-independence and independent leaders of Nigeria's society are depicted in history as being relatively youthful. Yakubu Gowon was 32 when he became the Head of State, and subsequent military rulers in Nigeria were no different. Even Major General Muhammadu Buhari (Retired), the current president, assumed power when he was 39 years old.

Body

With a large population of qualified voters, the Nigerian youths play crucial roles in the country's politics and wield the most influence. It is vital we re-strategize to increase our political engagement, just like our national heroes did in the past.

The belief that our votes do not matter should be dispelled among Nigerian youths. This one-off act has dampened the youths' enthusiasm for exercising their right to vote. When we brought the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) Registration Awareness

Campaign to the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) in Enugu state under the Speak Up Stand Out (SUSO) Program, I was both startled and worried by how deep this idea has been ingrained in the psyche of the youths. They must understand that if their votes were insignificant, politicians would not spend billions of naira to buy them.

The youths should stop believing "that Nigeria's problem is nothing personal to them" and start seeing Nigeria as their own. The youth should forge strong bonds with one another. They ought to exemplify religious tolerance and abstain from ethnic chauvinism. Even if the candidate running for office is not wealthy enough to compensate them, they should firmly support themselves. This will serve as a signalling call to many young people who are intellectually qualified to run for political positions but are discouraged by the hefty expenses.

Nigerian youths should see themselves as bigger than ordinary touts. They should stop acting as hired thugs and robbers who thwart elections in order to alter the country's political dynamics. They should be aware that politicians who use them as thugs do not want them to succeed. As a significant share of voters, young people have a responsibility to ensure that elections are conducted fairly since it will affect their future.

The youths of Nigeria should refrain from ongoing godfatherism practices and get involved in honourable politics instead. Godfatherism has had a significant detrimental impact on the ability of young people to participate in politics. Youth organizations should conduct appropriate orientation campaigns to inform people of all ages about the risks of recycling unscrupulous leaders. This will significantly contribute to Nigeria's gerontocracy being eliminated.

Conclusion

It is impossible to overstate the value of youths in a nation's growth. A nation's democracy, economic development, and production are supported by its youths. The participation of youths in politics will have a significant impact on the future of our nation, because when we keep silent, we say yes to corruption.



The Change is in our Hands

Oluwatoyin Abiodun Odunuyi



You wonder why everyone keeps fussing for people to get their personal Voter's card, also called PVC.

It's because we need a

change in this unique country of ours.

Politics is often a discussion that people often get quickly riled up over.

Imagine telling someone, *"our leaders are doing so much. Things are going so well in the country."*

You look at him/her with wide eyes and imagine how you can smack the idea out of the person's head without being violent.

Politics is so opinionated, just like every other subject in life. In your lifetime, you will find people that have completely different views from yours and it will upset you.

I once stayed away from the topic of politics because it frustrates me and due to my inaction in any political-themed conversation, I had forgotten the important matter.

I have the power to change the country and not just through my prayers and fasting.

We need to back up our frequent prayers with action.

The election season is approaching- we have various candidates, both young and old, with both good and bad intentions, and people with empty promises and a genuine attitude to change and development.

Many people are contesting because they either want change or power.

Today's youth need opportunities to participate in political processes. Democracy has given us the ability to use our voice and believe me, it is a strong voice to strive for good political decision-making.

One thing I am so glad about during this election period is that enlightenment and education are now being brought to social media, a place primarily for entertainment.

You scroll through Twitter and you see at least ten tweets, imploring that you start your decision-making in the political sphere. Getting your PVC.

Twitter account holders understand what I mean. Celebrities, influencers, and activists are making it their duty to educate the public about the usefulness of that card "PVC".

It's so inspiring how the youth are so creative in passing out the message, through memes, TikTok videos, and skits. We are not playing this time around.

That card holds so much power and I believe that democracy is such a beautiful thing to practice because we are not in a system of government where people are just thrown into office.

We have the power to choose "who next?"

We complain, quibble, and curse our leaders. Here's what to do, use that anger and frustration, get that card and do the needful.

Believe me, some people will try to stop you and offer you "money" for your vote. You must be popular with the trend of "money" in exchange for a vote.

It may be tempting, especially if you understand these challenging times.

Think of it as this- the money lasts only for a short while and the person whom you "voted" in, would affect how your life would be for the next four years- eight if he or she is elected again.



There is power in your vote and I believe that, if you and I continue to educate people and push for change through action and prayers, we will get the Nigeria that would be kind and nice to all.

Importance of Youth Participation

Ibrahim Gambo Ibrahim



Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn

vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. The primary role of young people is to get a good education in order to become better citizens of tomorrow. They need to learn skills to do the job that their country's economy needs. They also need to know how to read, write, think, understand, analyses, and discuss the issues their country faces.



Frontline Youth Creativity Initiative is a youth-led, youth-focused organisation working to promote youth agency through the creative arts. Founded in 2021 with headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, we believe that the creative arts are a powerful tool to effect positive social change.

Find out more about us on
<https://fyci.org>.