

# Accelerating Youth Civic Participation & Development

in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)



Supported by



# About Us

PROMAD Infotech Foundation is a non-profit organization combining evidence-based strategies with civic technology to bridge the gaps that exist between citizens at grassroots communities and the government to strengthen accountability, and participatory governance for efficient implementation of projects, programs, and policies for sustainable development.

PROMAD, founded in 2022, is fully registered in Nigeria by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). We have the mission to empower state and non-state actors through evidence-based strategies and advocacy for accountability, participatory governance, and development.

**Founder/Executive Director:** Daisi M. Omokungbe

**Research Team:** Mayowa Olajide Akinleye, Vahyala Kwaga, Cosmas Adewebi, and Hammida Mohammed

**Creative Designs:** Mayowa Olajide Akinleye

*© 2023 PROMAD Infotech Foundation.  
All Rights Reserved.*

**Notice of Disclaimer:**

This policy memo has been produced by PROMAD to provide useful insights into civic participation and youth development. PROMAD hereby certifies that all the views expressed herein simply reflect our analytical views, which we believe are reliable and evidence-based. Reasonable efforts have been made during the preparation of this document to ensure accuracy. Therefore, PROMAD assumes no responsibility or liability for any error, omission, or view expressed herein or for actions taken by individuals or groups as a result of the information provided.

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from PROMAD. All inquiries can be directed to:

**PROMAD Foundation**  
Suite D303, 2nd Floor, Soar Plaza, 182, 1st Avenue,  
Gwarinpa, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria  
Phone: +2348180177099  
Email: [office@promadfoundation.org](mailto:office@promadfoundation.org)

This publication is publicly accessible at [www.promadfoundation.org](http://www.promadfoundation.org)

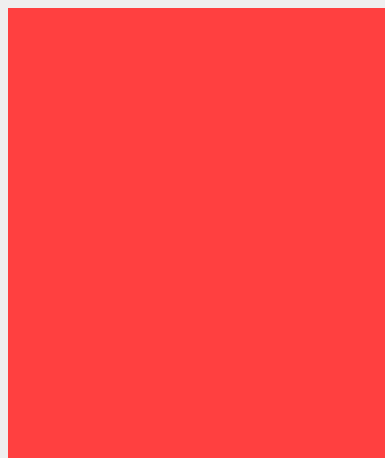
# Acknowledgement

PROMAD is grateful for the efforts of our Community Development Champions across the six Area Councils of the FCT: Mr Garba Abdulahi; Mr Hassan Abubakar; Miss Bridget Oshiogbele; Mr Ishaya J. Gbashe; Mr Jona Dogo, and Mr Sani Emmanuel.

We would equally like to acknowledge Mr. Vahyala Kwaga of BudgIT for his expert analysis and Mr. Cosmas Adewebi for his contributions to the making of this document.

We also acknowledge the vital comments of Mr Opeyemi Oriniowo, Project Lead, Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF); Mr Kamaldeen Afolabi, Grants Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, NYFF; Mr Haruna Godiya, Programmes Coordinator at LEAP Africa; Mr Peter Ogah, YouthHubAfrica; Ms Pamela Igrubia, Esq.; and Mr Iyanuoluwa Bolarinwa, Assistant Manager, International Growth, BudgIT; to the draft document during the validation session held in February 2023.

We are deeply grateful to LEAP Africa and its Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) team, the FORD Foundation and MacArthur Foundation for their support and providing the funds to implement our Accelerating Youth Civic Participation (AYCP) project in the nation's capital, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).



# Executive Summary

The "Japa" Solution amongst the youth elite is gaining momentum as a way to escape the number of challenges that face young people in Nigeria. But fine as it appears to be, it only remains a short-term solution to the challenge.

At PROMAD, we believe in using data and technology to investigate and analyze development problems and proffer policy related solutions to help stakeholders and government gain clarity on what must be done.

The publication of this memo is part of our Accelerating Youth Civic Participation in the FCT, a three-month project supported by LEAP Africa's Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) funded by the Ford and MacArthur Foundations.

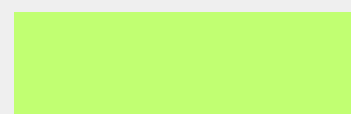
This policy memo examines youth civic participation and development in the nation's capital, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Specifically, it assesses youth related issues and group the findings into three major categories—access to economic power; civic and political participation and inclusion; and youth and electoral violence.

Findings and recommendations herein should be leveraged by stakeholders and government to ensure young peoples' contributions to the nation are harnessed. It will require a lot of planning, engagement, investment, monitoring and evaluation as well as the tracking of youth development investments by active citizens, youth constituencies in government and the development sector.

The issues affecting youth civic participation in the FCT is itemized in this document to spur participation of youth in the 2023 elections and contribute to leading new policy advocacy for young people's inclusion, and empowerment to play new roles in #TheNigeriaWeWant as the new administration will take-off on May 29, 2023.



Founder/Executive Director  
Promad Foundation



# Background

In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), youth unemployment is raging just like in other parts of the country. Young people are also marginalized and excluded from the political, community, and other important decision-making processes.

According to YIAGA Africa,<sup>1</sup> youth candidacy records declined from 34% in the 2019 election to 28.6% in the 2023 elections. For instance, the youth candidacy rate for the House of Representatives plunges from 27.4% in 2019 to 21.6% in 2023. Similarly, the State House of Assembly also dropped from 41.8% in 2019 elections to 35.6% in 2023.

According to the report, the north central region, which includes the Federal Capital Territory, has an 18.1% youth candidacy rate.

<sup>2</sup>Abuja has a working age population of 2,940,209 and 663,931 unemployed persons were recorded for the fourth quarter of 2020: rendering rates of unemployment and underemployment at 40.4% and 13.1%, respectively (NBS, 2021)

**40.4%**  
Youth Unemployment

**61%**

Crime rate

According to Numbeo (2023),<sup>3</sup> the crime rate in Abuja is 61.03%, arguably being perpetrated by the youth. Although, the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) has stated its commitment to reduce youth restiveness and unemployment through education & skills acquisition training, for economic empowerment in the territory.<sup>4</sup>

PROMAD, in its bid to understand the problems and provide policy recommendations through its “**Accelerating Youth Civic Participation in the FCT**,” work conducted a youth-friendly survey to gain insights for policy intervention, advocacy, and empowerment efforts to drive change for young people in the FCT. The survey was implemented across the six Area Councils of the FCT through our home-grown civic-tech needs assessment platform—<https://grap.org.ng>.

Our findings are categorized into three broad focus areas, which are: access to economic power; civic and political participation and inclusion; and youth and electoral violence.

<sup>1</sup> Check <https://yiaga.org/youth-candidacy-nigerias-2023-elections>. Date accessed, January 21, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> See E.O. Iduseri, et al. Role of Sustainable Development Goals in Combating Youth Unemployment: A Case Study of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*; Vol. 15, No. 3; 2022 ISSN 1913-9063 E-ISSN 1913-9071 Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.numbeo.com/crime/in/Abuja>. Date accessed, January 21, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/fcta-committed-to-reducing-youth-restiveness-unemployment-official/>. Date accessed, January 21, 2023

# Methodology



## Study Area

Our research was carried out in the Federal Capital, Abuja, across some major towns in the six area councils. According to the 2006 census by the National Population Commission, FCT was listed as the eighth most populous city in Nigeria, with a growing population of 1,406,239.

According to E.O. Iduseri, et al. (2022)<sup>2</sup>, there is a working-age population of 2,940,209 with a figure of 663,931 unemployed persons recorded in the metropolitan area of Abuja by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for the fourth quarter report of 2020; unemployment and underemployment rates stood at 40.4% and 13.1%, respectively.



## Data Collection

The study combined quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Data was collected using a structured exploratory questionnaire designed and administered via PROMAD's community needs assessment platform—<https://grap.org.ng> promoted via digital platforms and face-to-face by trained Community Development Champions in the area councils. We also conducted interviews and observations during town hall meetings.

This policy memo analyzes the results of data gathered through a survey, administered in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Nigeria. The total number of respondents, after data cleaning and preliminary validation, amounted to **191**.

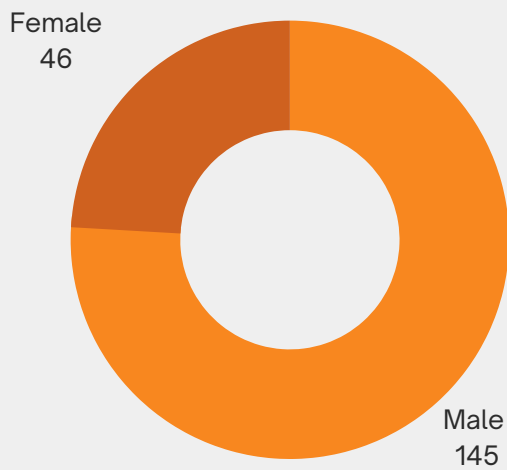
Considering the limitation in the number of respondents, it should be stressed that the number of respondents may not represent a statistically significant number, as the total number of youths within the FCT must be ascertained and a test for sample size must also be conducted. Qualitative approach was added to the study through interviews conducted with young people during town hall meetings.

Our research was carried out in the Federal Capital, Abuja in communities, across the six area councils.

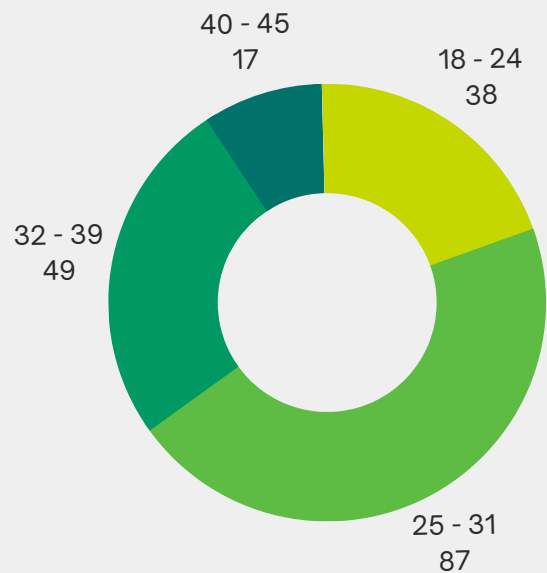
2. See E.O. Iduseri, et al. Role of Sustainable Development Goals in Combating Youth Unemployment: A Case Study of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*; Vol. 15, No. 3; 2022 ISSN 1913-9063 E-ISSN 1913-9071 Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education

# Demographic Distribution

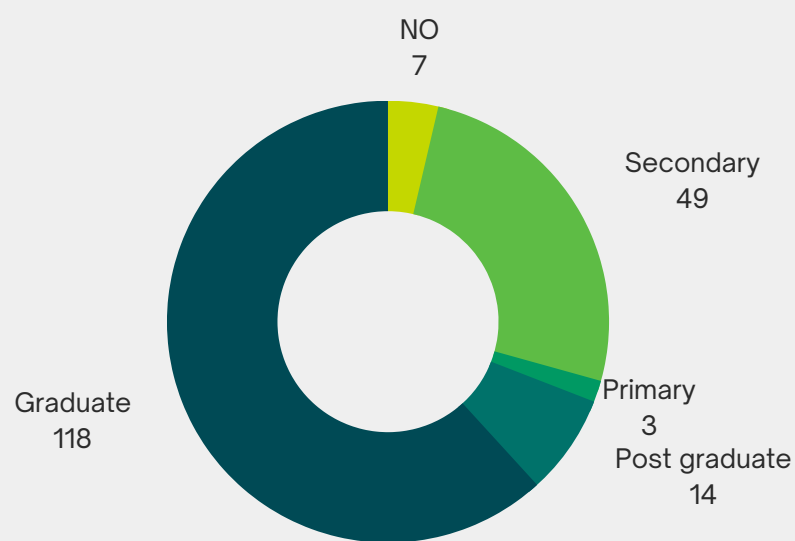
### Gender



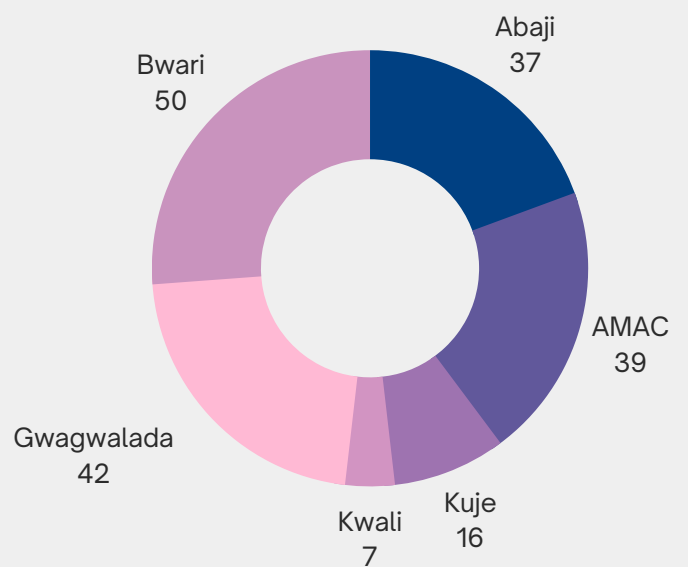
### Age



### Educational qualification



### Area council



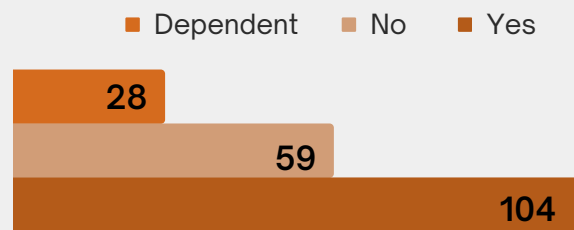
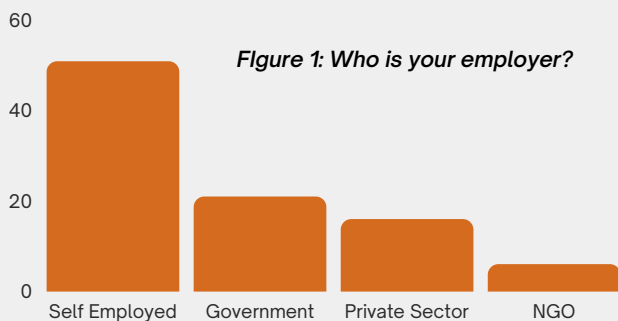
# Findings and Implications





# Part A : Analysis of Questions on Access to Economic Power

In terms of working conditions, **60** of the respondents are unemployed, **37** are students, and **94** have some form of employment (**51** are self-employed; **21** work for the government; **16** work for the private sector; and **6** work for an NGO/CSO). Both men and women expressed frustration at their inability/difficulty to find well paying work despite having required qualifications and are often forced into small scale entrepreneurship.



The respondents were asked to identify their **priorities from a list of career, political, and other personal development goals peculiar to young people**. *Table 1* lists their responses based on number of times it appeared. They were then asked to rank each response from most important to least important. *Table 2* lists the number of instances a need was chosen as most important.

Need	Count
Get a Job	99
Acquire or Develop my skills	98
Contribute to my community through Civic participation	96
Get Scholarship Opportunities	69
Run for Elections	36

Table 1

Priority of Need	Count
Get a Job	67
Acquire or Develop my skills	49
Get Scholarship Opportunities	39
Contribute to my community through Civic participation	37
Run for Elections	5

Table 2

These observations strongly correlates with feedback received during interviews with young people in the area councils.

It should be noted that the total of this sub-component of the analysis will not equal the total number of responses (i.e., 191), because respondents were asked to select as many as applied to them in order of priority. This means that the responses will be in excess of the total number.

# Part B : Analysis of questions on Civic and Political Participation, and Inclusion

The questions were designed to elicit responses and positions of the respondents in a number of subjects, from participation in elections, knowledge of the voting process, knowledge of political parties, engagement with political representatives, knowledge and opinion of Youth engagement and evaluations of their personal contributions to the civic space, among other things.

## Political Membership

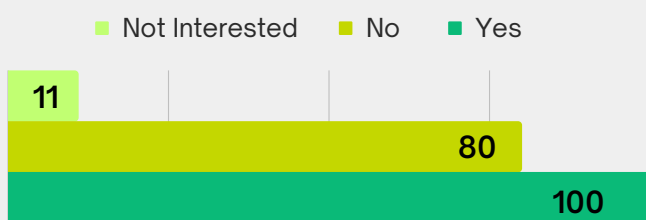


Figure 3: Do you belong to any youth group for political participation ?

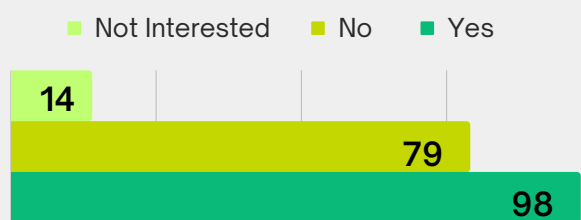


Figure 4: Are you a member of any political party?

52.35% of respondents belongs to a youth group involved in political participation and 51% of respondents belong to political parties. This shows that there is high interest. However, further study is needed to investigate the specific forms and quality of political participation in which the youth are involved. There is also the need for sensitization to raise the percentage and improve the quality of youth participation in politics.

## Voter Awareness

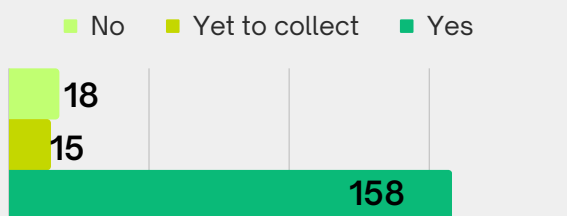


Figure 4: Do you have a Permanent Voter Card (PVC)?

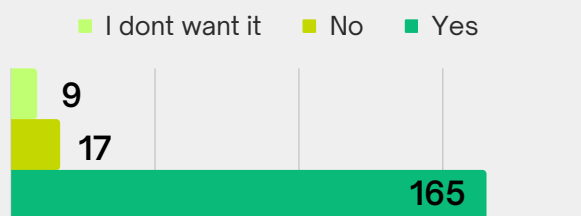


Figure 6: Do you know where to collect your PVC ?

82.72% of respondents have voter cards, 86.38% of respondents know where to collect their PVC. This points to the high level of awareness and interest among young people. A high percentage of them attended our meetings with their permanent voter cards (PVCs). The factors that does not allow the effective maturation of this interest to active civic participation such as; poor economic strength as identified in **Part A** should be investigated.

## Voting

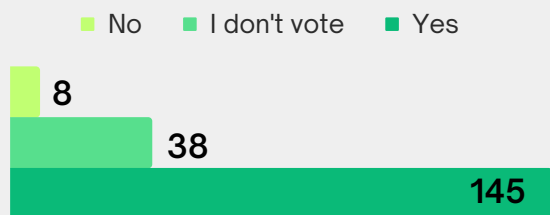


Figure 7: Have you ever voted in any election?

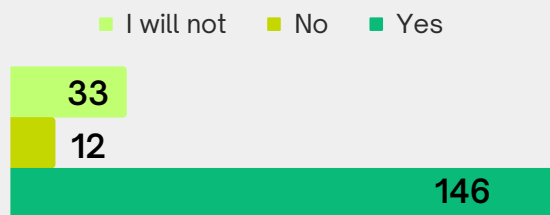


Figure 8: Are you going to vote in the 2023 general elections?

75.91% of respondents voted in a past election and 76.43% of them would vote in 2023. This seems like an impressive number. It is but then it is not, reflect on how the rates drop, about 83% can vote, 76% will Vote , 51% will continue to engage. This decline indicates the presence of barriers.

The respondents were asked to select barriers that affected their civic participation from a list . **Table 3** show their responses and the frequency.

Barriers	Count
Violence	72
Corruption	52
High cost of participation	39
Youth only meant for thuggery	28

Table 3

Violence was their biggest hindrance. This choice and feedback from the interviews strengthens the idea that young people view elections as the ultimate form of civic participation. More analysis is done in **Part C**.

Interestingly, 29.84% stated corruption as the second most significant hindrance. These finding can inform more exploration and actions by electoral umpires and actors.

## Dividend of Governance

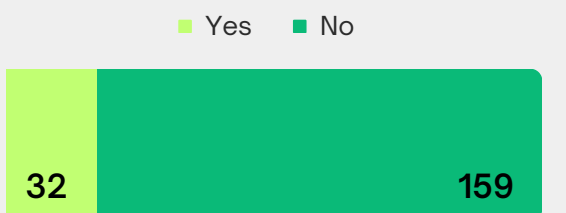


Figure 9: Have you benefited from the constituency or government youth empowerment schemes ?

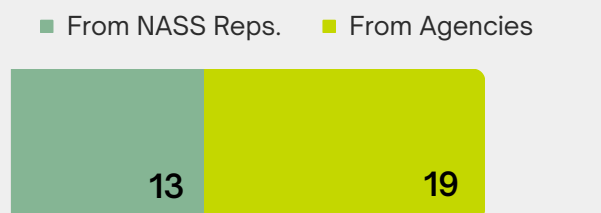


Figure 10: For respondents that said Yes, what was the source?

With 83.24% of respondents saying “No”, it means that there is a gap in service provision that ought to cater for the youth population. This evidence proves the sentiment of neglect expressed in the interviews. It can be used by elected officials in their policy formulation and also used by youth groups in their advocacy to government officials.

Though **16.75%** of the respondents have benefited from an empowerment scheme, their combined percentage (referring to both government agencies and NASS representatives) is relatively low. When asked what they felt caused this trend, interviewees described corruption, diversion of funds, favoritism, political patronage, and loyalty to ruling party(s) and political leaders.

### Civic Engagement

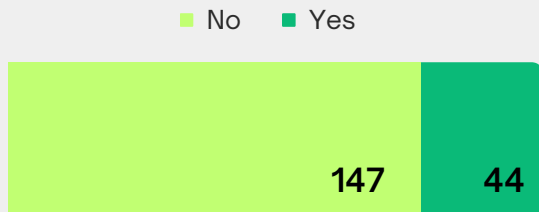


Figure 11: Have you engaged your representatives and government on youth employment and empowerment?

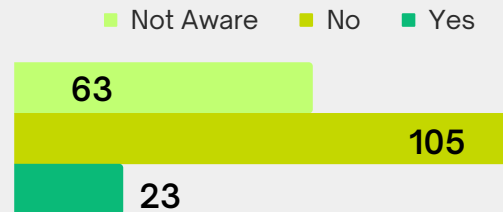


Figure 12: Has the Representative(s) in your community organised a town hall meeting or consultation session in the past 12 months

**Above shows 76.96% of respondents have not engaged**, this indicates that the youths do not understand or respect their responsibility to engage with the government regarding the abysmal levels of employment and empowerment as seen above. On the flip side, elected officials are also not engaging them as indicated by **88%** of the respondents that are not aware and know for sure that no representative has organized a town hall or consultation session.

This shows a wide disconnect between young people and elected officials. And could be among the top reasons for the declining participation of young people from when they get their PVCs to continuous civic engagement. Though about a quarter of the total respondents have actually engaged, it would be interesting to note what the specific programs or sectors that engagement has been in.

During the interviews, they also established that it was only NGOs that sought their views and contributions on community related issues. And there was a general frustration with the lack of tangible outcomes that resulted from those engagement.

The respondents were asked "What skills do you need for community organizing and personal development". **Table 4** ranks their responses based on frequency.

"All of the above" with **98** mentions was most frequent, indicating the need for a full suite of skills and capacities (opposed to singular skills), shows that the respondents are aware of what is required for community organizing in the context of Civic and Political Engagement. It is significant that "Leadership" and "Civic Principles" are the second and third most featured and also significant that there is a 15-point gap between these two components and the next component (i.e., "Letter writing & constructive engagement).

The respondents were then asked to rank their answers in terms of most important to least important". The observations are noted in **Table 5**

Community Organizing skills	Count
All of the above	98
Leadership	75
Civic Principles	73
Letter Writing	58
Digital Communication	47
Data Analysis	39

Table 4

Community Organizing skills	Count
All of the above	83
Leadership	75
Civic Principles	73
Letter Writing	58
Digital Communication	47
Data Analysis	39

Table 5

With respondents having indicated “All the above” as the most important (essentially stating that all the skills and competencies were equally important). This shows that their understanding of participation is nuanced between clerical or administrative skills, conceptual knowledge of what participation entails, technical skills and personal qualities. This knowledge signals the presence and effect of capacity-building programs that target the youth in the FCT.

### Inclusion

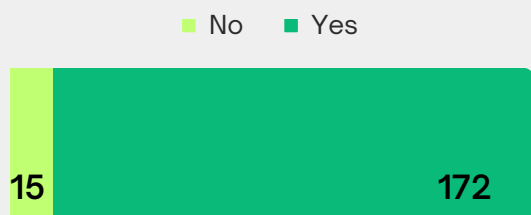


Figure 13: Do you support the inclusion of women and the inclusion of Persons with disabilities in elections?

With **90.05%** of respondents supporting the inclusion of Women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDS), it does show the progressive mindset of the youth. However, the existence of around 10% of those who do not support their inclusion is a source of concern.

Though we did not ask quantitatively, we noticed this bias was stronger along religious and ethnic lines. More study will be needed to effectively understand and explain this phenomenon. More sensitization is also required to promote egalitarian and more inclusive values among the youth.

## Political Empowerment

The respondents were asked “How many youths in your local government area (LGA) are elected into office” . **Table 6** ranks their responses based on frequency.

The respondents were asked “How many youths in your local government area (LGA) are appointed into Government” . **Table 7** ranks their responses based on frequency.

The respondents were asked “How many youths in your local government area (LGA) are political party executives at local, state, or national levels” . **Table 8** ranks their responses based on frequency.

Youths in elected office	Count
Less than 5	63
Not aware	62
None	51
More than 5	11
Less than 20	3
More than 10	1

Table 6

Youths in Appointed positions	Count
Not Aware	69
Less than 5	60
None	46
More than 5	10
More than 10	4
Less than 20	2

Table 7

Youths in Party Executive office	Count
Less than 5	63
Not aware	63
None	43
More than 5	15
More than 10	5
Less than 20	2

Table 8

'Less than 5', 'Not Aware' and 'None' appear a total of **176** times in *Table 6*, **175** times in *Table 7*, 155 in *Table 8*. Most respondents do not know or are familiar with less than 5 persons like them, in elected, appointed, or hold party leadership positions . This provides evidence that the level of youth participation in actual government is still low and perceived to be low.

# Part C : Analysis of Questions on Youth and Electoral Violence

This section, similar to Section B above, analyzes the responses to questions formulated around the role of Youth in Electoral violence. The questions were designed to elicit responses and position of the respondents on instances of violence, the impact of violence on electoral participation, causes of electoral violence, and projections about the likelihood of violence in the upcoming elections, among others.

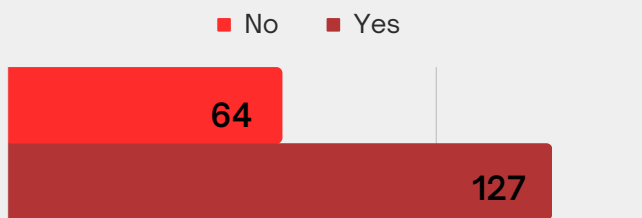


Figure 14: Has there been a case or cases of electoral violence in your community?

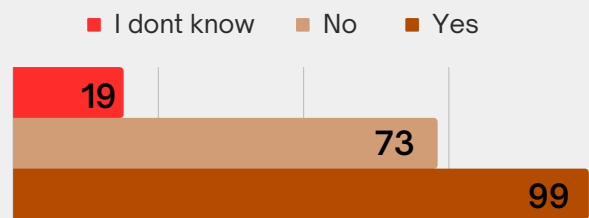


Figure 15: Has electoral violence prevented you from participating in past elections in your community?

66.49% of the respondents are aware of violence in their communities. This conforms to the reality of significant electoral violence in the African sub-region and that it is still a potent deterrent to political participation. This finding provides evidence for donor organizations, CSO groups, Youth groups and the government in their interactions with each other, for the improvement of the electoral process and the reduction and elimination of violence in elections.

51.83% of respondents (more than half) have been prevented from voting due to violence. As mentioned above, all stakeholders in the electoral process have a prominent role to play in creating strategies to reduce and eliminate violence.

The respondents were asked “How often has electoral violence occurred in your community”. **Table 9** ranks their responses based on frequency. This provides evidence for policymakers, security officials (who can consider the locations of the respondents that noted the highest frequency of violence).

Frequency of Violence	Count
1-5 times	116
6-10 times	18
11 - 15 times	3
16 times & above	3
Never	51

Table 9

For the question “To the best of your knowledge, who was responsible for past electoral violence in your community?”

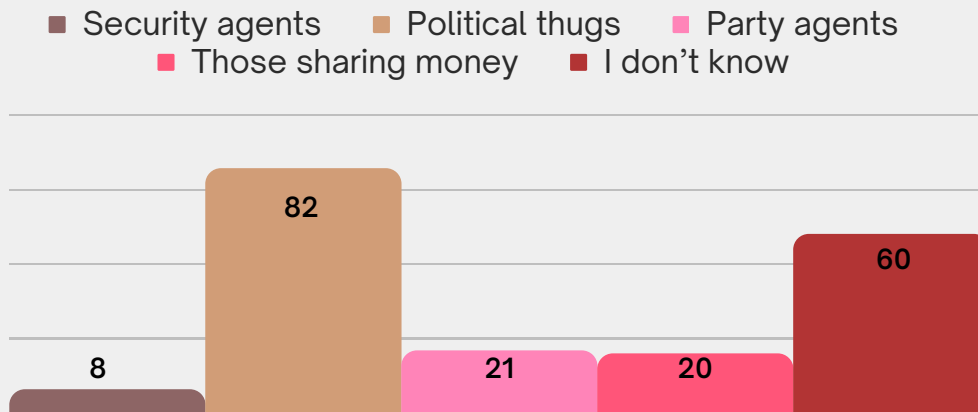


Figure 16: To the best of your knowledge, who was responsible for past electoral violence in your community

With **42.93%** of respondents alleging that Political Thugs were responsible for electoral violence, this shows there is a prominent feature in the violence system and this should be taken seriously. However, with **31.41%** of respondents not knowing who was responsible for the violence and a nearly equal percentage of ‘Those Sharing Money’ and ‘Party Agents’ believed to be responsible for the violence (**10.47%** and **10.99%**); it shows that more research can be done to properly conceptualize these alleged bearers of responsibility.

The respondents were then asked “How will you describe the age bracket of perpetrators of electoral violence in your area?”

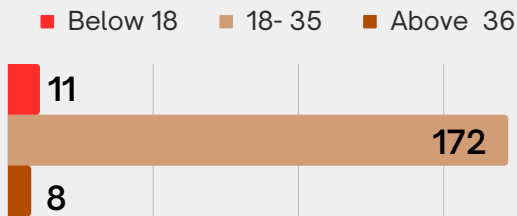


Figure 17: How will you describe the age bracket of perpetrators of electoral violence in your area

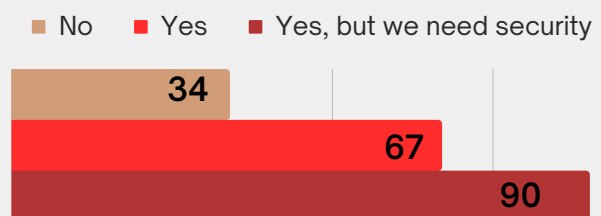


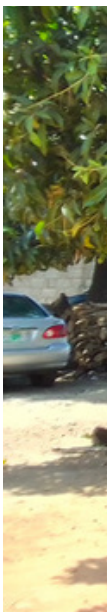
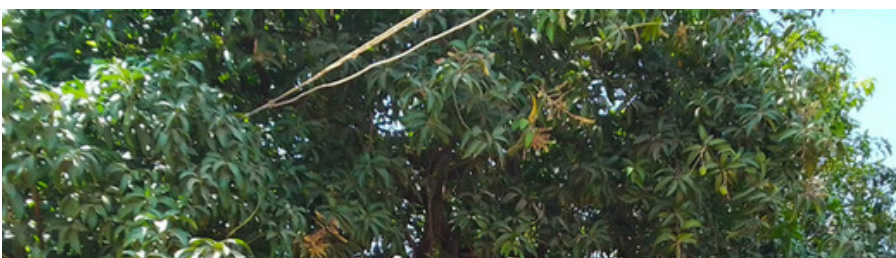
Figure 18: From the security indices in your community, would the 2023 general elections be violence-free?”

With **90.05%** of the respondents believing the age range of those perpetuating the violence is between 18 to 35 years of age, it may be an indication that the youth believe that persons like them are involved in violence. More research is required to unpack the intensity of this position and the possible causes.

The respondents were also asked if they felt the 2023 general elections be violence-free. With **82.19%** (a combination of respondents stating ‘yes’ and ‘yes, but’) of the respondents believing that the elections could be violence-free but **47.12%** of the total respondents qualifying it with the need for security, it shows that violence plays a significant role in the perception and expectations of the youth.



# Recommen- dations



*This brief has spotlighted issues affecting youth civic participation in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) under three broad categories, namely: access to economic power; civic and political participation, and inclusion; and youth and electoral violence.*

*The fact is that youth inclusion would facilitate new ideas and solutions to fast-track development not only in the FCT but the whole nation. This is particularly important as Nigeria is on the verge of democratic transition from one democratically elected administration to another which will create new political changes, efforts must be directed on actual youth development not ‘frivolities’ in budgeting for the youth.*

*Therefore, PROMAD, as a non-profit organization deploying civic technology to bridge the gaps between citizens, communities, and the government, proposes the following:*

# 1.

## **Domestication of National Youth Policy**

Nigeria’s National Youth Policy (NYP) is the central effort of the government aimed at addressing youth development and inclusion in the affairs of government and governance. The policy aims to promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and protect the health, social, economic, and political well-being of all young men and women in order to enhance their participation in the overall development process and improve their quality of life. As of this study,<sup>5</sup> only Lagos and Rivers states have made efforts at domesticating the youth policy. The domestication of NYP will enhance the preparedness of states, and FCT, and even local government councils to further promote youth development.

# 2.

## **Empowerment schemes must address youth needs and priorities**

As identified in this brief, the majority of the sampled youth said they’ve never benefited from empowerment schemes by their lawmakers and the government. Lawmakers and government agencies must be made to conduct needs assessments for the design of empowerment schemes before such are allowed into the annual budget for funding.

# 3.

## Youth must be front and center of their budget formulation

There is a popular saying that says “Only those who wear the shoes know where it pinches”. Annual budgeting for the youth cannot be complete without the youth at the center of the table. During our town hall meetings with youth across the six area councils, the majority complained about how the FCT budget is being done without their inclusion. They said they’ve never seen a copy of the budget for the territory, either in hard or soft copies, not to talk of being invited or consulted during the budget development process. There should be a budgeting framework that allows the youth to nominate the projects and programs they need according to their collective priorities in the budget. This alone is participatory, inclusive, and creates a sense of belonging and ownership.

# 4.

## Young people must organize to pursue their cause

No one can fight the cause of young people like their critical mass coming together to pursue a common goal. The government and leaders understand that the youth are the majority, and with their numbers, they can achieve anything they want if and only if they come together and engage relevant authorities. #NotTooYoungToRun law is a testament to what the youth demographic can achieve in Nigeria’s democracy if they are united, focused, and innovative. Tracking of government’s youth development investments must be embraced by young people from local-to-state and to the federal levels. Youth must make sure that government empowerment programs are delivered to them promptly, expose misappropriation of funds intended for youth investments, avoid petty politics and corrupt practices that can hinder youth inclusion and development.

# 5.

## Leave no youth behind—increased funding for education and innovation programs

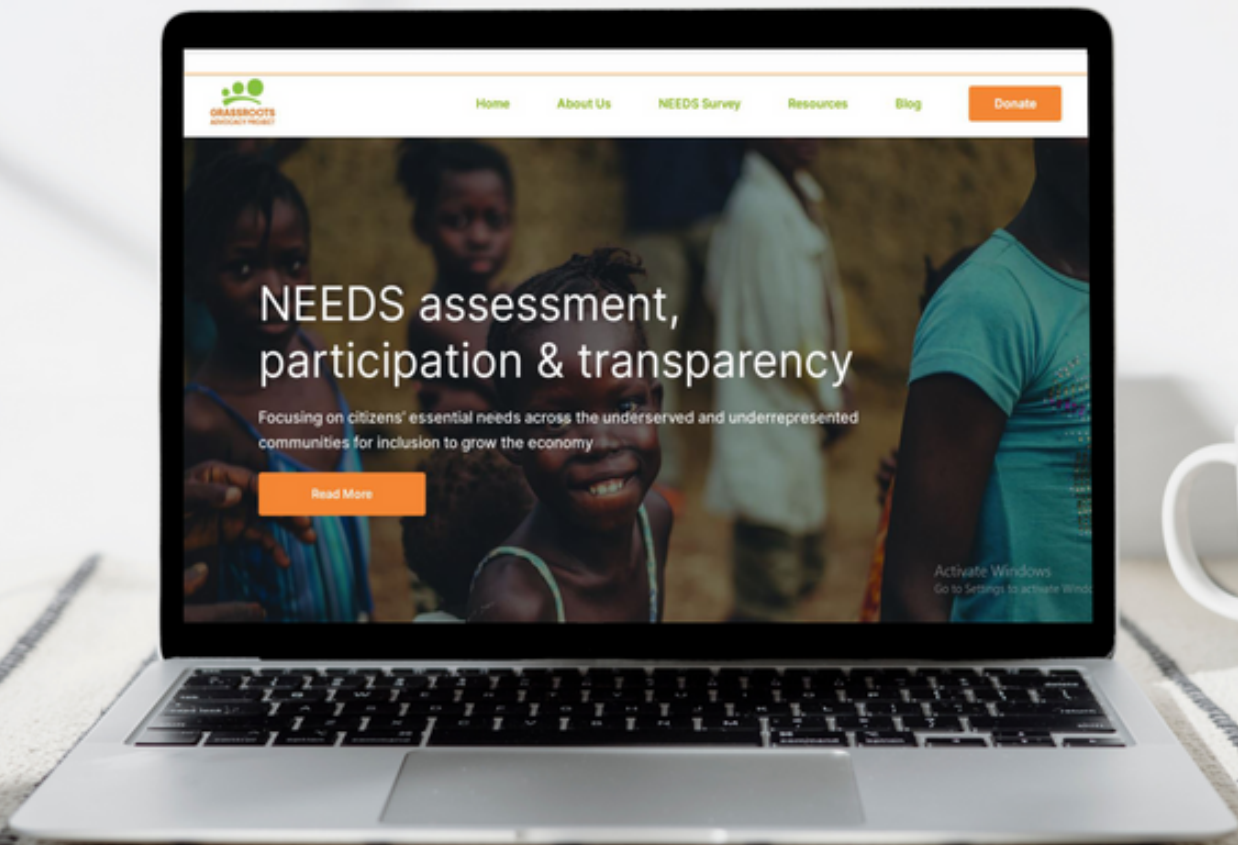
A well-educated youth demographic is very important if Nigeria is truly interested in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and beyond. The country currently has over <sup>6</sup>20 million out-of-school children, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Though, FCT recently ranked second in the provision of basic education, according to YouthHub Africa Basic Education ranking. Attaining a 25% budgetary allocation for education in the FCT will create more learning opportunities for young people, improve learning outcomes and empower them to participate in the emerging knowledge-based economy.

---

5. See <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/03/28/ngos-partner-rivers-to-domesticate-national-youth-policy-2/>. Date accessed—February 20, 2023.

6. See <https://www.thecable.ng/despite-alternative-intervention-number-of-out-of-school-children-keeps-rising-in-nigeria>. Date accessed—February 20, 2023.


7. See Basic Education Ranking according to States by YouthHub Africa launched on February 21, 2023 in Abuja. <https://youthhubafrica.org/eduranking/>.



We are working with **communities** and **citizens** both **online and offline** to conduct **NEEDS assessment** to determine **development priorities** that would be included in the **budget** and empowering them to hold the government accountable.


Learn more about our work today.

VISIT  
**WWW.GRAP.ORG.NG**

  @grapngr



We are a civic-tech organization working to empower citizens and communities to enable accountability and participation for good governance and development.

 +234 818 017 7099

 Suite D-303, Second Floor, Soar Plaza, 1st Avenue, Gwarinpa, Abuja, Nigeria

 [www.promadfoundation.org](http://www.promadfoundation.org)

  @promadng   Promad Foundation