

Factsheet on
**Youth and Women
Candidacy** in the
**2022 FCT Area
Council Elections**

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Yiaga Africa, is a civic non-governmental organization promoting democracy, governance and development in Africa through advocacy, research and capacity building. Our goal is to build democratic societies anchored on the principles of inclusion, justice, transparency and accountability. Yiaga Africa operates as a citizens' movement poised with the onerous mandate of enhancing the quality of democratic governance, public accountability and civic participation. Yiaga Africa leads the Not Too Young To Run movement and runs a Youth Observatory on Political Participation. Since 2007, Yiaga Africa has been involved in election observation and it is one of the leading organizations working on elections in Nigeria.

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Executive Summary

Youth inclusion in democratic processes has gained global attention, buoyed largely by the emergence of younger leaders and the demand for the recognition of youth participation as a human right. The youth of today are largely existing in a time of democratic contradictions where the increase in the number of countries adopting democracy as a system of government has not necessarily translated into the practice of democracy. For developing democracies, the struggle remains the ability of the system to consistently institutionalise democratic institutions and effectively mainstream a democratic political culture as the norm. Central to the discourse on democracy is the fundamental role of the people and the actualisation of the core principles of inclusion and representation especially of marginalised groups like youth and women.

Today's generation of young people is the largest in the world with nearly half of the world population under the age of 25. Africa for instance is a young continent with a burgeoning youth population constituting more than half of its population. The United Nations projects that the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to double by 2050 with countries like Nigeria expected to be one of the nine countries contributing to half of the world population by 2050. The numerical strength of young people in Nigeria, Africa and the world has not however translated to political representation in Government. According to a Global Parliamentary report, the average age of Parliamentarians is 53 years.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 'Youth Participation Parliament Report 2020', only 2.6% of the world's Members of Parliament/legislators are under 30 years, while 17.5% are under 40 years. In Nigeria, 2.55% of legislators in the National Assembly are under 35 years while 8.74% are under 40 years at the national level. In the State Houses of Assembly, 8.98% of legislators are under 35 years while 21.6% are under 40 years of age. Similarly, women representation in government remains poor with the Inter-Parliamentary Union putting the global average percentage in all chambers of national parliaments at 25.7%. The reality is worse in Nigeria, with women representation at 4.47% in the National Parliament and 4.54% in the State Parliament. The under-representation of young people and women in government and democratic processes remains a threat to democratic sustainability.




Youth representation and inclusion in democratic processes and institutions constituted a major campaign issue in Nigeria's 2019 general elections. The success of the mainstreaming of the youth agenda in the 2019 general elections was due to vigorous advocacy by the Not Too Young To Run Movement. The 2019 general election recorded an increase in the number of young candidates running for the office of the President, National Assembly, Governorship and State Houses of Assembly. Although this did not translate to the direct emergence of young people as elected officials when compared to the number of youth aspirants, however, the 2019 elections recorded a 2 per cent increase in young elected officials when compared with the 2015 election.

The numerical superiority of the youth population in Nigeria is underscored by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) 2019 Registered voters' list, which puts the percentage of youth registered voters at 51.11% of a total voter population of 84,004,084 million. For the FCT, young voters constituted 51.0% of the registered voters in Abuja during the 2019 general elections. With the commencement of the continuous voter's registration exercise in June 2021 INEC projects a quantum increase in the number of young voters by the 2023 general elections with about 935,095 young voters completing their registration as of 18 October 2021. This will likely translate to an increase in the 51.1% youth voters to vote in the February 12, 2022, FCT Area Council election.

On 31st March 2021, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the election. INEC cleared 478 candidates to contest in the election in the 68 constituencies of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. 110 of the 478 candidates will contest the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship seats in Bwari, Abaji Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali and Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC) while 363 candidates will also jostle for 62 councillorship positions in the FCT. The candidates, nominated by 14 political parties, including Nigeria's ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), will jostle for political and administrative control of the six area councils in FCT on 12 February 2022. Only six chairmen and 62 councillors are expected to emerge at the end of the electoral process.

The participation of the youth in the electoral process will enable them to effectively enforce their civic rights and actualise their political aspirations as leaders in Nigeria's journey to sustainable democracy. The Not Too Young To Run movement remains a landmark initiative designed to inspire youth political inclusion and development. Its gains must be consolidated and sustained in the 2022 FCT Local Council Elections and in subsequent elections in Nigeria.



The observable trends in the participation of youth and female candidates in the 2022 FCT local council elections are in two broad segments. The first one is on youth participation in the Chairmanship and Councillorship election, while the second is on the participation of women in the Chairmanship and Councillorship elections.

The following are among the most significant observations and trends:

- In total, 227 youth candidates, representing 47.9% of all the candidates, are contesting for seats in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections.
- Women representation is abysmally low, with female candidacy at 8.87%. 4 political parties; Action Alliance (AA), All Progressives Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have no female candidates vying for seats in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections.
- Among the area councils, the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) with 70 youth candidates has the highest number of youth candidates in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections.
- Among the political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with (39) has the highest number of youth candidates and the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) with (10) has the highest number of women candidates for the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections.

Introduction:

Women and Youth Candidacy in Local Elections in Nigeria

The National Youth Policy (2019) identifies a myriad of challenges which young Nigerians are faced with it. These challenges include: poverty, multi-dimensional discrimination, unemployment, barriers to education and limited opportunities. These challenges constitute a bane to youth political participation and inclusion, thus leading to a lower percentage of youth who hold political and leadership positions. As noted in the Yiaga Africa 'SWOT Analysis of Youth candidates in the 2019 elections', young candidates are faced with "inadequate funding/inability to access enough funds, political inexperience, gender, religious and ethnic discrimination..." amongst others as some of their major weaknesses. While these challenges abound and also extends to women electoral competition, every election presents its opportunities to further mainstream women and youth candidacy as the norm.

Nigeria is a federal republic with three tiers of government: federal (central), states and local government. Although democratically elected local governments are protected by the constitution while development areas and autonomous communities are created by individual state legislation, elected local governments are lacking in around half of the states. At the state level, the relevant ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs, or bureau of local government affairs is responsible for the administration of state-level Acts governing local authorities. Local government exists in a single-tier across all states. There are 768 local governments, and a further six area councils in the FCT, totalling 774 authorities. Following the 2015 local elections, 9.8% of councillors and 3.6% of chairpersons were female. The funds raised by taxes are collected by all levels of government, with local government being responsible for collecting licence fees for haulage, trade and motor vehicles. All revenue collected is pooled in the federal account which is in turn split across the three spheres of government. The core functions of local government include pre-school, primary and adult education; public health; town planning; roads and transport; and waste disposal.

Yiaga Africa 2018 Report on The Under-Representation of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria's Legislatures , states that on average, local government areas in Nigeria have an average representation of 6.0% women, 29.7% youth and 0.4% of persons living with disabilities (PWDs) in local councils. Recall that representation at the State Houses of Assembly was 4.9%, 5.8% and 1.4% for women, youth and PWDs respectively. While youth representation increases at the local level, the same is clearly not true for women and PWDs.

Legal Framework for Local Governments Elections in Nigeria

Local Government (Area Council in the case of the FCT) elections are guaranteed in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which establishes Local Government areas as the third tier of government. As a federal system, the Constitution enables decentralisation of power with the executive legislature and Judiciary structured to function at different levels. The Constitution divides the legislative powers between the National Assembly and State Assembly. Accordingly, national elections: the Presidential, National Assembly, Governorship, State Assembly are regulated by the Electoral Act which is an Act of the National Assembly and managed by INEC which is a federal executive body established in the constitution. Local elections are regulated by the Electoral Law of the state which is a law passed by respective State Assemblies in each of the 36 states. The Local elections are thereby managed by the State Independent Electoral Commission created by the Constitution. There is, however, a major exception for the Abuja local elections. Abuja is the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria as such, it is not structured like a State and has only federal legislators represented in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Accordingly, the local election, (LGAs are called Area councils in Abuja), is regulated by the Electoral Act and by extension, managed by INEC.

For the purposes of local elections, Section 3(6) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 establishes Local Government areas as the third tier of government in Nigeria. Section 7(1) of the Constitution further guarantees democratically elected local government councils in the country. Also, Section 7(4) the government of a state is mandated to ensure that every person who is eligible to vote and be voted for in a House of Assembly election is also given the right to vote and be voted for at a local government council election.

While the constitution guarantees uniform age eligibility for contesting elections in Nigeria, the age eligibility for contesting in local elections is not necessarily uniform. Respective State Houses of Assembly in making their Electoral Laws adopted different age eligibility for their local elections. In some states, 30 years is the eligibility age for contesting for the office of the Chairperson and 25 for councillors. Similarly, for the Abuja Area Council, the Electoral Act provides for 30 years as the age of eligibility for the office of the chairperson and 25 for councillors.

Local elections remain a fundamental democratic process because elections help to establish, nurture and sustain democracy and democratic political culture especially beginning at the local level. Elections provide the electorate with the power to freely participate in choosing their leaders and in providing the much-needed support and legitimacy to the state. Leaders are made accountable, and the institutions that create the stability of the political system are strengthened (Fage 2007).

Youth and Women Candidacy in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections

Youth Candidacy in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections



Women Candidacy in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections



Percentage of Youth Candidacy in the 2022 FCT Area Council Elections



Gender Distribution of Youth Candidates in the Councillorship Election



A gender analysis of youth candidates in the Councillorship Election for the 2022 FCT Local Council Elections reveals that 91.1% of the youth candidates are male. This figure is indicative of the very low representation of the female gender in the elections. Only 8.87% of youth candidates for the Councillorship Elections are female. Also significant is that majority of the female youth candidates are in the age group of 30-34 years

Party Distribution of Youth Candidates in the FCT 2022 Area Council Elections

With regard to the distribution of youth candidates across Political Parties in the 2022 FCT Area Council Election, 14 political parties fielded youth candidates for the Chairmanship and Councillorship elections.

Four political parties, African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP), account for 54% of youth candidates running for Chairmanship or Councillorship election.

S/N	Party	No. of Youth Candidates for Councillorship Election	No. of Youth Candidates for Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship Election	Total Number of youth candidates	% of youth candidates	Rank
1.	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	35	4	39	17.1%	1st
2.	African Democratic Congress (ADC)	31	3	34	14.9%	2nd
3.	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	26	-	26	11.4%	3rd
4.	All Progressives Congress (APC)	25	1	26	11.4%	3rd
5.	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	21	-	21	9.25%	4th
6.	Action Democratic Party (ADP)	18	5	23	10.1%	5th
7.	Young Progressives Party (YPP)	11	4	15	6.60%	6th
8.	Allied Peoples Movement (APM)	8	6	14	6.16%	7th
9.	Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	7	2	9	3.96%	8th
10.	National Rescue Movement (NRM)	4	2	6	2.64%	9th
11.	Labour Party (LP)	2	3	5	2.20%	10th
12.	African Action Congress (AAC)	3	1	4	1.76%	11th
13.	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	1	3	4	1.76%	11th
14.	Action Alliance (AA)	1	-	1	0.44%	12th

Political Party Ranking on Women Candidacy

Of the 14 political parties contesting for elective positions in the FCT Area Council Elections, 10 political parties fielded female candidates in the Chairmanship and Councillorship elections. Out of this number, 1 political party did not field female candidates for the Chairmanship or Vice-Chairmanship positions while 2 political parties did not field female candidates for the Councillorship positions. 4 political parties did not field female candidates for either the Chairmanship, Vice-Chairmanship or Councillorship positions.

S/N	Party	No. of Women Candidates for Councillorship Election	No. of Women Candidates for Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship Election	Total Number of Women Candidates	% of Women Candidates	Rank
1.	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	9	1	10	23.8%	1st
2.	African Democratic Congress	7	1	8	19%	2nd
3.	Social Democratic Party (SDP)	4	-	4	9.52%	3rd
4.	Action Democratic Party (ADP)	3	1	4	9.52%	3rd
5.	Allied Peoples Movement (APM)	2	2	4	9.52%	3rd
6.	Young Progressives Party (YPP)	3	1	4	9.52%	3rd
7.	African Action Congress (AAC)	2	1	3	7.1%	4th
8.	Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	1	1	2	4.76%	5th
9.	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	-	2	2	4.76%	5th
10.	National Rescue Movement (NRM)	-	1	1	2.38%	6th



Conclusion

The relatively high percentage (29.7) of youth at the local government level shows a potential pool of young Nigerians with some legislative experience. The 'Not Too Young To Run' Act, passed in 2018, has since reduced the minimum ages for contesting a number of elected positions. Youth aged 25–30 are now eligible to be elected into the House of Representatives and State Houses of Assembly. It remains to be seen if these changes will increase the number of young Nigerians contesting and winning these positions. Yet the dismal representation of already eligible youth, suggests that the age restriction is not the only liability keeping youth away from elected positions.

Non - governmental organisations advocating for youth political inclusion would do well to focus on training and motivating these youths to transition into higher offices.

Political parties, as platforms to elective positions, have a particularly important role to play. The traditional method of affirmative action used by Nigeria's political parties, discounted and free nomination forms, does not appear to translate into representation in politics. There is also a need to sanitize party politics and strengthen internal party democracy, thus reducing obstacles to inclusion. The representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in local governance remains poor and efforts to increase the inclusion of marginalized groups must be further strengthened.

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