

2023 Elections: Youth Representation in the Legislature

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Acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| APC | All Progressives Congress |
| PDP | Peoples Democratic Party |
| LP | Labor Party |
| INEC | Independent National Electoral Commission |
| IPU | Interparliamentary Union |



Introduction

In 2015, Yiaga Africa launched the Youth Observatory on Political Participation to monitor trends on youth political participation in Nigeria. The observatory was designed to bridge the knowledge and data gap on youth representation in public office to facilitate policies and programmes on youth political participation. The initiative entails collecting data on youth candidates and young elected leaders, analyzing the data and producing knowledge products to facilitate learning, policy dialogues, and program design. In addition, the observatory covers empirical investigations on the forms, drivers and dynamics of youth participation in other forms of political participation.

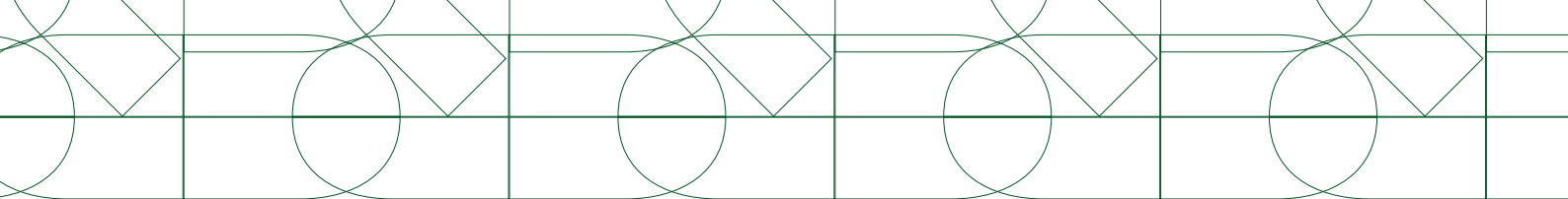
Nigeria's 2023 general election is the second general election since the amendment of the 1999 constitution to reduce the age qualification for running for office in Nigeria popularly known as Not Too Young To Run Act. The legislation addressed a major constitutional impediment to youth participation. By reducing the age criteria for the President from 40 to 35 years, House of Representatives from 30 to 25 years and State House of Assembly from 30 to 25 years, the political establishment began the journey of changing the face of politics. The surge in youth candidacy and youth representation in federal and state legislatures is directly linked to the Not Too Young to Run legislation and the rise in youth political awakening.

Since 2015, Yiaga Africa has published Youth Candidacy Reports in all general elections. The report reveals three dominant trends on youth participation in politics in the last three election cycles. First, political parties

nominate more youth candidates for legislative elections at the state level than executive or National Assembly seats. The political reality suggests that legislative offices at the state level offer better opportunities for young people to contest and win elections. Second, while youth demography is the highest on the national register of voters, youth candidacy hardly influences youth turnout. Third, youth candidates nominated by established politics are more likely to win elections that youth candidates sponsored by less established parties.

Youth candidacy declined in the 2023 general election. Yiaga Africa's analysis of INEC's candidate data shows that youth candidacy plunged from 34% in 2019 to 28.6% in 2023. The youth maintained dominance as the largest demography on the voter register but a minority on the list of candidates on the ballot. Eighteen political parties sponsored 15,336 candidates in the 2023 elections. Of this figure, 4,398 were young people representing 28% youth candidacy. Interestingly, 43.2% of the youth candidates (25 – 30 years) are direct beneficiaries of the Not Too Young To Run Act. Youth candidacy for House of Representatives declined from 27.4% in 2019 to 21.6% in 2023. Similarly, youth candidacy for State House of Assembly also dropped from 41.8% in 2019 to 35.6% in 2023.

The poorest representation of youth in the House of Representatives was recorded in 2015 when only three out of 360 members were youth, representing 0.3% of elected legislators. Youth representation was higher in the State House of Assembly with 57 youths (6%) occupying seats in various state legislative houses. There



was remarkable shift in the 2019 elections when 3% of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives and 8% of the 991 seats in the State Assemblies were won by young people between 25 – 35 years. Despite the decline in youth candidacy in the 2023 election, the level of youth representation in the legislature improved slightly compared to the 2015 and 2019 elections.

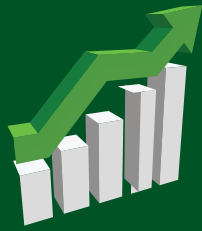
The report contains analysis of the data on elected candidates in the 2023 general election and presents an outlook of the National Assembly and State House of Assembly. The report gives an indication

of the youth representation in legislative houses. Data for this report was sourced from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) elected candidate list for National and State Assemblies and is accurate as of 16th May 2023. The report adopts 18 – 35 years as the youth age bracket in line with the African Youth Charter. However, in certain instances, the analysis extends the age benchmark to 45 years due to the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) classification of young parliamentarians as legislators under 45 years.

Key Findings

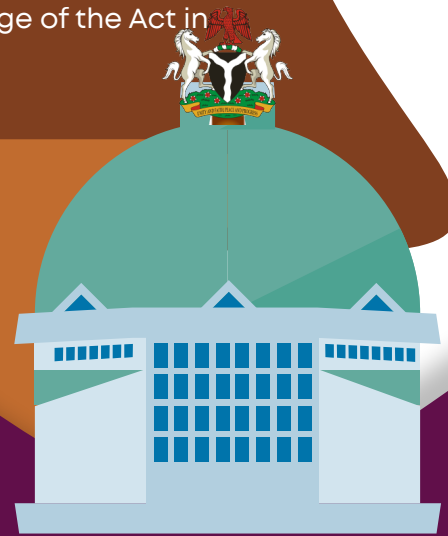
Youth representation in legislature improves with a slight margin:

In comparison to 2015 and 2019, young people won more seats in National and State Houses of Assembly. Youth representation in the House of Representatives increased from 3% in 2019 to 3.92% (0.9 increase) while in the state assemblies it rose from 8.9% in 2019 to 9.2% (0.3 increase).



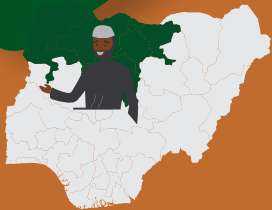
Direct beneficiaries of Not Too Young To Run win seats in the National Assembly:

Two young people between 25 – 29 won seats in the House of Representatives. This is the first-time candidates below 30 years will be elected to the National Assembly since the passage of the Act in 2018.



The highest proportion of young elected legislators are from the north west:

The geographical distribution of the young legislators indicates the north west geopolitical zone has the highest percentage of young legislators while the North east, South East and South south have low representation of young legislators.



The north west geopolitical zone has the highest percentage of young legislators while the North east, South East and South south have low representation of young legislators.



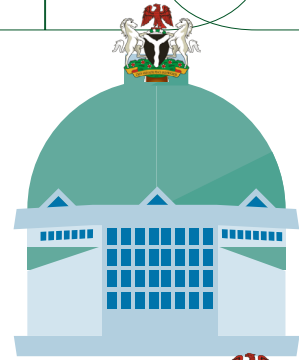
The All Progressives Congress (APC) has the highest party share of young legislators:

The All Progressive Congress (APC) has highest number of young legislators in the national and state assemblies.

Young female legislators record historic wins in legislative election: Four young female legislators under 35 years won legislative seats in three state assemblies, namely Delta, Lagos and Kwara. Kwara has the highest record of young female legislators and the youngest elected female, 26 years is from Kwara state.



National Assembly



3.93%

Young people between 25 – 35 years won 14 out of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives representing 3.92% youth. The APC has 7 members, PDP 6 and LP 1.

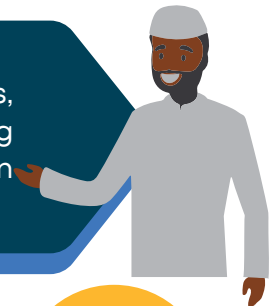


Two (2) seats in the House of Representatives were won by young people below 30 years making the first time direct beneficiaries of Not Too Young To Run act will be elected into the National Assembly since the passage of the act.

2 seats

37Years

Based on the IPU threshold for young legislators, six seats in the Senate are occupied by young people under 45 years. The youngest Senator in the National Assembly is 37 years old.

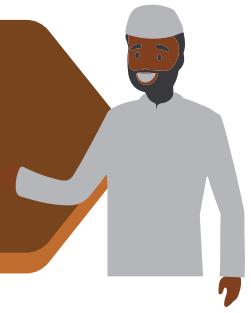


With 50 young legislators in the House of Representative, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has the highest number of young legislators under 45 years while the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has the lowest with 2 representatives under 45 years.

<45

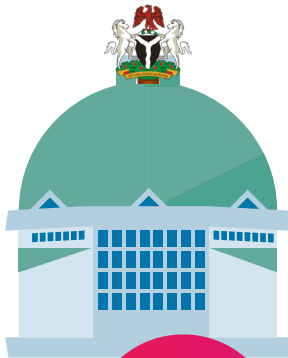
102
Legislators

Of the 102 legislators under 45 years old in the 10th Assembly, only 2 are women.



Of the 380 women who contested for Senate and House of Representatives, 11% were young women, and only 18 (4.7%) were elected. There are no women under 35 years in the House of Representatives. The youngest female legislator is 42 years old.

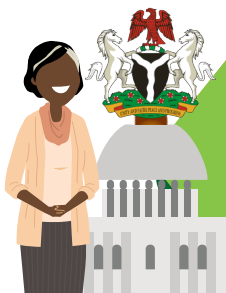
18%



State Houses of Assembly

9.2%

Of the 993 state constituency seats, 92 young people under 35 years secured seats representing 9.2% youth representation at sub-national legislative houses. This is an increase from 8.9% recorded in 2019.

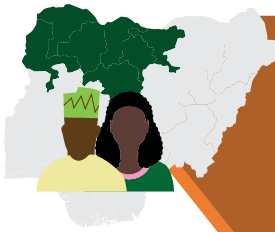


4 of the 92 under 35 years in the State Houses of Assembly, are women. The youngest female is 26 years old

<35 years

**<35
years**

The All Progressives Congress has the highest number of young legislators under 35 with 41 representatives. The APC is closely followed by the People's Democratic Party with 35 while Young Progressive Party (YPP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) have 1 representative each.

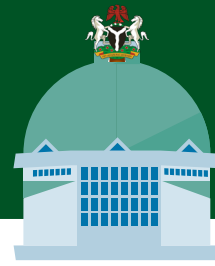


1.71%

The number of beneficiaries of the Not Too Young To Run legislation in State Houses of Assembly increased from 1.41% in 2019 to 1.71% in 2023.

Recommendations

National and State Assemblies



01

Invest in sustained capacity building for young legislators, who are primarily first-time lawmakers, to improve their knowledge of legislative practice and procedure.

Ensure young legislators are assigned leadership roles in legislative committees to maximize their intellect, energy and creativity in improving legislative governance.

02

03

Establish Youth Parliamentarians Forum as legislative committees to guarantee access to technical and financial resources to facilitate active youth participation in parliament.

Introduce and pass legislations that promote and mainstream women's political participation

04

Civil society, and development partners



05

Create opportunities for enhancing the capacity of young legislators through trainings, publications and exchange programs

Provide incentives to inspire high legislative performance in the areas of lawmaking, legislative oversight and constituent's representation.

06

07

Promote legislative accountability through a comprehensive evidence-based performance assessment system for young legislators.

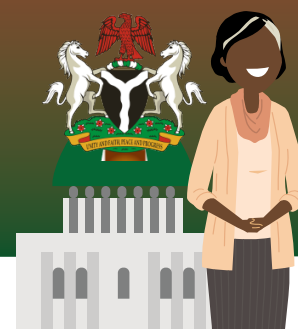


Media

Spotlight the contributions of young legislators to legislative governance and ensure media visibility for young legislators at the National and State assemblies.

08

Youth Representation in the National Assembly



1

Youth Representation in the House of Representatives (25 – 35yrs)

In the 2023 general election, 3122 candidates contested for the House of Representatives seats. Of this number, 674 were youth candidates between the ages of 25 – 35. Fourteen youth candidates

representing 3.92% won seats in the House of Representatives. This is an increase from twelve young legislators voted into the House of Representatives in 2019.

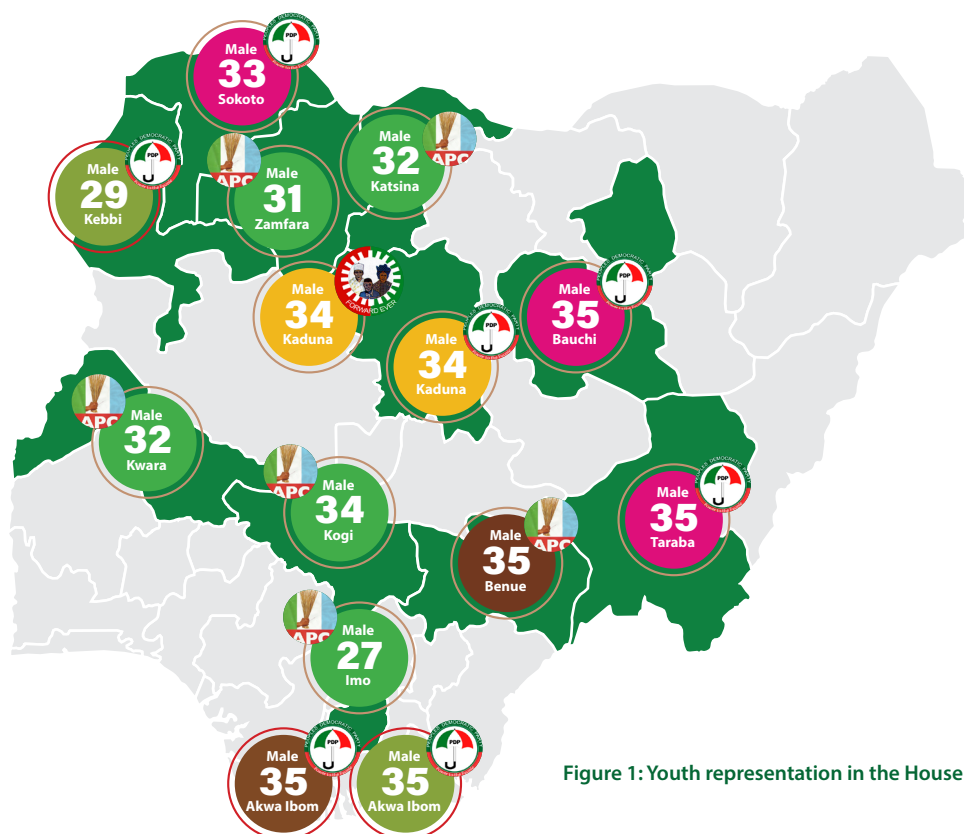
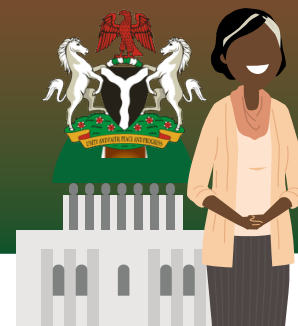


Figure 1: Youth representation in the House of Reps

Youth Representation in the National Assembly



2

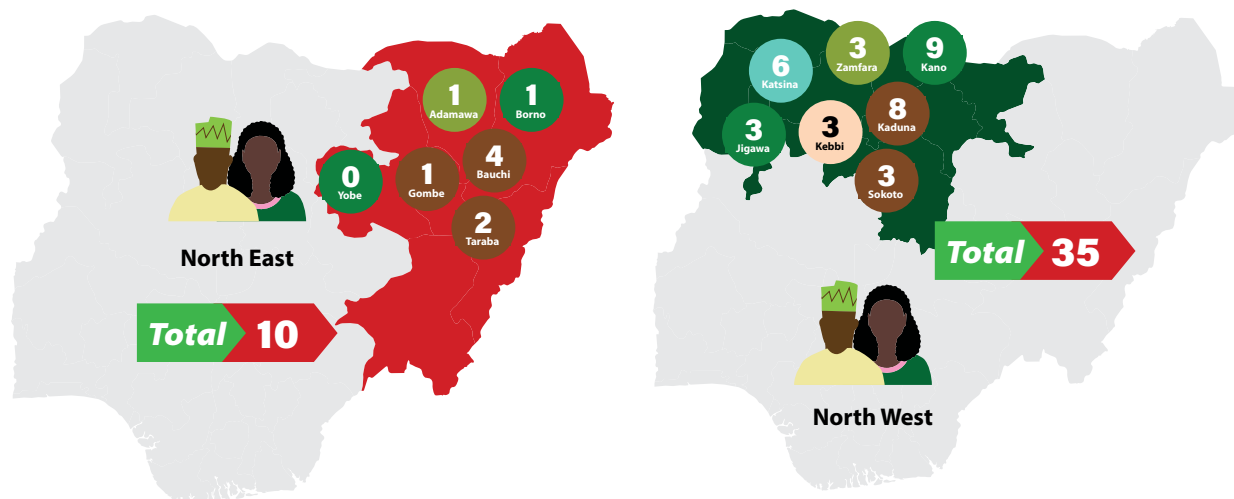
Youth Representation in the House of Representatives (36 – 45yrs)

As a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Nigeria adopts the age classification for young parliamentarians pegged at 45 years old. The National Assembly established a Young Parliamentarians Forum for members under 45 years old. Of the 3,112 candidates that contested for the House of Representatives, 1,079 are between the ages of 36 – 45. 88 of them won secured seats in the House of Representatives representing 24% of the House.

3

Geographical distribution of young legislators (25 – 45yrs)

35 of the 102 legislators under 45 years hail from the Northwest making the region the geopolitical zone with the highest number of young legislators while the Northeast and Southwest record low representation.



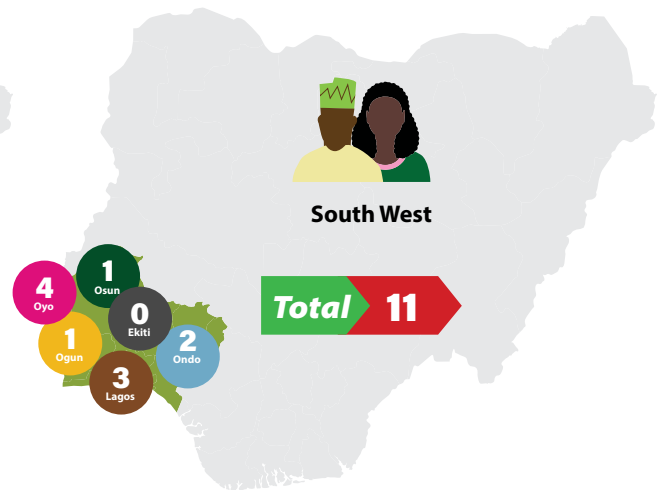
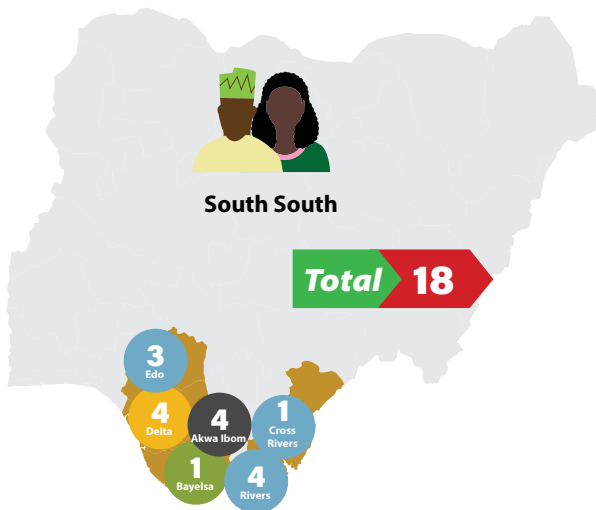
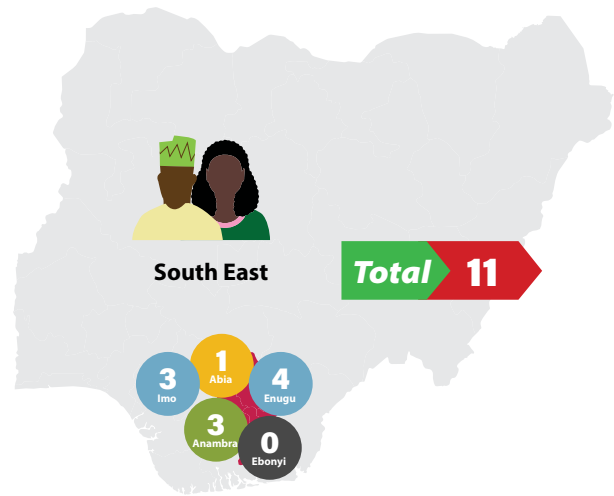
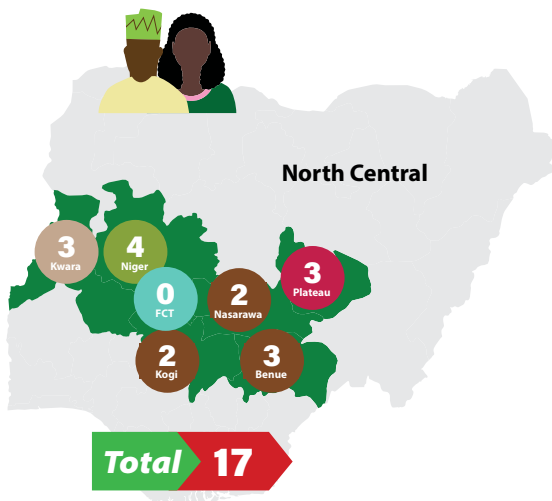


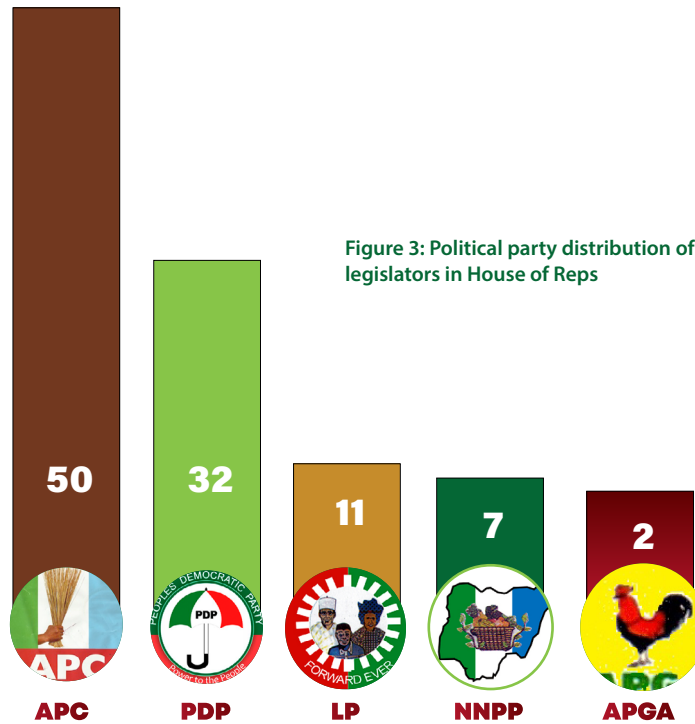
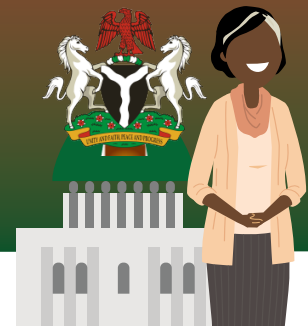
Figure 2: Geographical distribution of young legislators in the House of Reps

4

Political Party Representation

There are One Hundred and Two (102) young elected representatives in the House of Representatives between the ages of 25 - 45 from five (5) political parties. Out of this number, the All Progressives Congress (APC) has the highest number of representatives with 50 youth candidates, followed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with 32 representatives, Labour Party comes third with 11 representatives, while the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and the All Progressives Grand Alliance have 7 and 2 representatives respectively.

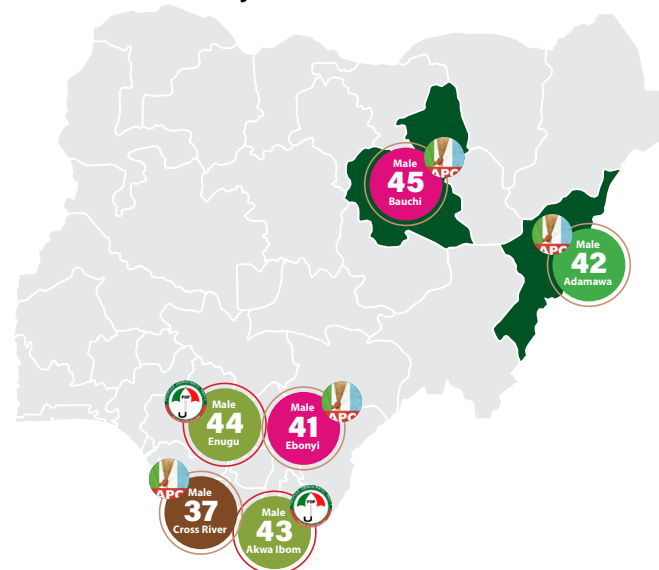
Youth Representation in the National Assembly



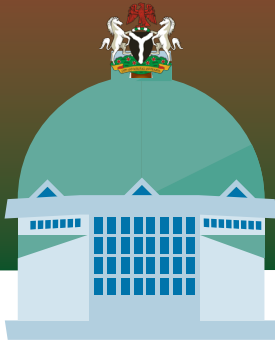
5

Youth Representation in the Senate

Based on the IPU threshold for youth, six seats in the Senate are occupied by young people under 45 years from six states. The Senators are distributed across the main political parties, APC and PDP. While APC has four young senators, PDP has 3 young senators in the National Assembly.



Youth Representation in the Houses of Assembly



1

Youth Representation in State Houses of Assembly (25 – 35yrs)

At the sub-national level, Nigeria practices a unicameral legislature with 993 state constituency seats across the 36 states of the federation. 3,632 young candidates jostle for seats for the State House of Assembly during the 2023 elections. 92 youth candidates under 35 won seats across 34 State Houses of Assembly. Of this number, 17 are young legislators between 25 – 29 years which represents 1.71% of the 993 state constituency seats.

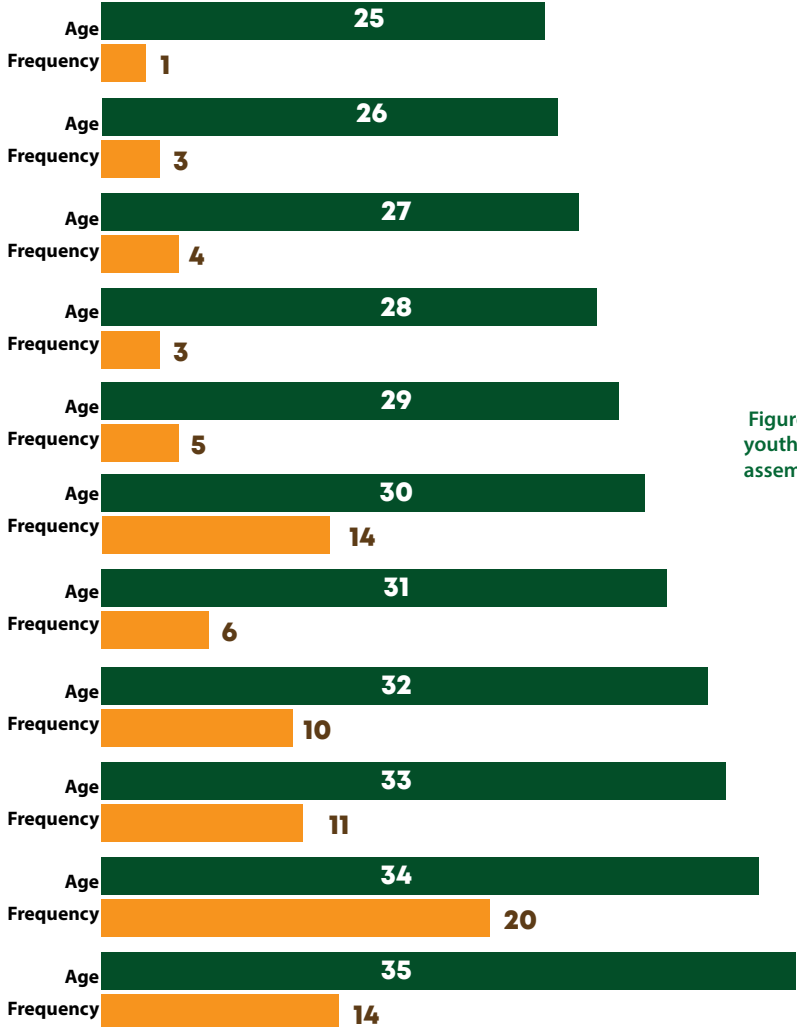
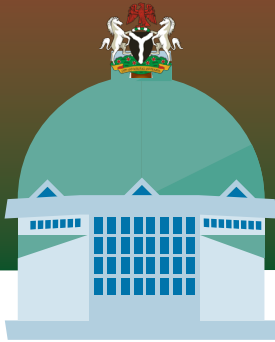


Figure 5: Age distribution of youth candidates in the state assemblies

Youth Representation in the Houses of Assembly



2

Political Party Representation

The All Progressives Congress has the highest number of young legislators under 35 with 41 representatives. The APC is closely followed by the People’s Democratic Party with 35 while Young Progressive Party (YPP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) have 1 representative each. Based on the ranking of political parties on youth candidacy, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) ranked 13th, and the All Progressive Congress (APC) ranked 15th. In the aftermath of the election, the APC and PDP rank higher than the other parties due to the number of youth candidates that secured seats in the legislature.

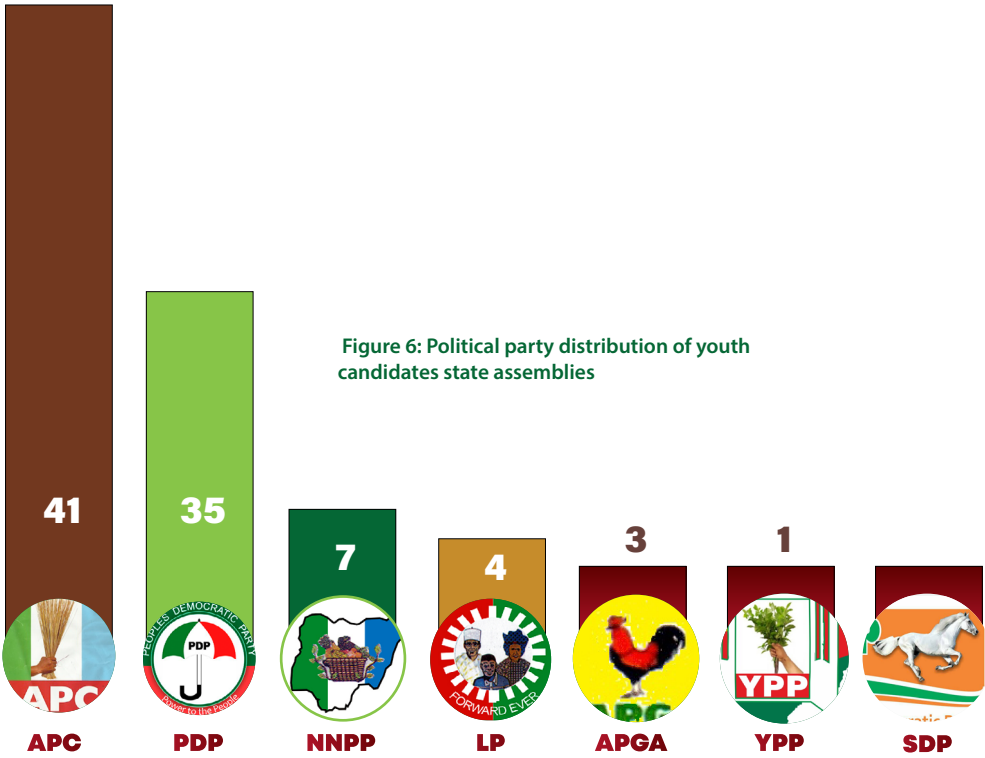


Figure 6: Political party distribution of youth candidates state assemblies

3

Geographical distribution of young legislators in state assemblies (25 – 35 yrs)

The North-West geo-political zone has 27 young legislators under 35 years old. The region maintains its rating as the geopolitical zone with highest percentage of young legislators.

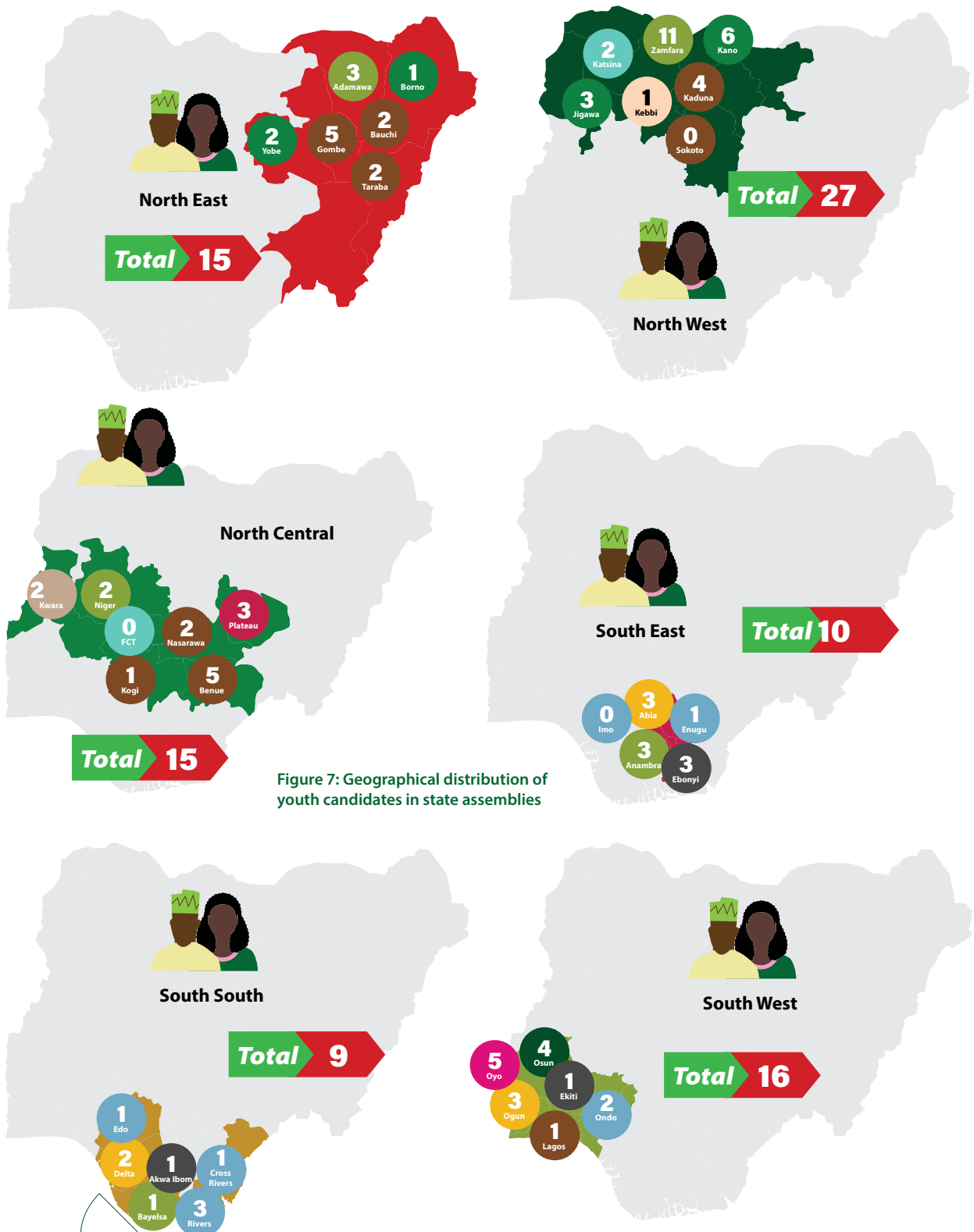


Figure 7: Geographical distribution of youth candidates in state assemblies

4

Young women Representation

Women representation remains abysmally low across the national and State Houses of Assembly. Out of the 93 members-elect across legislative houses at sub-national level, only 4 are women.

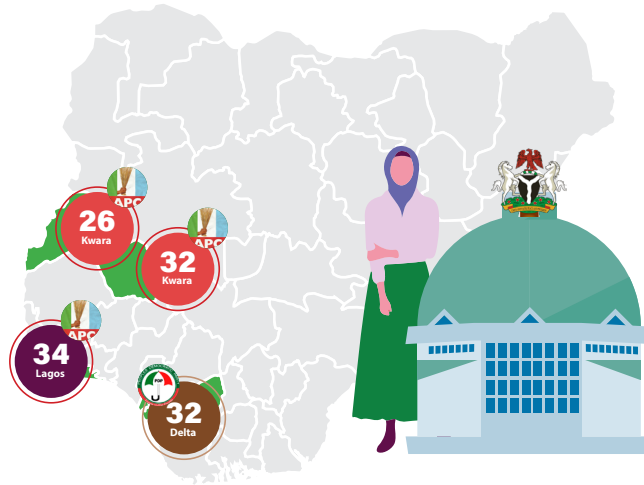


Figure 8: Young women representation in state assemblies



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