NATIONAL
YOUTH
POLICY

2019 - 2023
Pocket Version

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OVERVIEW

OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2019

Background & Rationale

The National Youth Policy developed as a result of recent global emphasis on programmes and policies which focus on complete development of young people as well as their active participation in nation building.

The Rationale for National Youth Policy includes:

- Young people are the greatest investment for a country's development.

- They serve as a measure of a nation's sustainability.

- The needs and aspiration of the Youth is the centre of national development.

What is a National Youth Policy?

It is a declaration and commitment to the practical support that a country intends to give to the development of its young men and women.

Universal concepts of the NYP:

- Participation
- Equity
- Cohesion

RATIONALE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE NIGERIA NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY IN 2016

- The need to reflect new realities and trends affecting young people, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To improve coordination among policies that affect youths in the country.
- To elevate youth engagement in economic, political and community life in Nigeria.

Situation Analysis of Youth in **Nigeria**

Nigeria is currently ranked the 7th most populous country in the world and the fastest growing nation. The youth represent 35.6 percent of the Nigerian population. The implication of this on socio-economic policies and agenda is that the growing population of youth need to acquire high-quality education and skills to contribute to a productive economy. This has resulted in the need to invest in young people.

Unemployment

- Unemployment and underemployment are one of the critical socio-economic problems facing Nigeria. As at 2106, youth unemployment rate stood at 24 percent.

- Unemployment and poverty are quite intertwined. Poverty makes it difficult to invest in education and health that would increase productivity.

- Long term unemployment is believed to feed political and ideological unrest and violence which further increases unemployment because of its effects on economic performance, investor confidence and political instability.

  - Job creation is a critical tool for economic development.

Entrepreneurship

- A major factor in economic growth is entrepreneurship, hence the need for its development.

- It is a permanent cure for extreme hunger and poverty caused by unemployment.

- It is more than starting a business, it involves identifying opportunities, allocating resources and creating value.

- Entrepreneurship skills: risk-taking, high-achiever, task-focused, future oriented, resourceful, etc.

Violence & Humanitarian Situation

- The emergence of the Boko Haram which has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's history.

- The United Nations estimated that from 2009 about 15 million people have been affected by the Boko Haram crisis and over 2 million have become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

- The youth constitute a significant portion of persons affected by the fall out of the Boko Haram activities.

- Youth also constitute the majority of the perpetrators of the violent boko haram activities, inter-communal clashes, restiveness in the Niger-Delta region and clashes between the Fulani Herdsmen and indigenous community members in various parts of Nigeria.

- Youth unemployment and related economic frustration are widely believed to be associated with the rising rate of violence in Nigeria.

Education & Capacity-building

- Education is the most important factor contributing to the ability of young people to live a productive and responsible life.

- Provision of educational opportunities for the youth is a fundamental pre-requisite for building a strong, just, equitable, viable and vibrant nation.

- The reality however is that a significant percentage of Nigerian Youths are illiterates and their educational needs remain not catered for.

- Poverty is a major barrier to formal education. This has also widened the gap between male and female literacy rate.

Health

- Youth health challenges in Nigeria are multiple. They however have behavioural roots and are preventable.

- A large number of youths do not have access to hospitals.

- Leading health challenges among Youths in Nigeria: sexual and reproductive health (SRH), mental health, substance abuse, injury and violence and nutritional problems.

Civic Engagement

- There is a recent prominence in Youth civic engagement in many parts of the world.
- The exercise of active citizenship is one of the most important activities for a healthy transition to adulthood. (World Bank Development Report 2007)
- YCE leads to reduced risky behaviour, increased academic success and greater civic participation later in life.
- YCE seeks to engage young people in democracy through in-school and out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunities.
- YCE reduces the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour and violence.
- It has the potential to contribute to personal development of young people, increased welfare, public awareness of the rights of children and young people.
- It can serve as a channel for young people to make valuable contributions to social change efforts in schools and communities across the nation.

Political Engagement & Inclusion

- Challenges to political engagement and inclusion includes: poverty, education barriers, and multiple forms of discrimination and limited employment opportunities.

- This has resulted in a low percentage of youths holding political and leadership positions.

- Young people are major actors in today's democracy and governance as they have taking leading roles in political activities and processes that have led to changes in the governance structure and the deepening of democratic practices in many parts of the world. (Young people are stakeholders in democratic processes and practices).

Political Engagement & Inclusion

- There is a need to remove the existing barriers to youth political participation.

- Attributes of effective and meaningful youth political participation: consultative, youth-led participation and youth-collaborative participation. (This goes beyond voting or standing for elections)

Disability & Special Needs

- 2.3 percent of the total population have one form of disability or the other. (2006 National Census).

- Almost half a million youths have one form of disability or the other. (2012 National Baseline Youth Survey).

Migration

- Migration is a factor which shapes the lives and development of youths at national and global level. Factors that contribute to youth migration: worsening economic situation in many low- and middle-income countries, increase of intra-country wars and political related violence.
- Nigeria-specific factors: economic challenge and rising unemployment.
- Major effect of migration is the phenomenon of "brain drain" ie migration of highly qualified Nigerian professionals.
- There is also internal migration in Nigeria (people leaving their states of birth to reside in another) due to a desire for better economic prospects and social facilities. This migration is more often than not a rural to urban migration.
- Other factors that affect internal migration are family reasons, conflict and civil unrest.

Policy Context

The National Youth Policy recognises the broader policy context in which it has been formulated and shall operate. This policy context is guided largely by other national policy initiatives and it is also reflective of international programmes and conventions, particularly the under-listed ones:

- The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).
- National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria.
- National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development.
- National Gender Policy.
- National Health Policy.
- National Policy on Education.
- Vision 20:2020

Regional Youth-Related and Development Agenda

- The ECOWAS Commission Youth Policy
- African Youth Charter
- Commonwealth Youth Charter

Global Development Agenda

- Charter of the United Nations
- United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth
- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (1994) and the ICPD Beyond 2014 follow up action (2014)
- Resolution 2012 of the UN Commission on Population and Development on Adolescents and Youth
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)
- "Our Future: A Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing" Report (2016)

Guiding Principles &Values

- Commitment to extensive consultations, respect for diversity of interests and opinion, input and consensus from grassroots and local communities in the spirit of national ownership.

- Affirms and upholds the fundamental human rights of all youths, including their rights to fundamental freedoms, development opportunities and full participation in the democratic and governance processes, as well as in community and civic decision-making and development agenda.

- Governmental recognition of the needs, interests, issues, aspirations, ideas and capacities of young people as the most important and valuable resource of the nation as well as making appropriate provision for optimal growth and development.

- The principles and aspirations of the national Youth Policy aligns with the

Guiding Principles &Values

provision of other existing national policies and development initiatives.

- Cooperative interaction of all stakeholders, including the different tiers of government, the private sector, the civil society, and development partners at all levels.

- Commitment to mainstreaming youth issues as a development approach shall inform the economic reform agenda, medium and long-term development planning, value reorientation and social transformation, and other development initiatives of the government.

- Youth centred development programmes, high degree of youth involvement in implementation, youth-led participation, and full considerations for gender equity, evidence-informed approaches, inclusiveness as well as political and fiscal accountability.

- The NYP recognises and respects the role of tradition, religion, and culture in the development of young men and women.

Vision, Goals & Target Population

Policy Vision

A Nigeria where youths live in a safe and secure environment with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations irrespective of their backgrounds, and contribute optimally to national development.

Policy Mission

To provide stakeholders in youth development an all-inclusive framework that will ensure the realisation of the full potentials of all Nigerian young men and women irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and socio-economic background.

Policy Goal

To provide an appropriate framework that protects the fundamental human rights of all youths, promote their optimal development and well-being, and enhance their participation in every sphere of national development processes.

Target Population

Young People between the ages of 15 and 29 years): The Target Population in this Policy is categorised into three groups:

A. **General population of youths**

B. **Especially Vulnerable Youths. This group includes:**

- Youths Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Youths who are drop-outs from the formal education system.

Target Population

- **Youths living with chronic health challenges that may impact their potential or opportunities for participation negatively (Youths with disabilities and youths living with HIV).**
- **Youths in challenging social and environmental circumstances that increase their vulnerability to health risks, and anti-social behaviours:**

- ✓ **Youths living on the streets**
- ✓ **Youths living in extreme poverty**
- ✓ **Youths living in slum areas (with high rates of crime and access to drugs)**
- ✓ **Youths living in disadvantaged communities, including rural areas.**
- ✓ **Youths living in families where there is physical and/or sexual abuse.**
- ✓ **Internally displaced youths.**
- ✓ **Female youths in environments of high gender inequity.**
- ✓ **Youths working in hazardous occupations.**

Target Population

C. Most at risk Youths. They include youths engaged in:

- Armed conflicts
- Crime (whether incarcerated or not)
- Substance abuse
- Sex work
- Other risky behaviours that compromise health, well-being and their own development or that of other members of the society.

Definition of Youth in the context of The NYP

- The African Youth Charter of 2006 defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 to 35 years.

- Nigeria's 2009 National Youth Policy defines youth as persons aged 18 to 35 years.

- On the basis of the Nigerian Demographic statistics however, this new policy defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 to 29. (This age bracket captures the period that most young Nigerians are transitioning from childhood to adulthood and require social, economic and political support to realise their full potentials).

Strategic Thrusts & Objectives

The strategic thrusts of this Policy are five cross-sectorial developmental pillars that are fundamental to enabling youths to transit to self-fulfilled and productive adulthood with opportunities for full, effective and constructive participation, in line with the Policy vision and mission.

These are:

1. **Productive Workforce and Sustainable Economic Engagement of Youths**

Thematic focus 1

Education, capacity-building and skills development.

Objectives:
- Improve the quality of education and skill training programmes.
- Improve access of youths to education and skill training programmes.
- Promote equitable access to educational opportunities for all youths
- Promote life-long learning among youths

Thematic focus 2

Employment creation and entrepreneurship

Objectives:
- Expand employment opportunities through diversification of the economy
- Increase access of youth entrepreneurs to assets and supportive services Build linkages between the industrial sector and the educational system

Thematic focus 3

Youth in Agriculture and the **Objective:**
- Promote Active Youth Involvement in Agriculture for National Food Security, Social Development and Job Creation.

Thematic focus 4

Youth in ICT and **Objective:**
- Enhance youth capacity and expand the use of ICT to drive youth creativity and productive engagements, employment and development.

2. Health and Health-Promoting Lifestyle

Thematic focus 5

Health Services.

Objectives:
- Improve the quality of youth-related health care services
- Improve the coverage of health care services for youths
- Promote appropriate health behaviour, including sports and leisure-time activities

3. Participation, Inclusiveness and Equitable Opportunities for all Youth

Thematic focus 6

Civic Engagement

Objectives:
- Strengthen the platform and capacity for youth engagement and participation
- Create platforms and enabling environment for inclusion of marginalised youths
- Strengthen inter-generational relationships and solidarity

Thematic focus 7

Political Inclusion

Objectives:

- Enhance the capacities of youth and youth-led organisations to engage actively with political processes at all levels.
- Foster an enabling environment for youth engagement with the political processes at all levels

4. **Ensure Promotive and Protective Environment for Youth Development**

Thematic focus 8

Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Youths

Objectives:

- Develop and enforce gender-sensitive laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of all youths

Peace and Security

Objectives:

- Entrench a mind-set and culture of peace – building, tolerance, dialogue and conflict resolution among youth through formal and informal education, and putting in place supportive social structures and mechanisms.

4. **Effective Partnership-Building and Effective Collaboration in Youth Development**

Thematic focus 10

Capacity for Promoting Youth Development Agenda

Objectives:

- Strengthening the capacity of government agencies for promoting youth development agenda
- Strengthening professional development and professionalism in youth work
- Strengthening the capacity of youth-led organisations for youth work

Sustainable Platform for Multi-sectorial Collaboration

Objectives:

- Establishing and operationalizing sustainable platforms for multi-sectorial collaboration

Youth Development Efforts & Commitments

- The creation of a Ministry of Youth Development by the Federal Government in 2007. (Now Ministry of Youth and Sports Development).

- The statutory responsibility of the ministry includes:
  o   Advancing the youth development agenda nationally
  o   Spearheading policy development and advocacy efforts
  o   Monitor the status of youths and facilitate youth development programmes.

- The ministry funded the conduct of a National Youth Baseline Survey in 2012 with the aim to promote empirical basis for evaluation and implementation of action on matters affecting the youth.

Four dimensions of the National Youth Development Index 2008:

Access

Quality of life

Value system

Perception

Youth Development Efforts & Commitments

- The Annual National Youth Development Report (2008)

- National Baseline Youth Survey (in conjunction with the National Bureau of Statistics). – reflects the status of youths in Nigeria vis a vis employment, educational situation, health, sports, political participation, drugs and crime, migration etc.

- Creation of a Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) - 2008

- Establishment of Youth Development Centres, for vocational training of youths in different parts of the country.

- Establishment of Zonal offices across the country to fast track youth development activities.

- The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme was also launched in 1973 to promote national unity and integration and

expose graduates to leadership roles and community development projects before joining the job market.

- Development of Citizenship and Leadership Training Centres (offering short duration programmes for youths to align them on citizenship issues and develop their potentials for leadership.

- Others contributors to Youth development are International development partners, civil society, organised private sector

Multilateral agencies that have contributed to the youth development agenda includes:
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Health Organisation (health development)
  The United Nations Children's Fund (child right and protection, health, basic education, water and sanitation)
  - The United Nations Development Programme
  - United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

- **International Labour Organisation (job creation and employment issues)**
- **The United nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (drug, corruption and crime control)**
- **The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (HIV prevention and control)**
- **United Nations Women (gender equity, female empowerment, rights and development of the girl-child), and**
- **The IMF and World Bank (economy, job creation, health, education)**
- **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**
- **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

Bilateral organisations active in youth development are:
- **The Department of International Development (DfID) and**
- **The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and**
- **The European Union**

Implementation Framework

- Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development
- National Youth Development Council (NYDC)
- National Council on Youth (NCY)
- National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN)
- Coordination Mechanisms:

  Establishment of multi-disciplinary Technical Working Groups on Youth Development at the three levels of governance in Nigeria.

- Government Institutions:
  - The Presidency
  - Legislative bodies
  - Ministry of Youths and Sports Development
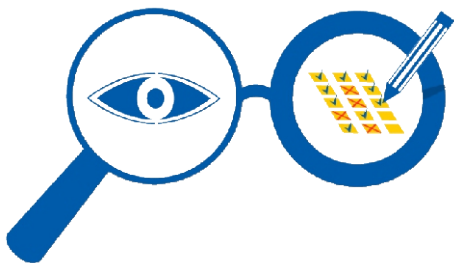 - Ministry of Education

Implementation Framework

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Women Affairs and Social
- Development
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Other Ministries and Agencies
- Organised Private Sector
- Civil Society:
  - Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
  - Academic and Research Institutions
  - Professional Groups
  - Student Unions
  - Youth-led Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other youth organisations
- International Development Partners

Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

Monitoring

- Expected to take place on a continuous basis by the relevant implementing partners.

- It covers all aspects of programme implementation; the result is the forwarded to the Planning, Monitoring and Information Management (PMI) Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development or its equivalent at the different levels of governance.

Evaluation

- To take place at both the midterm and end of the policy cycle to determine the overall achievement in youth development in the focal period and identify success and mitigating factors.

Research

- It is the backbone of evaluation and complements monitoring as well.
- Research is critical in generating data and providing evidence on progress being made in the implementation of youth agenda, and in the assessment of the status and needs of Nigerian Youths.
- A research effort in this context includes; national household surveys, programme activities, special surveys etc.

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