

# Empowering Nigeria's Future: A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development.



NYFF 2024  
White Paper  
Publication

# Executive Summary



**N**igeria faces significant challenges in achieving good governance, sustainable development, and robust infrastructure. This white paper, authored by LEAP Africa's Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) Imaginative Futures Working Group Members, analyzes these challenges and proposes solutions based on the #TheNigeriaWeWant report, a groundbreaking initiative by young Nigerians.

The paper identifies key areas requiring attention, including governance, poverty, infrastructure, youth development, insecurity, inflation, healthcare, technology, climate change, and unemployment. It then outlines actionable recommendations from the #TheNigeriaWeWant report, focusing on youth participation, economic empowerment, educational reforms, healthcare access, technological innovation, and sustainable infrastructure development.

Finally, a roadmap for action is presented, emphasizing policy reforms, investment in human capital, infrastructure development, youth engagement, sustainable economic development, improved healthcare, and social equity.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can harness its youthful potential and create a brighter future for all.



# Introduction



**N**igeria, a nation brimming with youthful energy and vast resources, faces critical challenges in its pursuit of good governance, sustainable human development, and robust infrastructure. A growing population strains resource allocation, economic instability breeds uncertainty, and social cohesion faces constant tests.

However, amidst these challenges lies immense potential. Young Nigerians, a rapidly expanding demographic, represent a powerful force for positive change. Recognizing this, the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) launched the #TheNigeriaWeWant report—a collaborative effort by young people from all six geopolitical zones.

This report serves as a blueprint developed towards achieving an agenda - **'a prosperous federal nation where all people from every generation are secure, free, happy and dignified'**.

# Key Challenges Facing Nigeria

## **Governance**

Current Situation: Nigeria's governance system struggles with corruption, weak institutions, and inefficiencies, which undermine policy implementation and public trust.

**Impact:** This leads to poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, and stunted economic and social development.

## **Poverty and Food Insecurity**

Current Situation: Nigeria faces a growing population with limited resources, straining food production systems, and threatening basic human needs.

**Impact:** This exacerbates poverty, malnutrition, and social unrest.

## **Infrastructural Development**

Current Situation: Inadequate infrastructure, including transportation, communication networks, and energy systems, hampers economic growth and social development.

**Impact:** Poor infrastructure limits access to markets, healthcare, and education, stifling economic opportunities and slowing national progress.

## **Unlocking Youth Potential**

Current Situation: The youth population is expanding, yet their potential for positive contributions is often underutilized due to limited access to education, skills training, and resources.

**Impact:** This leads to high unemployment rates, social instability, and a waste of human capital, limiting sustainable development (JAPA)

## **Crisis and Human Insecurity**

Current Situation: Ongoing conflicts and insecurity in various regions create an environment of fear and uncertainty.

**Impact:** This discourages investment and development, leading to further economic decline, social fragmentation, and displacement of people and communities.

## ■ Key Challenges Facing Nigeria

NYFF 2024  
White Paper  
Publication

**Empowering Nigeria's Future:**  
A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth  
and Sustainable Development.



### **Inflation and Economic Instability**

**Current Situation:** Rising inflation rates and economic instability affect the cost of living and overall economic health.

**Impact:** These issues reduce purchasing power, increase poverty, and hinder economic growth and stability.

### **Health**

**Current Situation:** Inadequate healthcare systems fail to meet the needs of the population, leading to poor health outcomes.

**Impact:** Health crises, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, highlight the weaknesses in the healthcare infrastructure.

### **Technology and Innovation**

**Current Situation:** Despite the potential for technological advancement, there is a lack of investment and support for innovation.

**Impact:** This limits economic diversification and competitiveness on a global scale, reducing Nigeria's ability to thrive in a digital economy.

### **Climate Change**

**Current Situation:** Nigeria is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events and resource scarcity.

**Impact:** These changes threaten food security, livelihoods, and infrastructure, increasing the risk of natural disasters and environmental degradation.

### **Rising Unemployment**

**Current Situation:** Economic challenges have led to high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth.

**Impact:** This contributes to social unrest, hinders economic development, and increases the risk of crime and instability.



# Recommendations from "The Nigeria We Want" Report

## **Governance and Youth Participation**

Recommendation: Increase youth involvement in political processes and decision-making to foster a more inclusive governance system that meets the needs of the populace.

**Action Plan:** Implement policies that encourage youth participation in elections and government, such as lowering the age requirement for political office, constitutionalizing local government autonomy to promote youth inclusion, and providing platforms for youth engagement in policy discussions.

## **Economic Empowerment**

Recommendation: Create job opportunities in emerging sectors like technology and the creative industry to address youth unemployment.

**Action Plan:** Establish youth-focused business incubators, provide access to capital for young entrepreneurs, and promote vocational training programs that align with market needs.

## **Education and Skills Development**

Recommendation: Reform the education system by revamping the curriculum and focusing on skills

development and practical knowledge that meets the demands of the modern economy and new realities.

**Action Plan:** Increase investment in education, particularly in STEAM fields, and create partnerships between educational institutions and industries to ensure that curricula are aligned with market demands.

## ■ Recommendations from "The Nigeria We Want" Report

NYFF 2024  
White Paper  
Publication

**Empowering Nigeria's Future:**  
A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth  
and Sustainable Development.



### **Health and Well-being**

Recommendation: Improve healthcare services, scale healthcare investments and budget, and address mental health issues among youth to ensure a healthy workforce.

**Action Plan:** Expand healthcare infrastructure, improve access to mental health services by mainstreaming it in all hospitals and primary healthcare centers, and promote public health campaigns targeted at youth.

### **Technology and Innovation**

Recommendation: Foster an environment that supports technological innovation and entrepreneurship, and leverage technology to promote access to education.

**Action Plan:** Invest in technology infrastructure, provide incentives for tech startups, support research and development initiatives, and create and support innovation hubs that offer mentorship and collaboration opportunities.

### **Sustainable Development and Infrastructure**

Recommendation: Develop sustainable infrastructure to support long-term economic growth and environmental stability.

**Action Plan:** Prioritize investments in renewable energy, green transportation, and sustainable urban planning to mitigate the impacts of climate change and support economic growth.

### **Poverty Alleviation**

Recommendation: Implement comprehensive social welfare programs to reduce poverty and promote social equity.

**Action Plan:** Expand access to social services, increase support for marginalized communities, and promote policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources.

### **Climate Change Mitigation**

Recommendation: Develop and implement strategies to combat climate change and its effects on agriculture and infrastructure.

**Action Plan:** Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and increase public awareness of climate change issues.

### **Governance Reforms**

Recommendation: Enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in governance.

**Action Plan:** Strengthen anti-corruption measures, promote transparency in government processes, ensure accountability through robust legal frameworks, and strengthen e-governance so citizens can access government services and support national development seamlessly.

### **Economic Diversification**

Recommendation: Diversify the economy to reduce dependence on oil and promote sustainable growth.

**Action Plan:** Invest in sectors such as agriculture, technology, manufacturing, and services, and create policies that encourage foreign and domestic investment in these areas.

### **Diaspora Engagement**

**Recommendation:** Engage the diaspora community to benefit from global expertise, and improve global cash transfer avenues to curb parallel market transactions that have reduced the strength of the Naira.

**Action Plan:** Develop a diaspora strategy to convert brain drain to brain gain while strengthening structures to curb modern global servitude meted out to Nigerians within and outside Nigeria.



# Roadmap for Action

Building upon the identified challenges and proposed solutions, this roadmap outlines a comprehensive approach for achieving the vision articulated in the #TheNigeriaWeWant report:

- **Policy and Institutional Reforms:** Create an enabling policy environment that empowers youth and fosters national development. This includes implementing youth-friendly policies, strengthening institutions, and ensuring inclusive and participatory reforms.

- **Investment in Human Capital:** Build a skilled and knowledgeable workforce capable of driving economic growth and innovation. This requires increased funding for education and vocational training, lifelong learning opportunities, and partnerships between educational institutions and industries.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Develop sustainable infrastructure to support economic growth and improve quality of life. Investment in transportation, energy, and communication

infrastructure, coupled with sustainable urban planning practices is crucial.

- **Youth Engagement and Empowerment:** Foster active youth participation in governance and economic activities. Creating platforms for youth engagement, promoting youth leadership, and supporting youth-led initiatives are key steps.



- **Sustainable Economic Development:** Promote economic growth that is inclusive, diversified, and sustainable. Supporting economic diversification, investing in green technologies, and enacting policies that promote sustainable development are essential.
- **Health and Well-being:** Improve health outcomes and ensure access to quality healthcare services for all. Expanding healthcare infrastructure, improving access to mental health services, and promoting public health initiatives are crucial.
- **Social Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure that all Nigerians have access to opportunities and resources, regardless of their background. This requires promoting social justice policies, supporting marginalized communities, and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.



## Call to Action

---

**N**igeria's future hinges on harnessing its youthful potential and implementing the solutions outlined in this white paper. With a clear vision, strategic actions, and inclusive policies, Nigeria can transform its challenges into opportunities, fostering a nation where every individual thrives in a secure, free, and dignified environment.

The journey towards this vision requires unwavering commitment, collaborative efforts, and sustained investments in the nation's most valuable resource—its young people. We urge policymakers, business leaders, civil society organizations, and all concerned Nigerians to actively engage in this transformative journey. By working together, we can build a more prosperous, secure, and equitable future for all Nigerians.



# About the Authors

*The Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) is an initiative of LEAP Africa, a youth-focused leadership development organization committed to raising leaders who will transform Africa. The NYFF Imaginative Futures Working Group Members authored this white paper and represent a diverse group of young leaders from across Nigeria, united by a common vision to build #TheNigeriaWeWant.*