

Addressing Youth Unemployment through a Streamlined National Youth Policy



Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress!

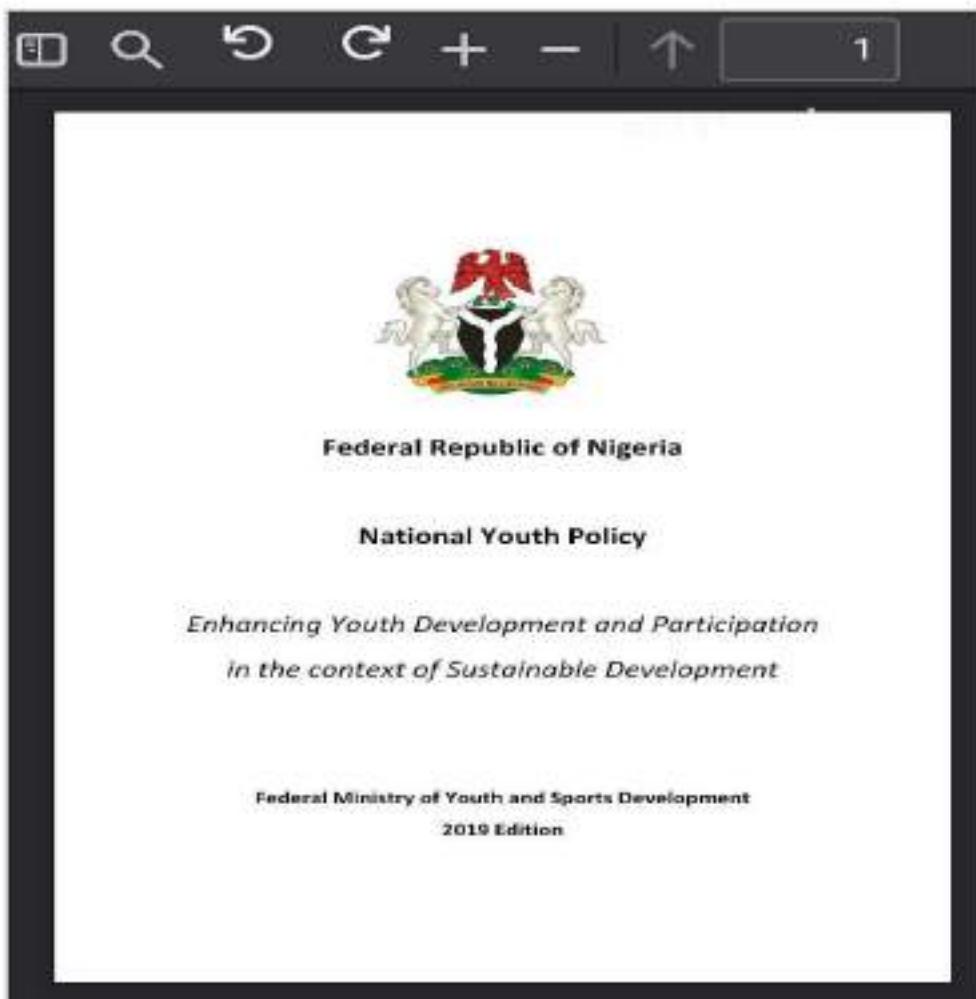
Youth unemployment in Nigeria remains alarmingly high, with rates exceeding 40% in some states. This challenge is compounded by the absence of a cohesive implementation of a national youth policy to harmonize efforts across sectors and regions. A fragmented approach has led to inefficiencies, duplication of programs, and limited impact. This piece recommends the development of a streamlined national youth policy to unify existing frameworks, prioritize skills development, and foster job creation. Such a policy will enable coordinated efforts, leverage resources, and address the root causes of youth unemployment.

The upcoming National Youth CONFAB is important, as it will enable government; both the sub-national and national to dialogue with youths from all strata, and to ensure a harmonization of ideas, agendas and focus areas for development and inclusion.

Context and Importance of the Issue

Nigeria, with over 60% of its population under 25, faces a demographic advantage that could spur economic growth. However, youth unemployment undermines this potential. Many young Nigerians lack access to quality education, employable skills, and entrepreneurial opportunities, leaving them vulnerable to poverty and social instability.

A key contributor to this challenge is the lack of an effective youth policy. Current youth-focused programs are scattered across federal, state, and local levels, with little coordination. This has resulted in inefficient resource use, regional disparities, and unmeasured outcomes.



National Youth Policy 2019/2023.

A cohesive national youth policy is crucial for creating a unified strategy to address unemployment and equip the nation's youth with the tools they need to succeed.

Policy Options

1. Maintain the Status Quo

Continue with fragmented youth programs at various government levels nationwide.

Pros: Minimal disruption to ongoing programs.

Cons: Sustains inefficiency, duplication of efforts, and limited nationwide impact.

2. Develop a Streamlined National Youth Policy

Create a unified framework to harmonize youth initiatives across sectors and regions.

Pros: Promotes efficiency, resource optimization, and better outcomes; enables monitoring and evaluation.

Cons: Requires time and political will for adoption and implementation.

3. Privatize Youth Employment Initiatives

Shift responsibility for youth programs to the private sector.

Pros: Leverages private sector efficiency and expertise.

Cons: May prioritize profit over inclusivity and equity; risks excluding marginalized groups.

Recommendation

The adoption of a streamlined national youth policy is the most effective solution to address youth unemployment. This policy should:

1. Unify efforts across federal, state, and local governments.
2. Promote skills development by integrating technical and vocational education into national curricula.
3. Encourage entrepreneurship through targeted funding and mentorship programs.
4. Leverage partnerships with the private sector for training and job placements.

A unified policy will provide a clear direction for all stakeholders, reduce inefficiencies, and ensure that resources are directed toward impactful programs.

This screenshot shows a page from a report. At the top, there are logos for 'NYFF 2024 White Paper Publication' and 'Empowering Nigeria's Future: A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development'. The main title is 'Recommendations from "The Nigeria We Want" Report'. Below the title, there are three columns of text. The first column is titled 'Governance and Youth Participation' and discusses increasing youth involvement in political processes. The second column is titled 'Economic Empowerment' and discusses creating job opportunities in emerging sectors. The third column is titled 'Education and Skills Development' and discusses reforming the education system. At the bottom right, it says 'PAGE 05'.

NYFF 2024 White Paper Publication | **Empowering Nigeria's Future: A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development**

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.

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Recommendations from the NYFF Report.

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NYFF 2024 White Paper Publication | **Empowering Nigeria's Future: A Roadmap to Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development**

Recommendations from "The Nigeria We Want" Report

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.

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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.

Implementation Plan

1. Form a National Task Force

Composed of representatives from government, civil society, and the private sector.

Tasked with drafting the policy and ensuring stakeholder buy-in.

2. Conduct Nationwide Consultations

Engage youth groups, NGOs, and community leaders to identify key priorities and challenges. The upcoming Youth CONFAB will seek to achieve this, and it should be as inclusive and expansive as possible.

3. Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Set clear benchmarks and metrics to track progress and ensure accountability. This will also lead to continuity when there is a change in Government.

4. Pilot the Policy in Select States

Test implementation strategies in one state per region/zone to refine the approach before a nationwide rollout.

5. Secure Alternative Funding

Utilize a mix of government budgets, international aid, and private-sector contributions to boost access for youths to funding.

Conclusion

Nigeria's youth are its greatest asset, but youth unemployment and fragmented policies hinder their potential. A streamlined national youth policy will unify efforts, maximize resources, and create opportunities for young people to thrive. By investing in a cohesive strategy, Nigeria can harness the energy, creativity, and ambition of its youth to drive economic growth and national development.

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