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As Nigeria Marks 66 Years of Independence, NYFF Calls for Action on Youth Democracy Index Findings

Nationwide survey shows young Nigerians remain committed to democracy, even as every public institution tested falls below the midpoint on trust.

ABUJA, 2 October 2026. As Nigeria marked 66 years of independence yesterday, the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) is calling on government, civil society, development partners and young people to act on new evidence of how the generation now inheriting the country's democracy experiences it.

The 2026 Youth Democracy Index, published by NYFF earlier this week, finds that young Nigerians still believe in democracy as an idea, rating it 3.4 out of 5. Yet only one in ten are satisfied with how it works in practice, and 84% say it has worsened over the past five years. Every public institution tested, from the Presidency to the judiciary, scored below the midpoint on public trust.

Despite this, 84% of young Nigerians surveyed intend to vote in the 2027 general elections, and most believe their generation can still drive meaningful change.

"This is the paradox at the heart of this Independence anniversary: a generation that has not given up on the country, even as it loses patience with how the country is run," said Onyeché Elisabeth Agbiti-Douglas, Project Director of the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund.

NYFF presents these findings not as a verdict, but as a guide to action. Sixty six years after independence, the measure of Nigerian democracy can no longer be whether elections take place, but whether young people, who make up a large share of the country's population, believe that those elections and the institutions around them work for them.

NYFF is therefore calling on government to build the trust the data shows is missing, through transparency and the genuine inclusion of young people in the decisions that shape their lives, rather than consultation after the fact. It calls on civil society and development partners to keep investing in the civic infrastructure that sustains youth engagement between elections, not only during them. And it calls on young Nigerians, a generation that has not stopped believing in what this country can be, to stay informed, stay registered and stay engaged.

Independence began the story Nigeria tells about itself. What young Nigerians are asking for, 66 years on, is a chance to help write what comes next.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

About the 2026 Youth Democracy Index

The Index captures the attitudes of young Nigerians to democracy and elections, government performance, institutional trust, corruption, emigration and civic participation. The full report is available at <https://nigeriayouthfund.org/2026-democracy-index-report/>

About the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund

The Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF) is a collaborative initiative funded by the **MacArthur Foundation**, the **Ford Foundation** and **Luminate Group**, and implemented by **LEAP Africa**. NYFF is committed to strengthening, supporting and enabling youth leadership, activism and social change through policy engagement focused on outcomes, and through inclusive resourcing for Nigeria's national development over the medium and long term.

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