



**CENTRE FOR INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

# **BEYOND WINNING THE MINDS: YOUTH, PEACE BUILDING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Policy Brief



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BUILDING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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**November, 2015**

## PREFACE

Youth constitutes a majority of those actively involved in violent activities. While government has set up to target specifically youth for its counter-insurgency campaign, its de-radicalization strategy seems to speak to some of the concerns about the participation of youth in violent activities. The central trust of the strategy is to win back the minds of those involved in violent activities. This presupposes that they had drifted away from peaceful engagements to violent mobilizations. While in a sense this may be correct, the winning back the minds does not necessarily imply retaining the minds in the long run. To be successful in getting youth away from violent engagements, the strategies must go farther from just winning the minds to engaging youth and transforming them into active economic agents in the society. Thus addressing the employment crisis that in the first place made them vulnerable to extremist mobilization is critical to the making of a peaceful society.

An effective strategy of mobilizing youth away from violent activities must therefore combine both winning and retaining the minds. Over the years, CITAD has been working with youth who have been organizing themselves in various groups and platforms to contribute in the peace building effort. Central in this organizing is the combination of youth peace activities with entrepreneurship programmes. This not only incentivize peace activism but also goes to address the very reason why youth whose lives have been turned a miserable experience rendering them susceptible to extremist mobilization.

Addressing unemployment is not just about providing youth with entrepreneurship skills but also creating the right mix of policies that would ensure the youth are able to transform their entrepreneurial skills into successful business. Unfortunately youth have been marginalized in the policy space as well as in the actual outcomes of policy decisions. Addressing these through such actions as improving budgetary allocation to education, democratizing educational administration, providing space and mechanisms for mainstreaming youth in policy making and creating agencies that would support entrepreneurship development services in a sustainable way are key elements to winning and retaining minds that we offer in this policy brief.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

Development can only occur if people are free to go about their businesses and be productive members of their society. Their productivity will not only generate wealth which will lead to economic growth but will also allow them to have the income that will expand the market of other goods and services thereby also reinforcing growth. Being free to move will also allow government to execute its programmes, including those that directly affect the social wellbeing of the citizens. Peace will also allow them to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and competence that are needed to move the country to greater consolidation of growth.

In a sense therefore, peace is a necessary condition for development. However, it needs to be added that peace is not a sufficient condition for development. Conversely, where there is no peace, there can be no substantive development. In other words peace and development must go together whereas insecurity and development are mutually exclusive.

Nigeria is still beset by many challenges that constitute threat to peace and security in the country. The Boko Haram insurgency is still to be overcome while communal conflicts, cattle rustling and urban violence are going on in other parts of the country. One common thing to all the types of violent encounters is the participation of young people. Indeed in many of these instances of violence, youth constitutes the majority of the combatants. Many of the suicide bombers of the Boko Haram insurgency are as young as less than 20 years old.

A central plank of the peace building effort of government must therefore deliberately be targeted at the youth with the aim of winning them away from violence and turning them into peace builders. Such an effort has to deal with the reality of youth unemployment in the country. Over 70% of youth in the country are said to be either unemployed or underemployed. Majority are young people who have not been able to further education either due to increasing inadequate number of spaces or the high cost of access which in the context of a generalized poverty in the country, their parents cannot afford. This category of youth therefore have no functional skills that can help find a space in the economy, which itself is contracting.

Youth reality of marginality is further compounded by political exclusion. The political processes in the country do not create space for meaningful participation by youth. Instead, majority are condemned to be mobilized as party and candidates thugs. Consequent upon this, they are nowhere in the decision table when matters that affect them are being decided, and hence do not benefit from the decisions from these decision tables. Instead, their poverty, deprivation and marginalization are mirrored in the obscene affluence of the elites who feed in corruption.

This feeling of injustice and the reality of the impotence of the youth to alter the situation creates a sense of hopelessness around youth, making them vulnerable and susceptible to life in the marginal spaces of drugs, crime and a trajectory that lends itself to mobilization for violent engagements.

The result is that youth today are both victims and perpetrators of violence across the violence landscape of the country. But youth are also on their own involved in many peace building efforts. Several of the vigilant groups are formed by young people across many communities in the country to secure their communities. Majority of the members of the civilian JTF in the northeast are young people. However beyond occasional patronizing support, government has no concrete strategies of engaging youth as key instrument for peace building.

# STATUS OF YOUTH IN THE COUNTRY

## Defining Space of Nigerian Youth



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The Nigeria Youth Policy (2009) defines youth as individuals between 18-35 years



Year: 2014  
Source: Transparency International



Year: 2013  
Source: Reporters Without Borders



Year: 2013  
Source: UNDP

### Literacy Rate of Young People



Nigeria is Rated 137th out of 140 countries in terms of Liveability

Year: 2014  
Source: The Economist

Year: 2015 Source: UNESCO Age range: (15-25)

### Network Readiness

112 Out of 189 Countries

Year: 2014  
Source: UN Survey

### E-Governance

141 Out of 180 Countries

Year: 2014  
Source: UN Survey

### Youth Development Index

140 Out of 170 Countries

Year: 2013  
Source: Commonwealth Youth Programme

### Gender Gap

118 Out of 142 Countries

Year: 2014  
Source: World Economic Forum

### Share of labour force aged 15-24 available and seeking employment



## Youth Unemployment

Female(15-24)



Year: 2014  
Source: World Bank

Total Labour Force

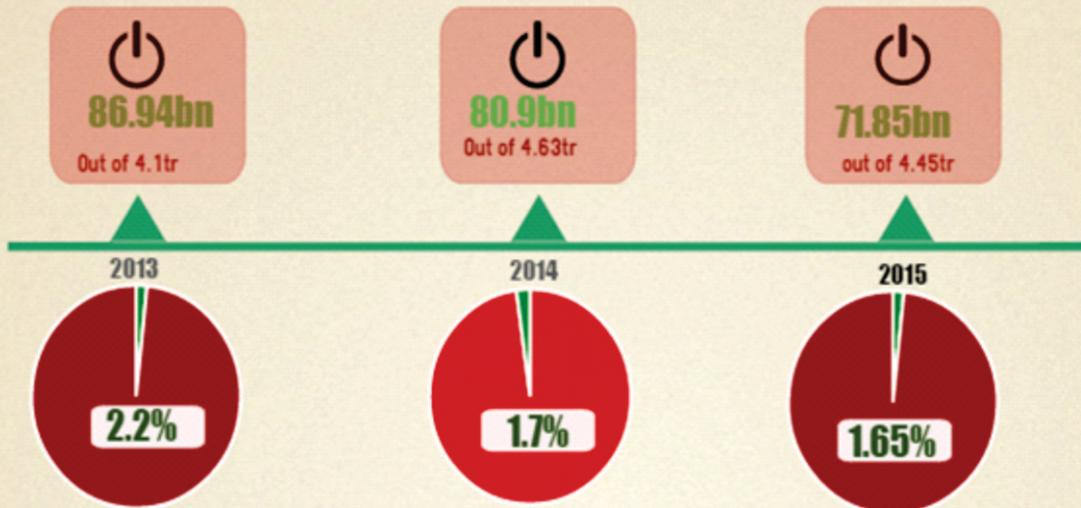
Male(15-24)



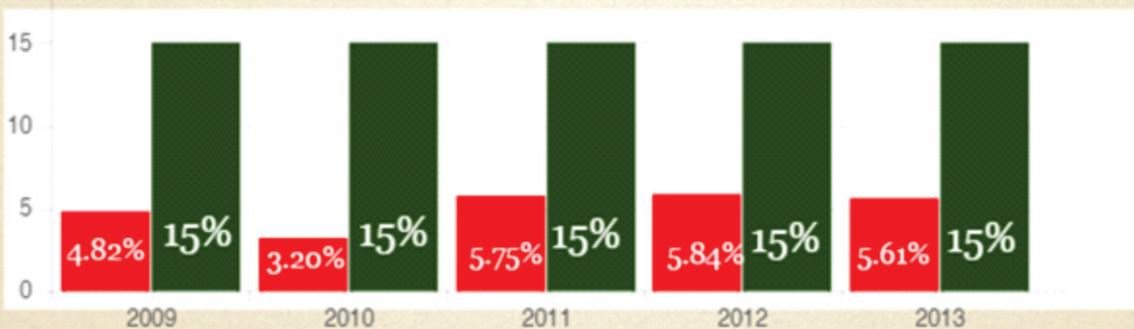
@yzy  
@ganygreen

## Youth and Federal Budget in Nigeria

### Federal Budgetary Allocation to the Ministry of Youth Affairs (2013-2015)



### Percentage of Health Allocation to Total Federal Budget (2009-2013)



Although youth constitutes the majority in terms of population in Nigeria, budgetary allocations to all sectors that concerns the youth have always been very low. Allocations to the Ministry of Youth over the last three years have been at the average of 1.85%

Though Nigeria is a signatory to the instruments that commit it to provide at least 15% of the national budget to health care sector, funding to the sector both at state and federal levels has been so problematic with average of 5% at the federal level. At the level of release, for for implementation of health sector programmes has often been less than 50%

# State of Education in Nigeria

**43.88%**

... Secondary school enrollment ...

**6%**

... Tertiary enrollment

Literacy Rate among the youth between the age of (15 - 25 ) in Nigeria 2015..

**79.89%**



**65.32%**

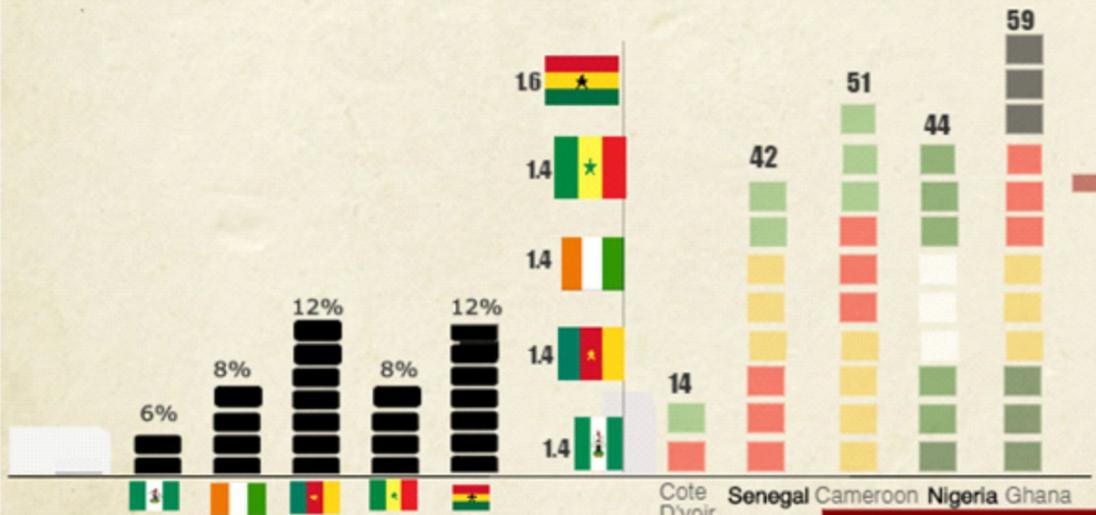


**72.79%**

**Tertiary enrollment rate** % of age group

**Public Expenditure on Education** % of GNP

**Secondary enrollment rate** % of Secondary age population



**Education Budget (2013-2015)**

Although the minimum benchmark Budgetary allocation to fund education is 26% ,allocation to the ministry of education in the last three years remained at the average of 9.6%

## Government Response

Government response to winning people away from violent engagement has been the programme developed by the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) that is the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The Programme was unveiled in March 2014. It consists of four streams namely De-radicalization of Convicted Terrorists, suspects awaiting trials, Counter Radicalization stream which seeks to build community engagement and resilience through building trust, creating awareness and resilience, Education as Tool for CVE and Strategic Communication. CVE Programme is both **vertical** (involving three tiers of government, federal, state and local) and **horizontal** (involving civil society, academics, traditional, religious and community leaders.) It works with different layers of partners: ministries, departments and agencies (MDA's), including the civil society. The Counter-Radicalization component which is the more general of the four has the following objectives:

- Create awareness of the threat of violent extremism at the grassroots level
- Identify credible voices in communities to speak out against extremism
- Collate data of religious figures and places of worship and capture the nature of sermons
- Initiate and conduct training workshops for peace initiatives including interfaith processes
- Operate grassroots based mentoring programmes
- Evolve small business enterprises and create jobs
- Work with law enforcement to increase the reach of the community policing
- Organize diversion programmes for youths in sports, art and entertainment

The programme has not achieved the desired results for a number of reasons. First, it has not actually been rolled out in the scale that it could make impact. Secondly it is a top down approach virtually no input from the communities where it is to be implemented. In fact, many of the implementing actors are not from the communities, creating credibility and local knowledge gaps. Third, although the counter-radicalization targets the wider society, in practice it focuses on the narrow target of the de-radicalization which was to work with prisoners and suspects, unable to reach out directly to the mass recruitment bases of the insurgents. The Education as Tool for CVE has hardly taken off. fourth, it is a generic programme, not necessarily targeting youth who should be the critical focus of de-radicalization.

Fifth, it misses the crucial point that winning the minds without providing for the body is not sustainable. The disillusioned youth are attracted to the marginal space of violence and insurgency because the state is failing in terms of meeting their expectations. Without jobs and means of livelihood and without safety net by the state, such youth can easily relapse. De-radicalization on its own therefore is only a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for getting youth away from violent engagement. The re-radicalization must be simultaneously with strategies to make youth active economic agents as well as addressing policy space that tend to marginalize and exclude young people in the society.

## Addressing Youth Unemployment as Key Peace Building

Unemployed youth have continued to provide the recruitment base not only for urban violent gangs but also for Boko Haram insurgents and their extremist groups. Addressing the problem of violence in our society must therefore undercut these recruitment bases by winning them away from recruitment into violent activities to becoming productive and legitimate economic actors in the society.

The recognition of the rising rate of unemployment (which was put at 7%) made the Federal Government in 2009 to convene a National Employment Summit. As the federal government made fresh commitments to job creation following the summit, many state governments retooled their youth empowerment programmes. There was indeed a floodgate of such initiatives. They include the National Directorate for Employment (NDE) scheme, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin), Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and several state governments owned programmes. Beyond serving as avenues for corruption, much of these have not achieved the desired results. The inability to address the issue is largely the result of the failure to see youth engagement in marginal spaces as resulting from acute socio-economic crisis in the country. Instead, in spite of the amount of money spent, unemployment appears to be rising rather than reducing, meaning that the recruitment bases for violent gangs are swelling than contracting.

While there is no doubt a few beneficiaries have been successful in setting up viable enterprises, the reality is that majority do not even get to the startup level before the dream evaporates. This is as a result of four factors.

First, governments that set up those schemes see success in terms of output that is the number of people trained rather than in terms of outcome which is the number of new businesses established or new jobs created that makes impact on the lives of the target. With this framework, for governments, there is no need for post training follow ups and mentoring and continuing support, they do not set up monitoring scheme to follow up those trained to find out whether they are succeeding in generating employment or running businesses.

Secondly, there has not been much thought on the sorts of skills that can empower and generate jobs. In this sense, there has been no strategic selection of skills sets that youth empowerment should focus. Thirdly, with the possible exception of YouWin, there are no systematic way of monitoring and evaluation of the empowerment programmes.

The fourth is that youth empowerment often assumes that empowerment means that youth have to ultimately set up their enterprises. This creates a disconnect between youth empowerment and the needs of business and wider society which is a result of the wrong notion that businesses will continue to contract rather than expand. The reality is that for the economy to grow, business must also expand and that means that they too will have to create jobs. Thus youth empowerment should not only be about youth setting up businesses but also grooming and placement services for youth who may want employment rather than setting up businesses.

### **Implementation of Youth Development**

Winning youth away from violence will be possible only with the simultaneously implementation of the following pillars:

- Adequate budgetary allocation to education, health, agriculture and youth-related programmes, in particular, meeting the UNESCO, WHO and Maputo Declaration benchmark
- Mainstream youth participation in governance including at both executive and legislative wings
- Mainstream peace building as component of youth development programmes as well as mainstream entrepreneurship in peace building programme of government

- Addressing the crisis of unemployment, poverty and high cost of access to education through consultative processes that treats youth as key stakeholders in the decision processes

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Governments**

- a. Should mainstream entrepreneurship programme as part of winning away youth from extremists ideas
- b. Should leverage the vast potentials of outsourcing an IT-based businesses to create jobs for unemployed youths in the country
- c. Should establish the Youth Development Fund which should be used among other things, to provide a source for startup capacity for young entrepreneurship on a struggle basis
- d. Youth development programmes especially those focusing on jobs and business creation must be backed with appropriate mechanisms for startup capital, monitoring mechanisms and continuous enterprise development services and coaching in their domains and that the crisis in the education sector is urgently addressed
- e. Mainstream peace education in the civic education curricular of secondary schools to ensure that young people have an early socialization of the imperatives of peace building
- f. Initiate legislative processes to give full effect to the provisions of the African Youth Charter as well as the National Youth Policy
- g. All governments should implement the relevant aspects of the National Policy appropriate to their constitutional scope
- h. Mainstream adequate representation of youth on boards and governing councils of government agencies and parastatals as to provide platforms and mechanisms for direct participation of youth in decision making process
- i. Institute the full participation of youth in the development and promotion of health-related programmes and policies that enable them to become agents of change in the communities and positively affect their lives and those of their peers
- j. State Governments need to review their youth policies in line with the modern democratic era

- j. Address the current crisis in the education sector in the country through holistic reform of both curricula and administration to make sure that students get both knowledge and skills, enabling to come out as job creators rather than job seekers
- k. Facilitate the revitalization of free and democratic youth councils at both state and national levels with clear support for channeling youth issues to government

## **2. Educational Institutions**

- a. Secondary schools should operationalize the new curricular which makes civic education compulsory with the addition that peace education is mainstreamed into the syllabus
- b. Encourage the formation and running of peace clubs in the schools to socialize young scholars into the rudiments of peace building
- c. Higher education should refocus their conflicts resolution education programme into a more general terrain of peace building
- d. Entrepreneurship studies should be compulsory in all tertiary education institutes
- e. The restoration of free and democratization student unionism in all tertiary institutions in tunes with our democratic ethos
- f. Embrace the concept of community participation in the management and running of schools at both secondary and primary schools levels

## **3. Philanthropies / Foundations / Development Partners**

- a. Support the implementation of entrepreneurship programmes by both government and civil society organizations
- b. Support peace building effort by youth organization, especially through sporting events and other activities that provide leadership training opportunities, team building and appreciation of the complimentary of our diversities
- c. Support the establishment of community vocational and entrepreneurial centres

## **4. Civil Society**

- a. Mainstream entrepreneurship programmes in all youth engagements to ensure that youth are empowered with livelihood skills
- b. Advocate and monitor the implementation of the provisions of the African Youth Charter and the National Youth Policy by all governments in the country
- c. Engage out of school youth in peace building and entrepreneurship programmes
- d. Continue to monitor and track the use of social media for extremist recruitment as well as mobilization through hate speech
- e. Promote the establishment of youth for peace platforms and students for peace across neighborhoods/communities and schools respectively
- f. To increase public awareness on the various youth related policies like African Charter and National Youth Policies

## ABOUT US

Centre for Information Technology and Development ([www.citad.org](http://www.citad.org)) is a capacity building civil society organization whose activities covers research, advocacy, training and publicity in all areas of ICTs. Its vision is; a knowledge-based democratic society free of hunger while its vision is; using ICTs to empower citizens for a just and knowledge-based society that is anchored on sustainable development.

**Main Office:** 3rd Floor, NSITF Building, no. 1A, Social Insurance Road, behind Trade Fair Complex, Zaria Road, P.O. BOX 10210, Kano, Nigeria. **GSM:** +2348068078282, +2348065429784 **E-Mail:** [info@citad.org](mailto:info@citad.org), [citadev@gmail.com](mailto:citadev@gmail.com), [citad4peace@citad.org](mailto:citad4peace@citad.org)  
**Website:** [www.citad.org](http://www.citad.org), [www.citad4peace.org.ng](http://www.citad4peace.org.ng)

**Jigawa State Office:** Flat B, Aduwa House, behind old Dutse market, Dutse, Jigawa State

**Bauchi State Office:** NUJ Secretariat, opposite Reinsurance House, Ahmadu Bello Way, Bauchi State

**Azare Office:** Central Office Building, Emir's Drive, Opposite Emir's Palace, Azare, Bauchi State

**Jama'are Office:** Jama'are LGA Secretariat, Adamami Road, Jama'are LGA, Bauchi State

*"...A central plank of the peace building effort of government must deliberately be targeted at the youth with the aim of winning them away from violence and in fact turning them into peace builders. Such an effort has to deal with the reality of youth unemployment in the country. Over 70% of youth in the country are said to be either unemployed or underemployed."*



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