INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has conducted five general elections since the return to civil rule; 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. These elections were signposted by exclusion and marginalization of young people as party candidates despite the positive roles they played as voters, election administrators and campaign merchants. The unfriendly electoral legal framework contributed to the low representation of youth in public office. To address this, the Not Too Young To Run bill was passed into law to reduce the age for running public office. The law reduced the age for running for the President from 40 to 35 years, House of Representatives 30 to 25 years and State House of Assembly 30 to 25 years.

The Not Too Young To Run legislation addressed a major impediment to youth participation in politics. It was a positive action towards closing the representation gap and signalled a shift towards inclusive politics. As a result of the reduction of age limits, Nigeria witnessed a new wave of competent and credible young women and men who aspired to run for office in 2019 Elections. For the first time in Nigeria’s post-independence history, young people between the ages of 25-30 were legally empowered to contest for seats in the House of Representatives and State Houses of Assembly.

Here is how they fared.
State of the Youth in Nigeria

It has been established beyond doubt that young people between the ages of 18 to 35 constitute the bulk of the country’s population, currently estimated by the United Nations to be 200,962,417. The numerical superiority of the youth population in Nigeria is underscored by the INEC Registered voters’ list, which puts the percentage of youth registered voters at 51.11 percent of a total voter population of 84,004,084 million (see graphic 1 below).

84,004,084 million

Registration by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44,406,439</td>
<td>52.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39,598,645</td>
<td>47.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registration by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (18-35)</td>
<td>51,110,172</td>
<td>51.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Aged (36-50)</td>
<td>29,540,707</td>
<td>29.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly (50-70)</td>
<td>15,935,784</td>
<td>15.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old (70+)</td>
<td>3,156,281</td>
<td>3.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State distribution of registered young voters (18-35 years)

Registered young voters: 42,938,458
Youth: 51.1%

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
Zonal distribution of registered young voters (18–35 years)

- **North West**: 10,067,370 (25.1%)
- **North East**: 6,321,616 (14.7%)
- **North Central**: 7,410,651 (17.3%)
- **South West**: 7,136,768 (16.6%)
- **South South**: 6,493,658 (15.1%)
- **South East**: 4,787,058 (11.2%)

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
Youth unemployment rate averaged 23.63 percent from 2014 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 38 percent in the second quarter of 2018 and a record low of 11.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2014.

Youth Unemployment

Unemployment rate

23.1%

Youth Unemployment

36.5%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

Youth Representation in Elective Office

1,558 Elective seats in Nigeria (Presidential, National and State Legislature)

60 (5.1%) National Rate

House of Reps
3 (0.8%)

House of Assembly
57 (6%)
Youth Candidacy in the 2019 Elections

- **Senate**
  - Total Candidates: 1,904
  - Total Youth: 253 (13.5%)

- **House of Reps.**
  - Total Candidates: 4,680
  - Total Youth: 1,262 (27.4%)

- **State House of Assembly**
  - Total Candidates: 14,138
  - Total Youth: 5,914 (41.8%)

- **Governor**
  - Total Candidates: 1059
  - Total Youth: 104 (9.8%)

Overall, youth candidacy increased significantly from 2015 (21%) to 2019 (34.2%).
Youth Representation in Elective Office (2019)

1,558
Elective seats in Nigeria
(Presidential, National and State legislature)

18 - 35 yrs
103
(6.6%) National rate

House of Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 - 30 yrs</td>
<td>22 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35 yrs</td>
<td>68 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40 yrs</td>
<td>125 (12.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 - 35 yrs</td>
<td>13 (3.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40 yrs</td>
<td>29 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I Support
NotTooYoungToRun

HOW YOUTH FARED IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS
Across the 991 seats in 36 State Houses of Assembly, 68 members-elect are between the ages of 31 and 35 who will sit and legislate at the state level. This represents only 6.08% of the members of the State Houses of Assembly.

There are 22 direct beneficiaries of the Not Too Young To Run Act in the State Houses of Assembly between the ages of 25 – 30. This is directly as a result of the age reduction legislation that was passed by the National Assembly and assented to by the President on 31 May 2018.

Rt. Hon. Saliu Yakubu Danladi
Speaker, Kwara State House of Assembly
(34 years)

Rt. Hon. Adebo Ogundoyin
Speaker, Oyo State House of Assembly
(32 years)

Rt. Hon. Abok Nuhu Ayuba
Speaker, Plateau State House of Assembly
(33 years)

Rt. Hon. Nasiru Magarya
Speaker, Zamfara State House of Assembly
(31 years)
Young Elected Legislators in the House of Representatives

10 HOW YOUTH FARED IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS
Youth Turnout in the 2019 Elections

The numerical superiority of the youth population in Nigeria is underscored by the INEC Registered voters’ list, which puts the percentage of youth registered voters at 51.11 percent of 84,004,084 million registered voters. 46.3% of young registered voters turned out to vote in the 2019 Presidential and National Assembly elections.