



## Rethinking Youth Economic Empowerment In Nigeria: Deepened Democratization, Entrepreneurship And Ict As Tactical Options

A. M. Kundiri Phd<sup>1</sup>, M. B. Umar Phd<sup>2</sup>

Federal University Wukari Taraba State Nigeria

Federal University Dutse Jigawa State Nigeria

Received 07 Feb, 2017; Accepted 23 Mar, 2017 © The author(s) 2017. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

**ABSTRACT:** Over the last few decades, the collapse of commodity prices and the attendant leaning of public resources ; incessant rise in births in the African continent leading to the expansion and geometrical growth of population; the growth of corruption within leadership of nations as a result of lessening sense of transparency and accountability have along with other factors jointly combined to impact negatively on the quality of today's youth and youthful populations in many African countries. In Nigeria, our main focus, the dominant majority of the youth population have been both targets and in some cases victims of maladministration of the nation's political and elite class. As targets of public officials and policy makers, several strategies have been worked out, a lot of resources expended all with a bid to checkmate the prolonged devastation that majorly confronted this vital group of a nation's population. In scripting this paper, consideration was given to data obtainable from secundary literature compiled by other researchers and public sector documents from institutions of government at various levels -local, state and federal. The paper was concluded with a presentation of a series of program and policy level recommendations.

**Keywords:** Change, Democracy, Development, ICT, Policy, Youth bulge.

### I. Introduction

#### "Youth" - Appreciating and Understanding its Complexity:

The United Nations General Assembly has aptly defined - youth "as the age between 15 and 24. There is no single agreed definition of whom and what constitutes - youth and definitions vary between countries and organizations. For example, the lowest age range for youth is 12 in Jordan and the upper age range is 35 in a number of African countries including Sierra Leone and Rwanda. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF use the term —adolescent for those aged 10-19, - youth for those 15-24, and - young people for those 10-24. There is also an apparent degree of overlap between international definitions of - youth and - children, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defining a child as everyone under the age of 18 —unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier.

In a more practical sense, youth is better understood as a transitional stage in life between childhood and adulthood, rather than as a rigid construct based on age. This new life stage can be characterized as a period of semi-autonomy, when young people experiment with adult roles but do not fully commit to them (World Bank, 2007). There is also a growing literature on the transition to adulthood and what it means to become an adult in different cultural contexts. Achievement of adulthood can be determined by various factors such as achieving economic independence, leaving the parental home, getting married and having children. In some societies, particular social or cultural rituals may also mark the transition to adulthood.

It is also vital to recognize that “youth” is not a homogenous construct, but encapsulates several different experiences and diversities, for example according to gender, class, disability, ethnicity, education and other attributions such as region, rural/urban. In some of the literature, —youth is used as shorthand for young men and the potential - threat posed by male youth. Young women can be invisible and doubly disadvantaged, and are left out of many youth-focused interventions in part because they are not perceived to represent a threat. In some cultures, female youth as a category scarcely exists, for example in Darfur (SUDAN).

Marc Sommers (2006) has also noted that in many contexts, motherhood tends to alter the social positioning of female youth far more than fatherhood changes the lives of male youth.

### **Youth Situation - The African - Nigerian Scenarios:**

Employment creation is indeed a formidable challenge that confronts all African countries regardless of the different levels of socio-economic development they have diversely recorded. In Africa, the youth account for 60 percent of total unemployed and three in five of Africa's unemployed are youth. A recent study by the International Labor Organization (ILO), the youth unemployment rate in North Africa amounted to 23.7% in 2009 and it is estimated to have remained at around the same level even as at 2010. When further analyzed, it is evident that this is twice as high as in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the youth unemployment rate was 11.9% by 2009. Therefore, youth unemployment remains a huge security issue in Africa driving youth to violence and crime. As such, as youths are agency for democratization, they can at the same time be instruments of violence as evidenced by the armed conflict in countries like Central Africa, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the UNECA 2009 Youth Report attested, "where young people are prominent in the adult population and the economy is weak and governance poor, the country is more likely to experience an outbreak of rioting and internal armed conflict." High unemployment rate has also been noted as the most powerful catalyst that contributed to uprisings in North Africa which led to the overthrow of governments in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Youth unemployment stands at 31 percent for Tunisia and 34 percent for Egypt. It is also well known that the Arab Spring or revolution was sparked by a single incident of one young Tunisian setting himself on fire because of work related dispute with the police. In Libya, the overall unemployment rate is 30 percent and youth unemployment rate is estimated as high as 50 percent. Thus, addressing youth unemployment with appropriate policies should be a major policy initiative of governments and political parties across Africa.

Authoritative sources have indicated that Nigeria's population has reached about 167 million people by 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics). The National Population Commission, Nigeria's most authoritative population data source, states that about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age. Unfortunately, as the youth population grows, or what others refer to as 'youth bulge' so does the problem of unemployment rate. In fact according authoritative data, Nigeria's unemployed youth numbered about 11.1 million in 2012. This calls for strategic options to be deployed as appropriate.

### **Youth Unemployment - A Review of Nigeria's Perspective:**

Reducing unemployment and by extension abject poverty amongst the youths population in all nations is indeed a strategic imperative for governments at diverse levels, thus, it is important that we further explore a number of trends in youth unemployment in **Nigeria** and at the same time make efforts towards effectively discussing various public sector directed programs attempted to address the problem.

In terms of age, younger segments of the youth struggle even more to find jobs or paid employment: At least two-thirds of unemployed youth are between 15 and 24 years of age. And interestingly, in terms of gender, available statistics demonstrate that a majority of the unemployed in this vulnerable group are female. Like we have shown in Table 1, women accounted for more than 50 percent of unemployed youth between 2008 and 2012.

An interrogation of youth unemployment by geographical or settlement location and from the perspective of both rural and urban Nigeria, indicates clearly that youth unemployment is most glaring in rural areas and is simultaneously growing rapidly: For instance, from 2010 to 2011, the share of unemployed youth in Nigeria's rural segments has increased from 47.59 percent to 59.95 percent. This makes inference to the fact that the population of unemployed youth in rural areas had risen from 2.9 million in 2008 to about 5.9 million in 2012. This indeed not only dramatic but exponential. Our table 1 below is clearly illustrative of the situation:

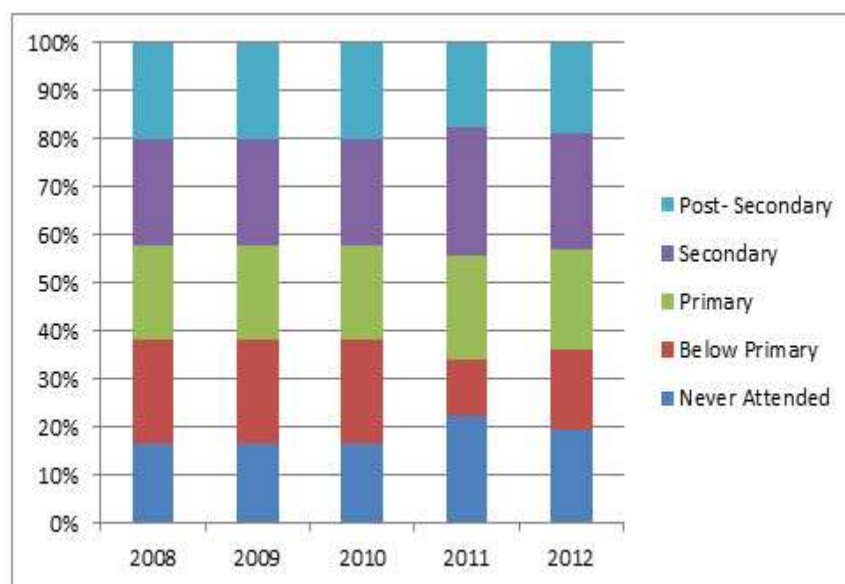
**Table 1:** National Youth Unemployment Figures by Gender and Geography, 2008-2012.

Year	Percentage of Unemployed Youth that are Female	Percentage of Unemployed Youth that are in Rural Areas
2008	58.50	54.68
2009	57.82	50.77
2010	54.52	47.59
2011	50.85	59.95
2012	55.42	53.25

Source: NISER, 2013

In terms of education, over the same period i.e. 2008-2012, in excess of half of unemployed youth did not have an education beyond primary school as is seen in Figure 1. below. This particular group has over and over again accounted for more than 50 percent of all unemployed youth in both rural and urban Nigeria. Very importantly, this situation report, we must understand, would always create a policy challenge to the public sector from an institutional perspective as well as those bestowed with the responsibility for leadership and by implication resource planning and expenditure. On the other hand, graduates of tertiary institutions, where I am coming from, also seem to be badly hit by unemployment too — making up about 20 percent of youth unemployment in the length and breadth of our country. They often remain unemployed for upward of five years after graduation as NISER( 2013) has indicated in its statistical data.

**Fig 1:**National Youth Unemployment (15-34 years) by Education, 2008-2012



Source: NISER, 2013

Numerous factors may be responsible for the prevalence of youth unemployment in Nigeria. There is a high population growth rate of about 3.5 percent per annum — which accompanies an already large national population of over 167 million people. In addition, deficient school curricula and poor teacher training have contributed to the failure of educational institutions to provide their students the appropriate skills to make them employable. Since schools in rural areas are generally more deficient in infrastructure, teaching facilities and teacher quality than schools in urban areas, this may help account for the high growth in rural unemployed youth. In fact, some experts suggest that the major jump in rural youth unemployment in 2011 (see Table 1) could be due to the mass failure in national examinations conducted among final-year secondary school students in 2010, which made many of them unemployable in 2011. In addition, it is the belief of many of us that lack of entrepreneurial skills and education is hugely also responsible for the state of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Thus, in our schools, today, and especially below tertiary level, our curriculum is largely empty because of the apparent absence of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. An appropriate educational content that emphasize entrepreneurship would have certainly reduced the production of graduates and school leavers that only yearn for paid jobs. They will then would have been job creators and not job seekers.

In addition to these supply and related factors, there is an apparent lack of a vibrant stock of industries to absorb 'competent' graduates. This obstacle was partly caused by a colossal infrastructural deficit and a debilitating structural realignment policy that gave rise to the infamous structural adjustment program (SAP) implemented by Nigeria in the 1980s, which led to the closure and complete collapse of many industries. From then on Nigeria has not been able to fully recover. Youth unemployment situation in Nigeria has also been aggravated by a backlog of flawed and inconsistent public policies on employment.

Policymakers have had to also confront inadequate information and data that can form the basis of effective planning. As enunciated in other studies (Asaju et al., 2014 and Iwayemi, 2014), data on issues such as employment are very hard to obtain, even from statutory institutions and agencies established for gathering socio-economic data. In places where unemployment registers exist, they are limited to urban areas, and, in fact, not all those searching for employment attempt to register as this has not been established as a normal practice in Nigeria. In the absence of such data, policymakers tend to rely on cross-sectional household surveys, which are often inconsistent and full of shameful errors. This deficiency makes it difficult for policymakers to clearly

appreciate the nature of the nation's employment challenge and therefore policy makers are not best disposed towards making informed decisions on how to support young people in the labor market. The scarcity of data or in some cases near complete absence on employment within the close-circuit economy and entrepreneurship in particular is a major obstacle, given the importance of this sector for youth employment.

### **Effective and Successful Public Policies in Nigeria - So far:**

In light of the incredibly high and rising unemployment rate in the last one or two decades, ascertaining policies that have worked in addressing unemployment in Nigeria is rather tricky and difficult. Around 1.8 million youth are said to be entering the labor market every year as Falusi (2014) reported. Since it is unclear to what extent any given intervention may have reduced the level of youth unemployment in aggregate terms, it may be more helpful to think of effective policies as those which have delivered on their stated objectives. Secondly and very importantly too, the sustainability of a program could also be considered an indicator of success.

Programs of different types have been introduced by various administrations over time to address youth unemployment, which has been an issue of significant public concern since the days of SAP. As a matter of fact, youth unemployment became the focus of the social policy of the military government that ruled Nigeria for much of its years as an independent nation. The initial reaction of the government was to conscript unemployed youth to public programs such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI), which provided immediate and direct jobs to participants who were interested in agriculture.

A series of more coordinated and planned measures later followed, and these have been largely classified into three categories: labor demand, labor supply and labor market interventions. The labor demand strategy focused more on creating jobs immediately through public works or creating certain jobs in the private sector aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and skills enhancement. Labor supply strategy dealt with the training and education of prospective job seekers. The labor market intervention strategy focused on improving the labor market and matching demand and supply interrelationships.

With the transition to civilian rule in 1999, however, successive civilian administrations— inclusive of the current leadership - have tried to refocus and re-strategize unemployment programs, abruptly discontinuing many of the old programs, restructuring some of them midway and creating new ones. It is also pertinent to note that as a federation, Nigeria's public policy on employment is often addressed at the three levels of government - federal, state and local - and that this formidably emerging emphasis on unemployment has made youth the primary constituency of concern to all levels of governance. Consequently, certain institutional arrangements and agencies have been inevitably established to promote employment among youth. Some of the most prominent programs include the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P), the Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YOU-WIN) among others.

The SURE-P was introduced in February 2012 and it focused principally on management and investment of federal government 'savings' derived from proceeds accruing from the partial removal of the subsidy on petroleum products. The SURE-P is the flagship of one of the most recent efforts towards providing job opportunities to various components of graduates emerging out of our tertiary institutions. It is more or less a whole range of activities and a body of programmatic schemes, inclusive of the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE), among others. One of the more successful schemes of the SURE-P is the GIS, which offers unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one-year internship in firms, banks, ministries, government departments and agencies, as well as in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), relevant to beneficiaries' disciplines. The purpose of GIS is to help beneficiaries acquire the appropriate skills and practical knowledge that will make them more suitable for the job market. About 50,000 graduates were selected for the first phase of the scheme out of some 85,000 applicants.

To qualify for selection, a firm must have been registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission, in addition to showing evidence of Value Added Tax registration and the possession of a Tax Clearance Certificate. In addition, the firm had to submit training and mentoring plans for each of their interns. The YOU-WIN program was designed to create job opportunities specifically, again, for graduates of tertiary institutions that elect to go into business as entrepreneurs. Simply put, participants are required to develop and execute their own business ideas that will provide jobs for themselves and other unemployed youths who may or not be graduates. By 2015, the program is expected to have provided 40,000 to 50,000 new jobs, encouraged expansion, specialization and job spinoffs of existing businesses, and enabled young entrepreneurs to have a broad professional and business network (NPC, 2013).

Further to the aforementioned, the current federal administration has developed a N10 Billion Youth Empowerment Support (YES) Project in collaboration with the Bank of Industry (BoI). The project is expected to create 36,000 jobs at inception. On this project, interest payable shall not go beyond single digit as declared

the Managing Director, BoI, Waheed Olagunju. Collateral to be presented as one of the conditions for BoI's monetary support would also not go beyond an NYSC Discharge Certificated or Postgraduate or Higher Education Certificate where available and two credible external guarantors. At the first phase of this project, BoI is partnering with 11 consultants. Reports from close governmental sources have also indicated that in the next three years, the Buhari administration would in addition to the YES Project create additional 3.6 Million jobs under other empowerment schemes.

At the state level, the government established various forms of employment-creating programs. The most prominent one is the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) established by Osun state, South West Nigeria. The scheme provides a series of employment opportunities for participants as traffic controllers, sanitation and environmental officials, security personnel, and other works and services. The World Bank has singled out the OYES scheme for its success in promoting youth employment in Nigeria and has recommended the scheme for replication by the federal and other state governments. Kano state under Governor Kwankwaso and Lagos state under Fashola have successfully and literally adopted the same scheme and of recent Kaduna State is adopting the same style under the auspices of Kaduna State Traffic Environmental and Sanitation Agency. The Kaduna government is also collaborating with BoI to promote youth employment. BoI, the government has reported has partnered with it towards gaining controlling shares at Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN) Ltd. PAN Nigeria Ltd has over the years maintained the reputation of being one of the most outstanding employers of labour within Kaduna's industrial landscape. These are indeed effective institutional approaches to unemployment and poverty reduction directed at the youth by the public sector. Morgan Winsor (2015), while reporting for the International Business Times, also quoted President Muhammadu Buhari expressing that his government's Youth Empowerment Program is "aimed at tackling unemployment, insecurity and social ills" would "be based on the model provided by the NYSC Scheme", meaning that it would be more definably youth oriented, nationally broad based and all encompassing to a larger extent.

#### **Big Expectations Thwarted By Big Challenges - A Review of Failed Efforts:**

Several public policies intended for addressing youth unemployment have faced unusual challenges principal amongst them were dearth of finance, the absence of good administration and implementation, incoherent policies, unimpressive responses from would-be trainees, and unqualified resource personnel handling the training programs. The National Accelerated Poverty Reduction Program (NAPEP) was for example too big for its skimpy budgetary allocation. Most of the funds for the program went to overhead and administrative costs in offices spread over the entire country, inevitably limiting its impact. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) on another hand had no openings of its own to engage unemployed youth, providing only vocational training to young school leavers. There have been insufficient funds to provide start-up capital for the youths that have succeeded in completing their training. A host of other factors have provided us with credible explanations on the failure of a lot of these youth employment programs. Some are as follows:

#### **Training is not Supplemented with Loans and not Targeted Appropriately:**

According to a recent survey by the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), youth unemployment programs have concentrated more on training than on other activities that actually provide openings for immediate employment in white-collar jobs or jobs in the small- and medium-scale industries (NISER, 2013). This strategy has not yielded the desired results because the training is often not accompanied by soft loans, which graduating trainees could use as start-up capital in order to facilitate their quick integration into the labor market. Targeting has also presented a challenge. Often, all categories of unemployed youth are lumped together as if they are homogeneous (in terms of education, skills, capabilities, etc.) when, in fact, there ought to be some distinctions on the basis of education, experience, and willingness to learn. The lumping together of graduates of primary school with those coming out of secondary schools and/or tertiary institutions makes training not only ineffective but also less impactful.

**Complex Structures, Weak Management and Insufficient Funding:** Running a multiplicity of programs at the same time under a weak managerial structure and practice, coupled with inadequate funding, and laced with several layers of authorities that sometimes quarrel among themselves, there is the likelihood of not being focused and effective. The process becomes even more complex in the absence of monitoring and coordination of planned activities. Indeed, the responsibility for youth employment policy is split among a wide range of ministries and agencies, often operating in isolation and competition with each other. In the absence of a consistent and coherent strategic approach, resources are likely to be misapplied. In addition, public funding is often insufficient and erratic and, indeed, not released fully.

**Structural Problems yearning for Structural Solutions:** The initiatives listed earlier simply bring a select group of youth into employment, but are grossly inadequate to accommodate the army of unemployed youth.

Besides, these programs are conceived with short-term gains in mind, and a little consideration of long-term perspective that may change the dynamics of unemployment substantially. The structural changes needed involve taking a comprehensive approach to employment issues in general. This could be done in a way that not only targets youth, but which also looks at educational, training and labor market issues so that dynamic and progressive policy interventions are initiated to address all issues comprehensively.

**Demand-side factors need to be considered:** A final consideration is to ask whether indeed a policy stance actually addresses factors that limit the demand for labor. Recently, public policy has encouraged youth to **undertake entrepreneurship**, which can make them create employment for themselves and also become employers of labor. However, in the long-run, the **industrial sector** must also expand to create opportunities for youth. Industrial expansion must, therefore, be based on available local resources in **agriculture and solid mineral exploitation** as well as **value chain activities** in those two sectors. The development of **infrastructure**, particularly **electricity**, will provide the necessary boost to any meaningful approach towards expanding industrial production space and creating employment for millions of job seekers, especially Nigerian youth. For example, the petroleum industry that has dominated Nigeria's external trade since the 1970s failed to provide employment opportunities for the people, given the technical knowhow required in the industry and so has not been helpful in solving the problem of youth unemployment. What is fundamentally required is to open up the petroleum downstream industries and train young people to provide services that are required at this level—activities such as welding, pipeline maintenance, security and other services.

Regrettably, these public policy programs have had diverse impact on youth unemployment. While a number of intervention programs did address some key critical needs, others failed to address the needs of youth as a unambiguous group. The management and administrative lapses of the programs have been most fragile and sometimes problematic, perhaps because of the multiplicity of authorities (federal, state and local government agencies) administering the programs. Some have been known to expend huge resources than is necessary or at least failed to justify the amount of public money devoted or expended.

#### **Democracy and Africa's Youth - What Role, What Future?:**

To construct a genuinely inclusive society requires that our youth population participate in all our affairs, indeed all our affairs meaning that young people's views are included in development policies and that young people are guided towards developing leadership skills. In many African countries, youth have either remained marginalized or have not played any formidable role in the political process beyond serving as Youth Leaders of political parties as in the case of varied Nigerian situations. An explanation is largely traceable to visible institutional and policy constraints of the state and society as a whole as we have seen in the evolution of youth policies and programs of many states.

Against this backdrop, the role of youth in governance and democracy building in Africa was interestingly examined at a 2012 international conference whose central theme was "Youth and Democratization in Africa: Lessons Learned and Comparative Experiences," also jointly hosted by International IDEA, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UNDP in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Conference main objectives were among others to understand the role of youth in democratization processes; discuss policy options for youth economic empowerment; articulate strategies for the engagement of youth in promoting sustainable democracy and economic development; and explore better policy options to mainstream youth in institutional, political, democratization and governance processes.

In spite of several policies and institutional provisions within many African states, African youth have been only marginally involved in civic participation, electoral participation and providing a political voice. This is partly due to lack of what many analysts have referred to as 'quota systems' in political processes and in political parties of many African countries. Youth have, therefore, remained on the perimeter of most political parties and associations in Africa.

In countries where there are mechanisms and policies in place for effective youth engagement, these have not been implemented due to the vested interests of the established political elites. As IDEA's Muna Abdalla has observed, "the dilemma of the African continent is the continued inability to provide the appropriate political and economic frameworks for enhancing the productivity of its youthful population." She further added that "the future of Africa's economic and social transformation depends on the ability to effectively translate its large youthful population into a demographic dividend."

Despite this unfavorable context, youth have, however, managed to negotiate and force their way to political participation and economic success. The North African experience has provided an inspiring example about the determination of youth to fight for what they believe and bring about change. Secretary-General Vidar Helgesen, Secretary General of IDEA said on his part that the conference has further re-opened the discourse about democracy, democratization and the role of youth in governance in the developing world. Examples were also given of youth social movements and initiatives across the continent which empower young people and

these includes: the “Y’en a marre” (Enough is Enough) movement in Senegal; the “Communication for Development” in Cape Verde; the “Young Acting for Change” program in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Togo.

Herculean challenges have featured prominently on the path of democratization in Africa. The African Development Bank has declared that 75% of Africa is under 25 years of age (AfDB, 2011) and as earlier noted, two-thirds of Sub-Saharan Africa’s population is young (15-24 year old) and every year for the next 20 years there will be half a million more 15 year olds in this region than the year before (ILO.org, Worldbank.org). This infers that young people are now in the majority in Africa and are the major stakeholders of Africa’s economy. But this new found status is not without its challenges. Young Africans today bear the burden of Africa’s problems. Available statistics show that, 50% of Africa’s youth have no formal education (UNECA, 2005, social.un.org), 70% account for new HIV/AIDS cases and 60% are unemployed (UNFPA, PRB, 2012; UNECA, 2005; Social.un.org). Again, this is a reinforcement of NISER’s earlier citations.

### **The ICT, Social Media, Political and Economic Change:**

Also, the use of mass media and modern communication technologies are important tools for mobilizing youth, and for facilitating, encouraging and building their capacity to take their rightful part in the development and political processes of their countries. This is indeed part of what we often refer to as the facilitation of “digital democracy”. Several incidents that are exhibitivite of the 'digital effects' can be cited in the twin revolution in Egypt, the Tunisian uprising or the Arab Spring as is generally known.

The 2012 conference further took note of other positive regional initiatives and encouraged governments to reform and adapt their systems in order to allow effective participation of young people. A new **Facebook Group** was for instance initiated at the conference. The whole idea essentially aims to “build solidarity and movements, share ideas, perspectives, lessons learnt, best practices and recommendations to ensure that youth are part and parcel of the drive towards the democratization of our continent.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Having looked at all the above, it is imperative that we conclude by observing that without a cogently evolved youth policy and its incorporation into the mainstream of our overall national development strategy, our overall efforts towards effective socio-economic and political transformation may not be sufficiently achievable. It is in the light of this observation that we also deem it expedient to make recommendations based on two key levels - the **level of policy and the level of program** as summarized below:

#### **Recommendations at policy level:**

1. We must at all levels be cautious of employing a 'security framework' towards youth, thus, we must balance efforts to prevent the engagement of young people in violence with a definable emphasis or focus on their positive role;
2. Governments and their agencies must ensure that policies and programmes work towards the inclusion of youth, rather than containment or appeasement, we must ensure the pursuit of participatory democracy in all its ramifications;
3. We must closely look at the linkages between different forms of violence (violent conflict, criminal violence, political violence etc);
4. We must equally identify and prioritize 'youth bulge' societies and settlements with high youth involvement in violence;
5. We must closely examine all the opportunities for addressing youth needs more in urban rather than rural contexts;
6. We must also ensure that all the "Youth Participation Guides" includes a thorough national and state-based data or directory of economic and youth resources;
7. Where necessary, we must develop a —Youth And Violence Prevention Guidance Note alongside Youth Participation Guide which can be deployed in evaluating the evidence and also give guidance on program development;
8. We must also emphatically commission a detailed review of different intervention mechanisms directed at addressing youth exclusion and youth involvement in violence, what has worked and what has not and best practice for working with youth via different aid instruments.

#### **Recommendations at program level:**

1. Undertake context-specific analysis of the situation of youth and key risk factors. and where feasible involve the youth in analysis and program;
2. Under all circumstances, we must not assume youth will automatically benefit from general development programmes, thus, our efforts should be more specifically directed.

3. Opportunities to integrate youth issues into existing programmes e.g. design specific youth components; earmark resources for youth; target interventions at youth must be identified and pursued.
4. If youth directed programs are under-funded, we should consider funding community-level initiatives via a credible intermediary such as an NGO.
5. We must assiduously support National Youth policies, in addition to ensuring that the policies are properly resourced and implemented to the letter
- 6 AND where appropriate, we must conduct an assessment of the impacts of all carried out by public bodies as well as NGOs on youth.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1]. Asaju, K, S. Arome and S. Anyio, 2014. "The Rising Rate of Unemployment in Nigeria the Socio-economic and Political Implications", published in Global Business and Economic Research Journal,3(2): 12-32.
- [2]. Falusi, A. O., 2014. "Employment Generation for Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: Issues for Consideration", presented at the 21<sup>st</sup> Celebration of the Development Policy Centre.
- [3]. IDEA Africa, 2012. "Democracy and the Role of Youth in Africa -Lessons Learned and Comparative Experiences." - International Conference Jointly organized by GPAD-UNECA, Addis-Ababa, Sept.
- [4]. International Labour Office, 2010. World of Work Report 2010: From Crisis to the Next Crisis? Swaziland, Geneva.
- [5]. Iwayemi, Akin, 2013. "Youth Unemployment in Nigeria – Challenges and the Way Forward", a paper presented at the World Bank Regional Workshop on Youth. Abuja. July 23-24.
- [6]. Lysnay M. Hilker and Erika Fraser, 2009. Youth Exclusion, Violence, Conflict and Fragile States, a DFID Equity and Rights Team Report.
- [7]. Morgan Winsor, 2015. International Business Times, 6th May.
- [8]. National Planning Commission, NPC (2013): Mid-Term Report of the Transformation Agenda, May 2011 – May 2013: Taking Stock, Moving Forward. Abuja.
- [9]. National Population Commission,(2013). Nigeria's unemployment rate rises to 23.9% —NPC, Punch Newspaper, October 13.
- [10]. NISER, 2004. Nigeria Urban Youth Employment and Empowerment Project (NUYEPP) – Youth Background Study, in collaboration with the World Bank
- [11]. NISER, 2013. Analysis and Design of Safety Nets and Capacity Empowerment Program for Unemployed Youth in Nigeria
- [12]. Premium Times, Monday, July 4th, 2016.
- [13]. Sommers, Marc, (2006). Fearing Africa's Young Men: the case of Rwanda
- [14]. UNDP, 2006. Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis, UNDP: New York.
- [15]. UNECA, 2009. African Youth Report: Expanding opportunities for and with Young people in Africa, Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa. p. 83.
- [16]. USAID, 2005. Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention, Washington D.C: USAID.
- [17]. World Bank, 2003. Youth Employment Policy in Developing and Transition Countries–Prevention as well as Cure, Washington, DC.
- [18]. World Bank, 2008. Youth Employment in Africa, Africa Development Indicators 2008/9. Washington, DC: World Bank.