

REPORT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY AREA COUNCIL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION FOR 2026

by

21st century community empowerment
for youth and women initiative



Table of Content

	Executive Summary	3			
1.0	CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	4	2.3	Deployment of Election Observers	9
1.1	Background	4	2.4	INEC Stakeholders Engagement	10
1.2	Purpose of the Observation	5	2.5	Election Observation Findings	11
1.3	Understanding the FCT Election	6	2.6	Limitation of the Election Observations	12
2.0	CHAPTER TWO: OBSERVATION MISSION DEPLOYMENT PLAN	7	3.0	CHAPTER THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS	14
2.1	Pre-Election Activities	7	4.0	ANNEXTURE	15
2.2	Training of Election Observers	8	4.1	Picture Speaks	15
			5.0	ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION	16

Executive Summary

Ahead of the 2026 FCT Area Council elections, CEYWI commenced its plan to deploy trained and accredited observers to observe the conduct of the elections. The FCT Area Council elections was conducted in the 6 Area Council of the FCT. The Federal Capital Territory Area Council Elections held on Saturday, 21st February 2026. The exercise was expected to see 1,680,315 registered voters casting their ballots across 2,822 polling units (PUs) in the six (6) Area Councils of the FCT —namely Abaji, the Abuja Municipal Area Council, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali. It was contested by 570 candidates in 68 (sixty-eight) constituencies for the positions of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and 62 (sixty-two) Councilors made up of 10 (ten) wards each for five Area Councils and 12 (twelve) wards for the Abuja Municipal Area Council.

This election is the second to be conducted under the leadership of Prof. Joash Amupitan as Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). It comes at a time of heightened citizen

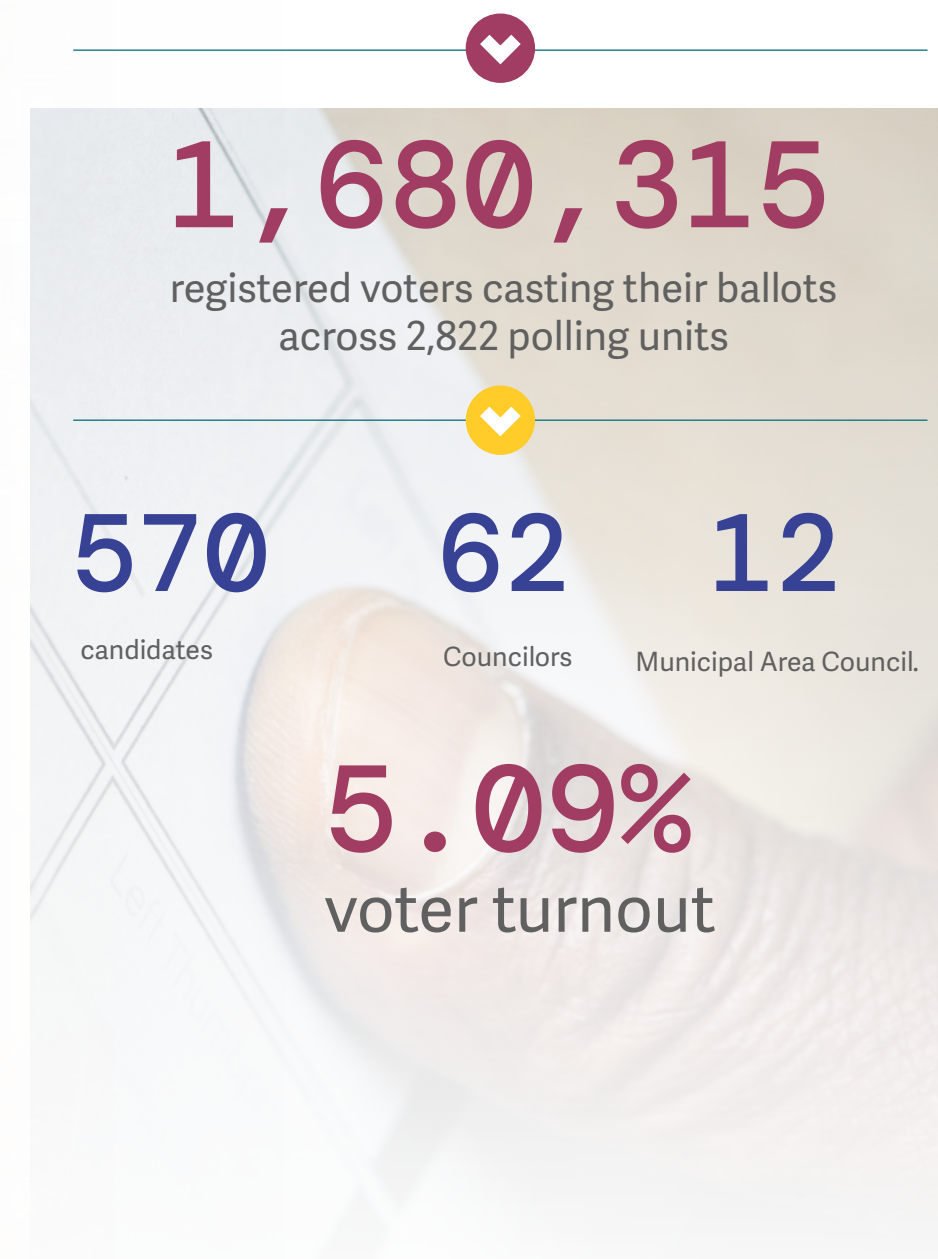
demand for transparency and credibility in Nigeria’s electoral processes, particularly following the signing of the Electoral Act 2026 and calls for unambiguous provisions mandating the electronic real-time transmission of polling unit results to the INEC IReV portal.

Historically, FCT Council elections have been characterized by voter apathy. The last elections, held in 2022, recorded a voter turnout of 5.09%. The 2026 elections are taking place against the backdrop of increasing voter apathy observed in by-elections conducted since the 2023 general elections.

While the build-up to the election was generally peaceful, stakeholders expressed concerns regarding voter apathy, the need to clean and update the voter register, security challenges particularly in identified flashpoints and the deterrence of vote trading. Although INEC repeatedly assured stakeholders of its readiness to deploy seamlessly across the FCT, previous gaps between commitments and actual delivery were discussed at various Civil Society Organization (CSO) and INEC engagement meetings.

The electoral process has, thus far, proceeded peacefully in the areas covered by CEYWI observers. However, concerns regarding low voter turnout and logistical delays remain significant. Extremely low voter turnout compared to the number of registered

voters. Some voters were unable to locate their names on the voter register and were consequently unable to vote. Many polling units did not have accredited party agents present.



1.1 Background

The integrity of elections may be disputed in numerous ways. One of the ways is improper tallying of election results which may be introduced by human error, lack of proper oversight or deliberate action of political actors to tamper with the actual result. Also, the processes leading to declaration of election results such as the conduct of voters, political supporters, politicians, INEC officials, etc during opening of polls, accreditation and voting, and counting, collation and declaration at polling units are also significant.

Thus, the CEYWI's priority during the elections is to provide constructive analysis of how the election day process is being conducted as well as the integrity of election results. **CEYWI observers on election day will therefore perform the dual role of observing the processes, document and transmit election results from selected polling unit and ward collation centres in 50% of all the wards across the Area Council to its Election Analysis Centre (EAC).**

Election is a process and not an event. To that

extent, election observation should cover all the activities undertaken in connection with the election. A credible election is not just premised on events of the Election Day. It is also based on the legal framework, prevailing political environment, respect for individual rights and internal party structures and collaboration among all the actors in the electoral process. Several election-related activities typically precede and follow voting. Activities that precede voting include constituency delineation, party primary and candidate selection processes, registration of voters, campaigning, distribution of voting materials and management of distribution logistics, training and accreditation of election workers, including party agents, etc. All these impacts on the outcome of election and are as important as the election proper. After voting, there is usually counting and tallying of votes, collation and declaration of results.

If these activities are conducted diligently with fairness, independence and even-handedness by the electoral umpire, the parties, candidates and Observers are likely to regard the elections as credible, free and fair and the likelihood of legal challenge to the announced results will be severely minimised, if not eliminated entirely. Most times elections are won and lost before election day. many electoral malpractices capable of determining the results of elections are also mostly committed before or after Election Day.

Therefore, election observation should ideally focus on the whole electoral processes. However, such an approach has immense cost implications, and most Observers focus on the Election Day seeing it as a reflection of how the electoral process has evolved. To that extent, it represents a reasonable point of engagement, and this guideline focuses mainly on observing the voting and result collation process. However, Observers would be well advised to pool resources to enable them to follow those activities that precede and follow balloting which may affect their overall assessment of the elections

Furthermore, a primary focus of election observation is whether the elections are carried out substantially in accordance with the rules and regulations that are prescribed by law in the country in which they take place. However, election observation is not limited to this, as it also seeks to compare these national laws against international standards to ensure that they conform to basic thresholds of democratic elections as accepted by the international community. Such observation will also take into account the performance of the election managers, the level of independence given to them by law and the attitude of the government in enforcing the election law and maintaining law and order. All these will offer an Observer a clear picture of the quality of the election process..

1.2 Purpose of the Observation

Democratic elections are thus the opportunity for the people to express their sovereignty through the ballot to confer legitimacy to their government, renew its mandate if necessary or withdraw from it the authority to govern. This is the basis of accountable government. The task of accomplishing this goal lawfully is a collective duty shared by the government, voters, candidates, and the international community. Election observation is in part an expression of international solidarity with communities going through this process and a way of ensuring that there is credible evidence based on which to evaluate, assess and report on the credibility of the elections in terms of whether they meet the minimum thresholds of democratic participation.

CEYWI then observed the FCT Area Council Election to provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the nature of election processes for the benefit of the population of the country where the election is held. It provides opportunity for constructive criticism and engagement of election process to ensure improved performance in future elections. It is an expression of interest in protecting and promoting of common democratic values.

Elections are the means through which the people exercise their sovereign right to choose who governs them and what the political and other priorities of their government should be.

1.2 Understanding the FCT Election

The recently enacted Electoral Act 2026 introduces significant legal and operational changes affecting political party administration, candidate nomination processes, compliance obligations, dispute resolution mechanisms, and the Commission's regulatory mandate. Beyond legal compliance, the Commission is drawing lessons from previous elections to strengthen preventive regulation. Persistent challenges such as opaque party primaries, membership disputes, weak financial disclosure practices, and exclusionary participation patterns have contributed to avoidable litigation and electoral uncertainty. Addressing these gaps early remains central to the Commission's preparations for 2027.

The FCT Area Council elections was conducted in the 6 Area Council of the FCT. The Federal Capital Territory Area Council Elections held on Saturday, 21st February 2026. The exercise expected to see 1,680,315 registered voters casting their ballots across 2,822 polling units (PUs) in the six (6) Area Councils of the FCT —namely Abaji, the Abuja

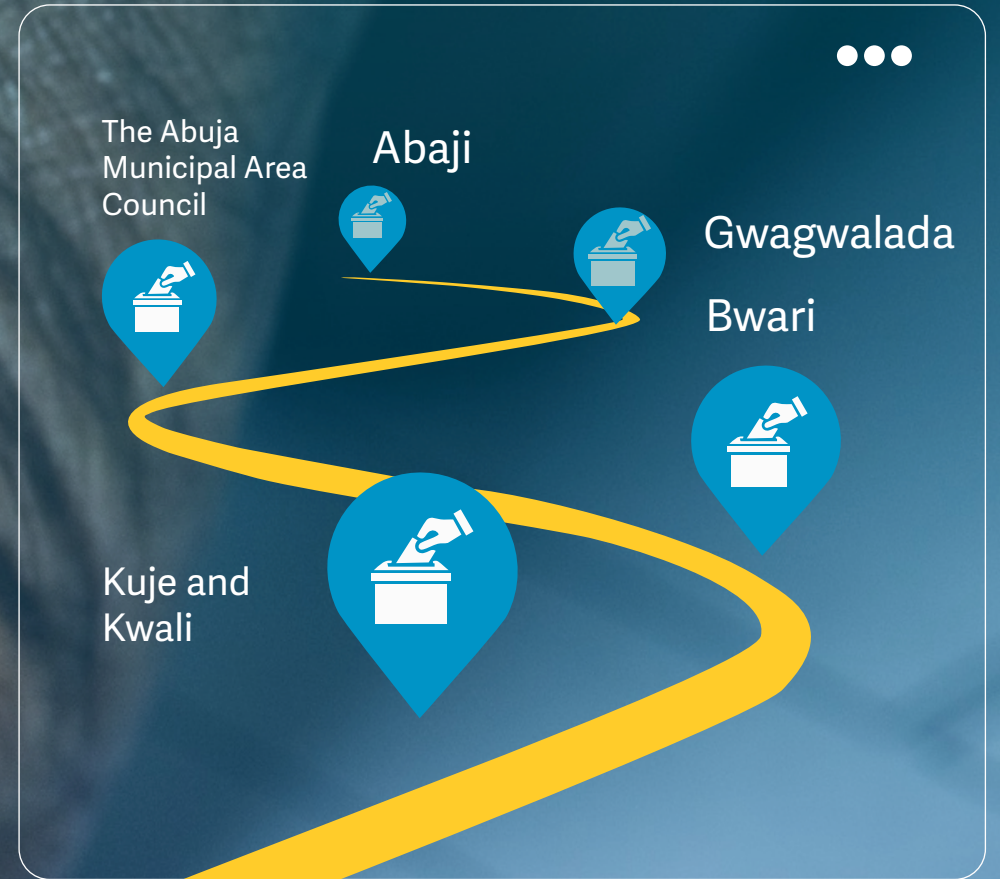
Municipal Area Council, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali.

The election was expected to be contested by 570 candidates in 68 (sixty-eight) constituencies for the positions of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and 62 (sixty-two) Councilors made up of 10 (ten) wards each for five Area Councils and 12 (twelve) wards for the Abuja Municipal Area Council. The Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the election, which was released 23rd January 2025 consists of 13 (thirteen) key activities, 10 (ten) of which have already been successfully completed. The remaining activities relate to the publication of the Notice of Poll, the last day of campaigns and Election Day itself.

Number of polling units

2,822 

polling units (PUs) in the six (6) Area Councils of the FCT



Number of expected candidates to contest

570

For Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

62

Councilors made

12

Abuja Municipal Area Council

The Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the election, which was released 23rd January 2025 consists of 13 (thirteen) key activities,

2.1 Pre-Election Activities

Ahead of the 2026 FCT Area Council elections, CEYWI commenced its plan early by applying for observation as a domestic observer for the FCT Area Council Election as enshrined in the Election Management Body guidelines

<https://inecnigeria.org/list-of-accredited-observers-for-2026-fct-area-council-elections-observer-groups/> . After securing the accreditation, CEYWI team followed up with required logistic to deploy trained and accredited observers to observe the conduct of the elections in the six Area Council.



2.2 Training of Election Observers

CEYWI then leveraged on its network to mobilize interested observers for the election mission. Through elective process, CEYWI trained 30 Domestic election observers to observe the election process, with average of 5 observers per Area Council.

Then training was communicated through the dedicated WhatsApp group where all observers get information about the observation. Then we engaged the service of Election Expert to facilitate the training session for the observers with key rudiment of election observation and other conduct and role of observers in an election of such nature.

5 *observers
per Area Council*



2.3 Deployment of Election Observers

CEYWI's priority during the elections is to provide constructive analysis of how the Election Day process is being conducted as well as the integrity of election results. CEYWI observers on Election Day therefore performed the dual role of observing the processes, document and transmit election results from selected polling unit and ward collation centres in 50% of all the wards across the Area Council to its Election Analysis Centre (EAC) in partnership with Dataphyte Foundation.

CEYWI team in collaboration with Dataphyte Foundation then transformed the updates into live reports on Dataphyte's election portal and

selected social media platforms with attribution to respective Polling Unit Observers. CEYWI also produced short analytical reports on key themes emerging during the election to inform citizens.

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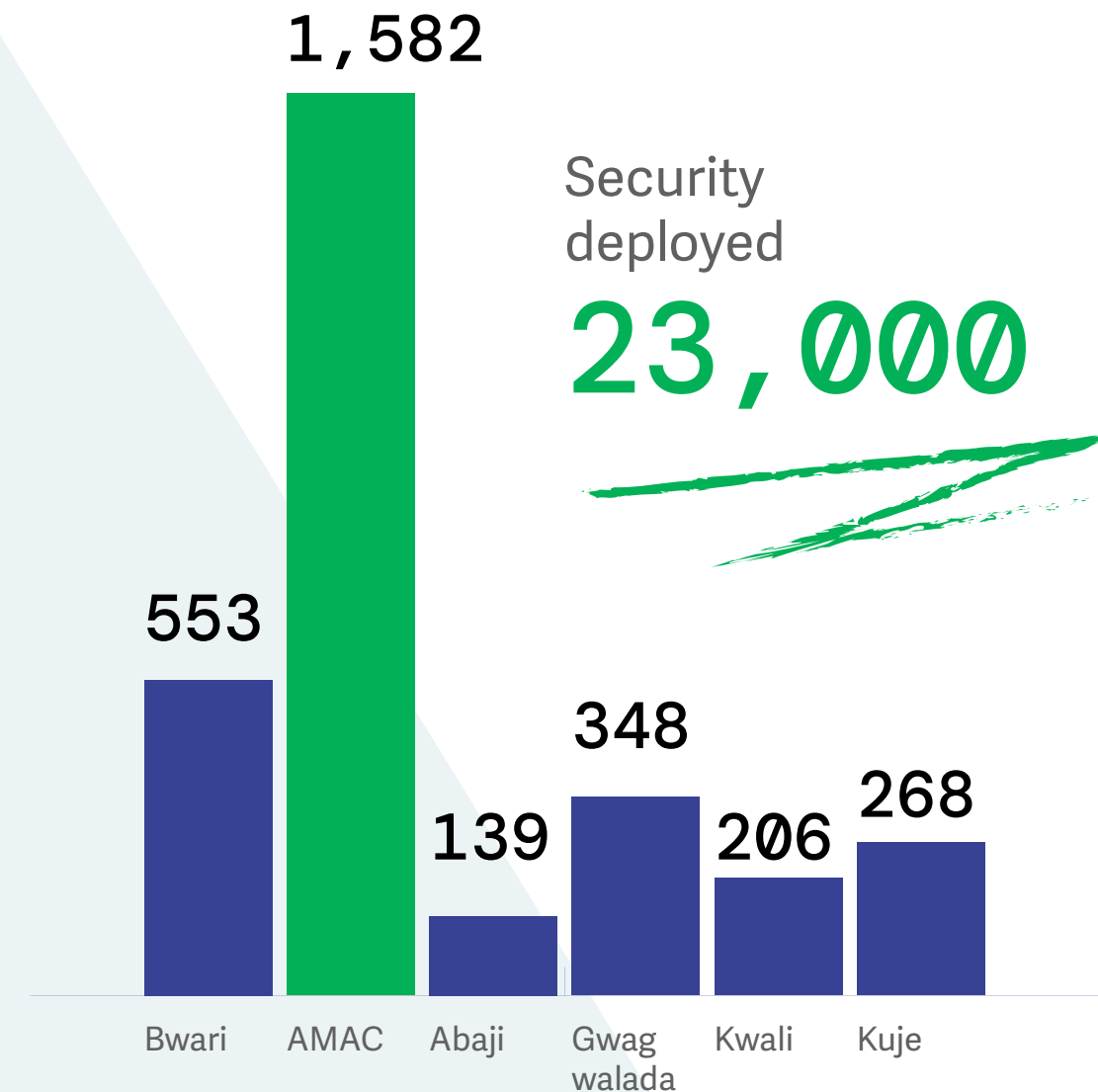
50%



of all the wards across the Area Council to its Election Analysis Centre (EAC) in partnership with Dataphyte Foundation.

2.4 INEC Stakeholders Engagement

INEC as part of preparation for the election organized series of stakeholders with relevant stakeholders. One of such engagement was the CSOs and media briefing. CEYWI participated and learnt lessons as part of preparation for the election. Take away from yesterday's briefing at INEC. INEC gave detailed that deployed to all the Area Councils as follows: Bwari – 553, AMAC - 1,582, Abaji- 139, Gwagwalada – 348, Kwali – 206, Kuje- 268, Security deployed 23,000, Report any security alerts to; ACP Edward Operation 08035879480 DCP Sharo- 08034516071, Control room- 08032003913, PRO – 07038979338, INEC contact 07015680499, 09046338928, HOD EPM FCT 07030557709



2.5 Election Observation Findings

Below are the summary of the key observations and findings received from CEYWI PUs observers



1. Logistics and Arrival of Materials:

Deployment of INEC officials and materials was mixed. While some polling units recorded timely arrival, others experienced delays. At King of Kings Secondary School, Lugbe (AMAC), officials and materials arrived at 9:57 a.m. At LEA Primary School Polling Unit, Galadimawa (Apo), officials arrived at 9:10 a.m. no INEC officials had arrived at FCDA Quarters, Site 1 Polling Unit. While at Ikwa Primary School of Gwagwalada Area Council in Zuba materials and personnel arrived as early as 6:30am and materials were further dispatched to other polling units within the Ikwa ward.



2. Accreditation and Voting:

In most polling units observed, accreditation commenced shortly after setup. The process was initially slow but improved over time. At Polling Unit 053, Karu, accreditation and voting commenced at 9:04 a.m., with only two voters present. At Kabusa Primary School Polling Unit, accreditation began at 9:05 a.m. At PU EC30A 004, Section 2, Area 1 (AMAC), voting commenced at 10:15 a.m. However, majority of polling units that arrived early commenced accreditation and voting immediately after setting up in the presence of the political party's agents.



3. Voter Turnout:

Voter turnout was generally very low across most polling units observed. However, unusually high turnout was recorded at Abaji East Primary School, Nuku Ward, and at PU 004, Kayarda Primary School, Kuje.

Election Observation Findings



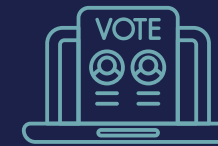
4. Vote Buying:

Polling Officers generally made deliberate efforts to position voting cubicles to ensure voter secrecy. While cases of vote buying were observed in most polling units, suspicious activities suggestive of vote trading were reported at PU 023 and PU 171, Federal Staff Clinic, Gwarinpa (AMAC). Also, some party loyalists were seen around engaging in the vote trading across most of the polling units observed by our PU Observers.



5. Security:

The voting process was generally peaceful across polling units observed. There was a strong presence of security personnel. Nigeria Police officers, Civil Defence Corps officers were deployed. Personnel of the Nigerian Immigration Service were observed at Orozo Primary School, Polling Unit 015 (AMAC). Also, our observers noticed presence of other security agencies such as Federal Road Safety Corps, Vigilante Group of Nigeria and Correctional Officers across many polling units.



6. Functionality of BVAS:

The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) functioned effectively in most polling units observed. At FCDA Site 1 Polling Unit, the Presiding Officer demonstrated to party agents that the BVAS device was not preloaded with results.

2.6 Limitation of the Election Observations

Major limitation of the Election Observation Mission was in ability of CEYWI to deploy observers across the Polling Units within the FCT due to lack of resources. However, we plan to engage external funding to be able to cover entire territory in the subsequent election. Also, our inability to mobilize to participate in the mock election organized by INEC.



3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Recommendations are listed below:

- ✔ INEC to strengthen partnership with CSOs and media houses on need to carry out intensive voters' education as part of processes of election in Nigeria
- ✔ Political parties should take training of dedicated party members to serve as part agents during and after voting for effective party mandate protection
- ✔ Need for INEC to engage private transport companies to supplement current partnership with National Union of Road Transport Workers for effective distribution of materials in a timely manner.
- ✔ Media houses and CSOs should support political parties and carry out issued based campaigns among political parties to give room for citizens to demand for transparency, accountable and credible election processes.



4.0 ANNEXTURE

4.1 Picture Speaks



INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF RESULT OF POLL FROM POLLING UNIT
2026 FCT AREA COUNCIL ELECTIONS
KUJE CHAIRMANSHIP

Area Council: FCT Code: 317
Ward: KGE Code: 04
Registration Area/WARD: RUBOH Code: 06
Polling Unit: RUBOH/ PRIMARY SCHOOL Code: 001

S/N	POLITICAL PARTY	VOTES SCORED		NAME/SIGNATURE OF POLLING AGENT
		IN FIGURES	IN WORDS	
1	A	///	NIL	
2	AA	///	NIL	
3	ADC	1	ONE	JOSPHUA ADEOLA
4	ADP	///	NIL	
5	APC	137	ONE HUNDRED & THIRTY SEVEN	JOSPHUA ADEOLA
6	APGA	19	NINETEEN	Sunday Kings Sadiq
7	APM	///	NIL	
8	NNPP	106	ONE HUNDRED & SIX	AGANU SHIRAZUWA
9	PDP	///	NIL	
10	SDP	///	NIL	
11	ZLP	///	NIL	
TOTAL VALID VOTES		264	TWO HUNDRED & SIXTY FOUR	

5.0 ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

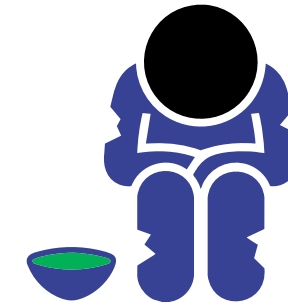
21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth & Women Initiative is a humanitarian, not for profit, and non-governmental organization founded in 2012, with the mission to serve as a platform for good governance and societal development, through policy advocacy for inclusive participation and people-centered research towards sustainable peace and development. It was incorporated as a corporate body with Corporate Affairs Commission on 7th November 2014 (CAC/IT/NO73348), National Planning Commission (12th August 2015), NPC/NGO/IC/S.638, Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering (24th November 2014) RN: SC 151401085, Federal Inland Revenue Services (11th February 2015) MTOABJ/NGO/73348/0000814.

Our target groups cut across Youths, Women, People with Disability with a special interest in political and economic empowerment for the betterment of the society through popular participation in governance. CEYWI is a member of various networks and coalitions, including at: NATIONAL LEVEL: Civil Society Scaling-up Nutrition in Nigeria (CS-SUNN), Nigerian Network of NGOs,

Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Tax Justice and Governance Platform (TJGP), Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC), State of the Union Nigeria Campaign Platform (SOTU-N-CAMP). REGIONAL LEVEL: CEYWI is a member of the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOFF), CONTINENTAL LEVEL: we belong to the African Caucus NGOs on Social Development GLOBALLY: we belong to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption Coalition (UNCAC), and United Nations NGO Committee on Social Development. CEYWI has UN Special ECOSOC Consultative Status.

Our Objectives:

Towards Sustainable Community and Human Development, 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth & Women Initiatives specific objectives are:



To build human and institutional capacity for sustainable development and poverty reduction, particularly among youths and women.



To promote and enhance the agency of youth, sensitize and engage them to be active informed participants in political, economic and development process.



To deepen and promote good governance, rule of law, human rights, environmental rights, equity and social justice.



To collaborate and share relevant information with all stakeholders including appropriate government agencies at all levels on conceptualization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

CEWYI'S MAIN ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON:

Democratic Governance

- Election Cycle Activities
- Gender & Women Participation in Decision Making Processes Access to Justice
- Youth and Women Political Economic Campaign.

Promotion of Health, Human Development and Social Inclusion

- Youth & Women Economic Empowerment
- Food Security Campaign
- SDGs Attainment Campaign
- Health Sector Advocacy and Accountability
- Volunteerism and Internship Scheme

Transparency, Accountability, Good Governance and Promotion of Public Finance and Management:

- Budget Transparency and tracking,
- Procurement Processes Monitoring
- Open Government Partnership.
- Environmental security, wildlife crime, corruption and illicit finance.
- Tax Justice Campaign

Research and Consultancy Services:

- Training and Capacity Building Facilitation
- Social Analysis & Pro-Poor Policy Advocacy
- Strengthening of Institutional & Technical Capacity
- Gender Analysis of Policies & Programmes
- Advisory Services for NGO Development and Management

Institutional Governance

There is a Board of Trustees who give legal expression to the organization. The Board makes policies and approves finances concerning the running of the organization. There is also the Project Management Committee consisting of the staff of the organization and a member of the Board. The Project Management is led by the Chief Operating Officer who is answerable to the Board and who oversees the secretariat. CEYWI work with a team of dedicated, skilled and experienced staff drawn from various background charged with bringing innovation, integrity, energy and independence using expertise where necessary to bring experience to bear with a particular interest in social enterprises and development sectors.

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Social media platforms
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/century-community-empowerment-655b98240/>
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<https://x.com/21ceywi>

