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SUPPORTING FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD

POWERSHIFT FOR DIGITAL RIGHTS PROJECT

# POWERSHIFT FOR DEMOCRACY

*Activity Report*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The PowerShift for Democracy Project was implemented to empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and platforms necessary to champion digital rights, civic engagement, democratic participation, and social inclusion within their communities. Supported through the Yiaga Africa Incubator Grant, the project combined capacity-building, youth-led advocacy, media engagement, public sensitization, and stakeholder dialogue to promote responsible civic participation and digital citizenship.

*The project commenced with a two-day Digital Rights and Civic Tech Bootcamp held in March 2026, where 47 young leaders were trained on digital rights, civic space, protest law, cyber hygiene, storytelling for advocacy, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for civic engagement. Beyond building knowledge, the bootcamp provided participants with practical opportunities to co-create advocacy ideas addressing real social and civic challenges within their communities.*

*Following a competitive review process, two participant groups were selected and supported to implement their advocacy concepts. The first group launched the "Reclaim Your Voice" campaign, addressing youth voter apathy through radio engagements and public sensitization activities which happened in the month of April 2026. The second group implemented an inclusion-focused advocacy project promoting equal participation and representation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in society and governance processes which also happened in April 2026.*

The project culminated with the PowerShift Symposium held on 29th April 2026. The symposium brought together youth leaders, civil society organizations, social influencers, media practitioners, poets, spoken-word artists, and civic actors to reflect on lessons learned, share implementation experiences, and discuss how digital platforms can be leveraged responsibly to promote civic engagement and social change.

Through community outreach, radio discussions, digital storytelling, and stakeholder engagement, the project successfully transitioned participants from learning to action, strengthened youth leadership, amplified civic awareness messages, and contributed to broader conversations on digital rights and democratic participation.

# IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



The activities under this indicator focused on supporting participants from the March Digital Rights and Civic Tech Bootcamp to design and implement advocacy interventions within their communities.

Following the bootcamp, participants were organized into groups and challenged to develop practical advocacy projects addressing issues affecting young people and marginalized groups. These concepts were reviewed based on relevance, innovation, feasibility, and potential impact. Two projects were selected for implementation support.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

PowerShift for Democracy was developed in response to growing concerns about declining civic participation among young people, limited awareness of digital rights, increasing misinformation within digital spaces, and the exclusion of marginalized groups from civic processes.

The project sought to create a new generation of informed and engaged young leaders who understand their rights, embrace civic responsibility, and use digital tools constructively to influence positive change.

The initiative combined capacity building, practical advocacy, community engagement, media outreach, and stakeholder dialogue to create a holistic approach to youth civic participation.

# Building The Foundation For Youth-Led Civic Action

## *1.* Digital Rights and Civic Tech Bootcamp

The PowerShift for Democracy Project officially commenced with a two-day Digital Rights and Civic Tech Bootcamp held from 26th–27th March 2026 in Jos, Plateau State. The bootcamp represented the project's foundational capacity-building activity and was designed to equip young people with the knowledge, practical skills, and confidence required to engage effectively in civic processes and digital advocacy.





The activity attracted significant interest from young people across Plateau State, with a total of **92 applications** received following a public call for participation. After a competitive selection process, **60 young leaders** were selected, while **47 participants** successfully completed the training.

The bootcamp was developed in response to growing concerns around declining civic participation among young people, increasing restrictions within digital spaces, widespread misinformation, and limited understanding of digital rights and democratic engagement. Recognizing the important role young people play in shaping democratic outcomes, the training sought to create a new generation of digitally aware and civically responsible youth leaders.

Over the course of two intensive days, participants engaged in interactive sessions facilitated by experts in civic engagement, digital rights, governance, media, and youth development. Key thematic areas included digital rights and civic space, protest rights and the Cybercrime Act, gender and digital inclusion, cyber hygiene and online safety, storytelling for advocacy, digital communication strategies, and the use of Artificial Intelligence tools for civic engagement.

Unlike traditional classroom-based trainings, the bootcamp adopted a participatory learning approach. Participants worked through case studies, simulations, group discussions, practical exercises, and collaborative problem-solving sessions. This methodology encouraged active participation and enabled participants to connect theoretical concepts with real-life challenges affecting their communities.

One of the most impactful components of the bootcamp was the project ideation and co-creation session. Participants were grouped into teams and challenged to identify pressing social and civic issues affecting young people and marginalized communities.

Through facilitated brainstorming sessions, the groups developed practical advocacy concepts that would later evolve into community-based interventions.
This process marked the transition from learning to action and laid the groundwork for the youth-led advocacy projects implemented during the next phase of the project.

The bootcamp not only strengthened participants' understanding of civic engagement and digital rights but also fostered a network of young advocates committed to using their voices and digital platforms to promote positive social change.

# From Learning to Action

## Youth-Led Advocacy Project Development

Following the successful completion of the bootcamp, participants entered the practical implementation phase of the project. Building on the knowledge and skills acquired during the training, participants were encouraged to develop advocacy initiatives capable of addressing real social challenges within their communities.

Working in groups, participants refined their ideas into project proposals focused on civic participation, democratic engagement, social inclusion, and public awareness. The project team provided mentorship and technical support throughout the proposal development process to ensure that ideas were realistic, impactful, and aligned with the broader objectives of the PowerShift initiative.

The proposals were assessed based on creativity, relevance, feasibility, sustainability, and potential impact. At the end of the review process, two advocacy projects were selected for implementation support.

This phase was particularly important because it transformed participants from beneficiaries of training into active implementers of change. Rather than ending at capacity building, the project created an opportunity for young people to test their ideas, engage communities, and gain practical experience in advocacy, communication, teamwork, and project management.

### *1.* Civic expression events:

**Reclaim Your Voice: Breaking the Power of Voter Apathy Among Youth**

**The first youth-led project focused on addressing voter apathy among young people. Developed under the theme "Reclaim Your Voice:** Breaking the Power of Voter Apathy Among Youth," the campaign sought to challenge growing political disengagement and encourage young citizens to become active participants in democratic processes.

The project emerged from conversations during the bootcamp where participants identified voter apathy as one of the major threats to democratic participation among young people. Many youths expressed feelings of frustration, distrust in political institutions, and a perception that their votes do not matter. The group therefore designed an advocacy campaign aimed at changing these perceptions and promoting active citizenship.






## RADIO ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

**The campaign began on 20th April 2026 with a live radio discussion on Jay FM.**

The radio engagement provided a platform to reach a broad audience across Plateau State and beyond. During the session, participants discussed the causes of voter apathy, the dangers of political disengagement, and the importance of youth participation in elections and governance.

The conversation emphasized that democratic change requires active citizen involvement and encouraged listeners to view voting not simply as an electoral activity but as a powerful tool for influencing public policy and holding leaders accountable.

Building on the success of the first broadcast, a second radio discussion was held on 21st April 2026 at Tin City FM. This session deepened conversations around civic responsibility and explored practical ways young people can participate in governance processes beyond elections. Topics included community advocacy, public accountability, citizen engagement, and youth leadership.

The radio sessions created opportunities for listeners to reflect on their civic responsibilities and stimulated conversations around democratic participation within local communities.




## NYSC SECRETARIAT SENSITIZATION SESSION

**The campaign culminated in a public sensitization session conducted on 22nd April 2026 at the National Youth Service Corps Secretariat in Jos.**

The activity targeted corps members because of their strategic role as educated young leaders serving within communities across Nigeria. Through presentations, discussions, and interactive engagements, participants explored issues relating to voter education, democratic accountability, civic responsibility, and youth participation in governance.
The session encouraged corps members to become advocates for democratic participation within their communities and challenged them to use their influence positively to promote civic awareness.

To increase visibility and attract public interest, the group produced customized campaign materials including branded caps and advocacy placards carrying the campaign message "Reclaim Your Voice." These materials generated curiosity, encouraged discussions among participants, and reinforced campaign messaging throughout the event.



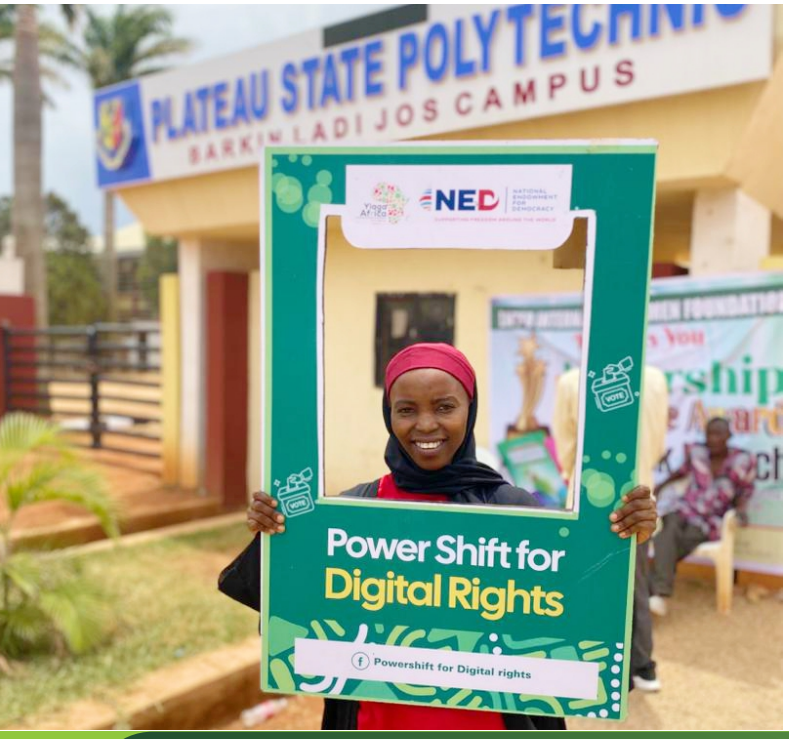
# Carrying Along Persons with Disabilities in Our Society

## The second youth-led advocacy project focused on promoting inclusion, accessibility, and equal participation for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

*The idea emerged* from discussions during the bootcamp around social inclusion and the need to ensure that civic engagement initiatives are accessible to all members of society regardless of physical ability. Participants recognized that many Persons with Disabilities continue to face barriers that limit their participation in education, governance, and community life.

**The project sought to challenge stereotypes, promote understanding, and encourage greater inclusion of Persons with Disabilities within civic and social spaces.**









## COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION AT PLATEAU STATE POLYTECHNIC

**The activity was implemented on 25th April 2026 at Plateau State Polytechnic, where students and members of the institution were engaged in conversations around disability inclusion and equal participation.**

Through facilitated discussions, participants explored the social and structural barriers that often exclude Persons with Disabilities from opportunities available to other citizens.

The conversations emphasized that disability inclusion is not merely a welfare issue but a matter of rights, dignity, and equal access.

Students were encouraged to reflect on their attitudes towards disability and consider practical ways they could contribute to creating more inclusive learning environments and communities.

## INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SIGN LANGUAGE

A particularly impactful aspect of the activity was the inclusion of a sign-language-supported engagement session. This ensured that hearing and speech-impaired individuals could participate actively in discussions and share their perspectives.



The session provided a powerful demonstration of what meaningful inclusion looks like in practice. For many participants, it was their first experience engaging directly with persons facing communication barriers, creating deeper understanding and empathy around issues of accessibility.

The presence of sign language interpretation transformed the activity from a discussion about inclusion into a practical example of inclusion itself.

## VOX POPS, STORYTELLING AND DIGITAL ADVOCACY



To broaden participation, the team conducted vox-pop interviews with students, collecting views and reflections on disability rights, representation, and equal opportunities.

Participants also documented the activity through photographs, short videos, interviews, and social media content. These digital storytelling products were shared online to extend the conversation beyond the event venue and reach wider audiences.

The project successfully created awareness about disability inclusion while demonstrating how young people can use creative advocacy approaches to challenge stereotypes and promote social change.

## AMPLIFYING IMPACT THROUGH DIGITAL ADVOCACY

A unique feature of the PowerShift Project was its integration of offline community engagement with digital storytelling and online advocacy.

Throughout the implementation period, participants produced creative content including short videos, reels, photographs, awareness graphics, participant testimonials, interviews, and advocacy messages.

The content was disseminated through Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), and other social media platforms.

This strategy enabled participants to extend the lifespan of their advocacy efforts, engage wider audiences, and reinforce campaign messages beyond the physical events.

The digital advocacy component also provided an opportunity for participants to apply practical skills gained during the bootcamp, particularly in storytelling, content creation, strategic communication, and audience engagement.

# 3.0 POWERSHIFT SYMPOSIUM:






## The PowerShift Symposium served as the project's culminating activity and was held on 29th April 2026 under the theme:

### From Clicks to Change: Harnessing Youth Power for Digital Rights and Civic Engagement

The symposium brought together project participants, civil society organizations, social influencers, spoken-word artists, poets, media practitioners, radio stations, development partners, and youth leaders.
The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the project's journey, celebrate achievements, and examine the role of young people in promoting responsible digital engagement and civic participation.

A major highlight of the symposium was the experience-sharing session where participants presented reflections from their advocacy projects. Youth leaders discussed lessons learned during implementation, community responses to their interventions, challenges encountered, and the impact of combining digital advocacy with physical community engagement.

The symposium also featured keynote presentations, interactive discussions, creative performances, stakeholder goodwill messages, and networking opportunities that strengthened collaboration among civic actors and digital rights advocates.

**The event successfully transformed project outcomes into broader conversations about youth leadership, digital rights, democratic participation, and social accountability.**

# Result (Output and Outcomes)

## OUTPUTS

**YOUTH LEADERS TRAINED**

**YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY**

**RADIO SENSITIZATION PROGRAMS**

**NYSC CIVIC SENSITIZATION**

1. 47 youth leaders trained through the Digital Rights and Civic Tech Bootcamp.
2. Two youth-led advocacy projects successfully implemented.
3. Two radio sensitization programs conducted.
4. One NYSC civic sensitization session conducted.
5. One sensitization campaign implemented at Plateau State Polytechnic.
6. Multiple digital advocacy contents produced and circulated online.
7. Advocacy materials including branded caps and placards produced and utilized.
8. One PowerShift Symposium successfully organized.
9. Strengthened network of youth digital rights and civic engagement champions established.






# Result (Output and Outcomes)

## OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness among young people on voter participation and civic responsibility.
- Improved public understanding of inclusion and equal rights for Persons with Disabilities.
- Increased youth participation in civic conversations through radio and community engagements.
- Enhanced confidence and capacity among participants to design and implement advocacy projects.
- Greater use of digital tools and social media platforms for civic education and awareness creation.
- Strengthened collaboration between participants, media organizations, civil society actors, and stakeholders.

**Improved understanding of how digital platforms can be used responsibly for social change and democratic participation.**



# RISK AND CHALLENGES

1. Low turnout of some group members during the implementation of Group One activities affected coordination and task distribution.

2. Limited time and resources constrained the scale of outreach activities.

3. Coordinating participants across different activities and locations required additional logistical planning.

4. Public engagement during sensitization activities varied across locations.

# LESSONS LEARNED

Youth-led advocacy initiatives are more impactful when participants are actively involved in project design and implementation.

Radio remains an effective platform for reaching and engaging young people on civic issues.

Community sensitization activities encourage direct interaction and create stronger awareness among participants.

Team coordination and commitment are important for successful project execution.

Combining physical advocacy activities with digital content creation increases the reach and sustainability of campaign messages.









## EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES



**Increased interest among young people in civic engagement and voter participation advocacy.**



**Opportunities for future partnerships with media organizations in the plateau**



**Potential for expanding digital advocacy campaigns through social media platforms and online storytelling.**



**Strengthened the project team, by registering powershift as a legal entity and push for partnerships, funding and support from donors.**



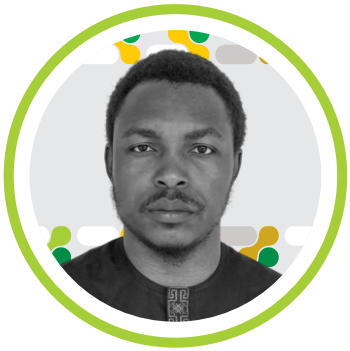

## SUCCESS STORIES

1 One of the most impactful outcomes of the month was the success of the "Reclaim Your Voice" campaign. Through radio sessions and sensitization activities, young people were encouraged to see voting not just as a political process but as a means of expressing their voices and shaping the future of their communities. Several corps members at the NYSC sensitization session expressed renewed interest in participating in elections and civic advocacy activities.

2 Another inspiring outcome came from the sensitization on inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Participants at Plateau State Polytechnic engaged actively in discussions about equality, inclusion, and representation. Many students acknowledged that the session helped them better understand the challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities and the importance of creating more inclusive spaces within schools and communities.

3 The PowerShift Symposium further reinforced the impact of the project by bringing together participants and stakeholders to reflect on how digital spaces can be used responsibly for advocacy and social change. The discussions encouraged participants to continue using their voices, creativity, and digital platforms to promote civic engagement and positive societal transformation.

## MEET THE IMPLEMENTING TEAM



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## DIVE INTO THE HIGHLIGHTS






















# Thank you

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