

# YOUNGSTARS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

## IGNITE CHANGE WORLD YOUTH DAY FOR DEMOCRACY ONLINE FORUM

**PROJECT REPORT:** Ignite Change World Youth Day for Democracy Online Forum

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Preamble/Project Background
2. How Project was Implemented
3. How the Winners Emerged.
4. The Prize Presentation
5. Conclusion

### **1. PREAMBLE / PROJECT BACKGROUND**

“When you love people and have the desire to make a profound, positive impact upon the world, then will you have accomplished the meaning to live.” – This among others is what drives us in Youngstars Foundation.

October 18<sup>th</sup> has been set aside as the World Youth Day for Democracy since 2004, and each year, young people all over the world commemorate it with diverse activities across continental borders. This has been on for 7 years and it is becoming increasingly popular among young democracy activists.



**Ignite Change**, the theme for 2011 was commemorated by Youngstars Foundation through a 5days Youth Online Forum on Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria tagged “**Ignite Change World Youth Day for Democracy Online Forum.**”

#### • **Benefits of Participating in the Forum**

- Winners would physically meet and interact with the New Human Rights Officer of the US Embassy in Nigeria as well as be given an opportunity to share their work for future collaboration with his office.
- All 15 winners would be presented a branded T. Shirt and Badge courtesy of the World Youth Movement for Democracy Washington DC – USA.
- All winners would become a member of a vibrant global movement of young people promoting sustainable and credible democracy worldwide.

## 2. HOW THE PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED

From Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Youngstars began an online campaign on its website and other online networks to create awareness for the online forum. The period of awareness lasted for about 8

15 Youths to win a Lunch ticket with the New Human Rights Officer of the US Embassy Nigeria, Branded T. Shirts & Badges in the Ignite Change World Youth Day for Democracy Online Forum.

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days and the forum kicked off on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October through Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011 on Youngstars new website, <http://youngstarsfoundation.org>.

Each day, Youngstars posted a topic for discussion on different contemporary democracy issues affecting Nigeria, and young people posted comments as they felt strongly about the topics. At the end of the forum, a total

number of 70 comments were posted on the different topics. (See topics and sample comments chosen at random below. More details are on our website <http://youngstarsfoundation.org>).

### **Topic 1:**

Discuss any key ingredients needed to improve Nigeria's democracy and why.

### **Random Comment:**

ZIKO

October 17, 2011

*Democracy as we know is a government of active majority and for democracy to achieve its core aim of delivering good governance and promotion of human rights; then the majority must be actively involved. Why I choose active Citizen Participation as an ingredient needed to improve Nigeria's democracy cannot be far-fetched because for now the level of apathy on the side of the citizen is too, high most especially the young people that makes up the vast majority of those that are supposed to be active participant in the democratic process. They do not understand national issues or even care to know what is expected from the elected officers, so how do we engage the leadership if we do not understand the issues ourselves. Every day I see the passion young people put in football following, they can call the first 11 team of any team in the English Premiership but do not know the name of their Councilor, or even know the real issue happening at home, and when issues of national interest comes up, they all discussed based on emotions, sentiment or what a particular journalist wrote which they are not really sure it is correct, because they themselves has not avail themselves with facts and figures. So to improve our democracy through engaging our leaders and holding them more accountable and responsive, there must be active citizen participation, these present culture of ' he no concern me....i no wan die....i no be sabi sabi' must change.*

### **Topic 2:**

What in your view will deepen democracy? Is it true federalism as practiced in the us or our variant of presidential system of government?

### **Random Comment:**

Ihidero Victor

October 18, 2011

*When Paul Goebbels, the unrepentant Nazi apostle heard culture being discussed in tandem with governance in 1942 he brought out his revolver. Again, when Amilcar Cabral, the revolutionary Guinea Bissauan and Cape Verdean fighter held culture he manipulates it to liberate his peoples from the devilry that epitomized the Portuguese colonial government. Need I, again, shovel up the reality in Imperialist Kenya of the mid-1940s to 1950s- where the people were finally defeated by the Britons after they had captured the cultural essence of the fertile Kenya. What were the causes of the World War II and Cold War if not Culture and system of government; Culture and economics; and culture and power. Again, why are the Arabs on the streets after the unseating of Hosni Mubarak, Ben Ali and others? They are demanding for democracy. What kind of democracy I dare ask?*

*Nigeria's democracy, whether federal or presidential will remain shallow and loose unless we, as a people begin the long walk to domesticate our democracy rooted in our culture. Every thing as well as words happens within a given cultural context before they are diffused to others. Meanings could be distorted in another cultural context owing to the fact that the totemism of the etymology of democracy may suffer from its adaptors. The US borrowed democracy from the Greeks and have since domesticated it to their culture. Today, they are better off than the Greeks. The same thing passes for Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark. That these nations 's democracy are deep owes to the richness of the role culture plays in their affairs. Our democracy is still a borrowed property that is begging for an ownership right.*

*The Arabs are protesting because they do not a Western-styled democracy. They want it rooted in Arab nationalism devoid of western hegemonic forces. And this Arabic consciousness is making the West to squirm on their seats. The question to brood over, again, is why?*

*Our democracy can be deepened when we, the peoples of Nigeria are willing to reeducate ourselves and political system in order to unlearn the western style of governance.*

*Nigeria's brand of democracy needs a definition rooted from within.*

### **Topic 3:**

Will a 6 years single tenure improve our democracy and fast track development in Nigeria?

#### **Random Comment:**

POPOLAIO

October 19, 2011

*To the best of my understanding, 6 years single tenure is not the solution to the present predicament we find ourselves in Nigeria. What we are lacking in the leadership structure today is the lack of visionary leaders. Such leaders that have already prepared their manifestos right away before going for the general elections. In the reality, such type of transactional leaders are very few in our political offices. For instance, it takes somebody with a ready-made blueprint less time to implement his/her programmes while getting to the office. On the other hand, it takes a longer period of time for another person who has no implementable action plans. He or she just has to consult experts at the inception of his/her office and before such consultants are through with their finds, it will take a long period of time. In the case of the governor and/or president, he/she also has to prepare the blueprint, discuss it at the executive council level before it is passed to the parliament for deliberations, sometimes public hearings are conducted, report back to the house for the second and the third readings for the final passage.*

*What is important is that if our leaders are visionary, it will take them less time in understanding the yearnings and aspirations of the ruled which is important in deepening the democratic values and development in our country. A case study of the turn around project of Gov. Babatunde Fashola during his first tenure in Lagos State is enough proof that leadership is not by the length of time you spent in an office but what you have achieved from the period of time that you have spent while in the office.*

*Lastly, the proposed amendment bill for the tenure elongation before the national assembly is not intended for the development of the country but to empower the elected leaders for tenure elongation. May the Lord protect us from the acts of un-patriotism.*

#### **Topic 4:**

Are young people well represented in the Nigerian nation structure? Suggest practical ideas for better youth representation in government.

#### **Random Comment:**

*ABIODUN PHILIPS*

*October 20, 2011*

*The Youth in Nigeria are not better represented in the government system and it is alarming on a daily basis the rate at which there are no employment for graduates and the teeming youth at large. The Nigerian government has not deem it fit to constitute a proper bill to recognize the youth of the nation in leadership status making them to be a second fiddle in nation building whereas they have subjected them to being used as political thugs, street urchins (area boys), rapist, kidnappers, ritualist, internet scammers & armed robbers without adding much value to physical development in the nation. Really it is high time for the youth to wake up and stand firmly for their rights and let government & our leaders know that enough is enough for the incessant strike in our higher institution of learning due to poor funding. Lack of social infrastructure, bad road network, poor health facilities, non availability of industries and agricultural development. Like, I always charge my fellow youth to be positive minded in whatever they are doing, read constantly and always learn new innovations and face challenges at any point in life. I will suggest that government should build an institute for youth policy & industrial orientation whereby there will be intermediary between minister of youth & development and also the minister of labour & productivity for economic and social development. There should be constitution reformed for youth quarter representation at all level of government and parastatals. There should be national institute for youth & sports. With these i believed that the Nigerian youths will be better represented in the government and the issues of high rate of unemployment and youth unrest will systematically reduce to the barest minimum. God bless NIGERIA.*

#### **Topic 5:**

As Nigeria's democracy grows, what specific ways can you contribute in the next 1 year in making it a vibrant democracy?

#### **Random Comment:**

*BLESSING]*

*October 21, 2011*

*The Nigerian society has come a long way since she gained her independence. Over the years we have since old hands governing the affairs of our country over and over again we have since these old hands been recycled! As Nigeria grows what i can contribute as to make her a vibrant democracy is; a) calling on youths to stand up and take the reins of some areas, we complain about the country but how many youths in the past election stood up to at least campaign even if not elected but try to be nominated by showing interest? i am happy that youths came out to vote but we should also be activate in allowing our fellow youths vote for us too, we may not start from the top, it may be from our ward, district, community, local Government and so on, i believe if we come out en mass we will have a vibrant democracy.*

b) a developing and informed society will help a vibrant society- youth seminars could also go a long way, youths are looking forward to a push, if we have a body that could speak to youths about these things they will stand up and take their rights.

c) finally ,naturally youths are vibrant people and vibrant people create vibrant society and environment.

### 3. HOW THE WINNERS EMERGED



On a daily basis, three best comments were selected and reviewed by Youngstars team. The third day had only two comments reviewed and selected. The commenters were informed on the website that their comments were selected and that they won free lunch tickets with the New Human Rights Officer of the US Embassy in Nigeria, a branded T. Shirt and Badge courtesy of the World Youth Movement for Democracy, Washington DC. Also, Youngstars informed them about the date, venue and time of the lunch and prize presentation. (See tabular data of winners below).

#### IGNITE CHANGE ONLINE FORUM - WINNERS

S/N	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL	STATE OF RESIDENCE
1	Zlko	+2348134708741	<a href="mailto:izik_57@yahoo.com">izik_57@yahoo.com</a>	Benue
2	Eghosa Kings	+2348078087625 +2348068400362	<a href="mailto:eghosa24ogie@yahoo.com">eghosa24ogie@yahoo.com</a>	Edo
3	Fagro	+2348039210905	<a href="mailto:sfagorusi@gmail.com">sfagorusi@gmail.com</a>	Kaduna
4	Samuel Uchenna Okwara	+2347035027300 +2348025460794	<a href="mailto:samuel_okwara@yahoo.com">samuel_okwara@yahoo.com</a>	Imo
5	Adeyere Adebola	+2348038060357	<a href="mailto:paceconsult10@yahoo.com">paceconsult10@yahoo.com</a>	Lagos
6	Clinton	+2348068475053	<a href="mailto:ifeanyinnedu@gmail.com">ifeanyinnedu@gmail.com</a>	Zamfara
7	Popoola	+2348032249398	<a href="mailto:popoolaio@gmail.com">popoolaio@gmail.com</a>	Osun
8	Chukwuisaac	+2347039292738	<a href="mailto:azik_chuks2000@yahoo.com">azik_chuks2000@yahoo.com</a>	Ebonyi
9	Abiodun Ajayi	+2348026410443	<a href="mailto:youthvolunteersnet@yahoo.com">youthvolunteersnet@yahoo.com</a>	Plateau
10	Abiodun Phillips	+2347039740389	<a href="mailto:abiodunphillips@yahoo.com">abiodunphillips@yahoo.com</a>	Lagos
11	Emekue Nkem Purity	+2348069061387	<a href="mailto:dilexy2001@yahoo.com">dilexy2001@yahoo.com</a>	Enugu
12	Ihidero Victor	+2348098774084	<a href="mailto:specialespecie@gmail.com">specialespecie@gmail.com</a>	Edo
13	Mary Robert		<a href="mailto:mailmaryfree@yahoo.com">mailmaryfree@yahoo.com</a>	
14	Blessing	+2348036369930	<a href="mailto:timok4christ@yahoo.co.uk">timok4christ@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Abuja

At the end of the forum, the 14 winners were asked to confirm participation for the prize presentation. Only 6 winners confirmed availability, while the other winners declined due to the distance between Abuja and the state in which they reside. Then, the opportunity was made open to all participants of the forum and 1 forum participant confirmed availability.

#### **4. THE PRIZE PRESENTATION**

At 12:30pm on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011, the winners and forum participant had the opportunity to have the Interactive lunch with Michael Kiselycznyk, the New Human Rights Officer of the US Embassy in Nigeria at Crystal Palace Hotel, Portharcourt Crescent, Off Gimbiya Street, Area 11, Abuja, Nigeria. A total number of 7 youths residing in different states in Nigeria were present, and Youngstars team was there with them too. The Youths shared their work with the Human Rights Officer and discussed different issues from politics to democracy in Nigeria, the U.S and the world at large. (See Tabular Data Below for Youths present at the lunch and prize presentation).



#### **YOUTHS PRESENT AT THE LUNCH AND PRIZE PRESENTATION**

S/N	NAME	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL	STATE OF RESIDENCE
2	Eghosa Kings	2348078087625, 2348068400362,	<a href="mailto:eghosa24ogie@yahoo.com">eghosa24ogie@yahoo.com</a>	Edo
3	Fagro	2348039210905,	<a href="mailto:sfagorusi@gmail.com">sfagorusi@gmail.com</a>	Kaduna
4	Daniel Stephen	2348035514476,	<a href="mailto:stephen.progressstev@gmail.com">stephen.progressstev@gmail.com</a>	Abuja
6	Chukwuisaaac	2347039292738,	<a href="mailto:azik_chuks2000@yahoo.com">azik_chuks2000@yahoo.com</a>	Ebonyi
7	Abiodun Ajayi	2348026410443,	<a href="mailto:youthvolunteersnet@yahoo.com">youthvolunteersnet@yahoo.com</a>	Plateau
9	Emekue Nkem Purity	2348069061387,	<a href="mailto:dilexy2001@yahoo.com">dilexy2001@yahoo.com</a>	Enugu
11	Blessing	2348036369930,	<a href="mailto:timok4christ@yahoo.co.uk">timok4christ@yahoo.co.uk</a>	Abuja

The Human Rights Officer also made an interesting statement about Youngstars website by saying that the website is so easy to navigate and there is lots of information for young people on it.



At about 2:15pm, the Human Rights Officer presented the winners their prizes (branded T. Shirts and badge) and took pictures with them. The administrative officer of Youngstars, Bola Abimbola also presented Michael a branded T.Shirt and badge as a sign of courtesy.

The lunch ended with lots of pictures amidst joy and happiness on the faces of the youths for such an honourable opportunity.

A total number of 8 T.Shirts and Badges were given out to the youths present and Youngstars is currently working on sending the prizes to the

winner who were unavoidably absent at the prize presentation.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, our profound appreciation goes to the World Youth Movement for Democracy Washington DC – USA for the T.Shirts and Badge, and the opportunity given to us to serve. For all of these results would not have been achieved, if not for the confidence you have in us that we will be able to deliver. Your kind gesture has brought smiles on the lives of many young people in Nigeria, and referring to a phrase of one of our project participants, the reward of good work is more work.