



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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President's Letter

Subject: We are advancing the answer that Africa's youths are ReadyToLeadAfrica by SERVING their communities!

Dear friends,

As we enter a new year, I want to take a moment of time to share encouraging news from our work in the field and to share the accomplishments ReadyToLeadAfrica has made in 2021. The most exciting news is that our work in the electoral reforms bill advocacy for Nigeria was successful! Recent actions from the National Assembly which led to the passing of the electoral reforms bill have shown the possibility of a 78.4% improvement in Nigeria's Electoral ACT



Godbless Otubure
Global President
ReadyToLeadAfrica

Throughout 2021, I witnessed our 36 states and African country chapters led by young people organize advocacy efforts thanks to hands-on support from ReadyToLeadAfrica which increased youth participation by over 70% in the process of electoral reforms. We organized marches on the National Assembly, Summits on strengthening and preserving democracy, a Youth Peace Accord during the Anambra Governorship Election. This dramatic increase in civic engagement resulted in more than 10 million people reached with the impact of our works across Africa.

While there is much to be thankful in the past year of work, we are also looking towards our new and exciting programs such as #ReadyToSERVE designed to organize support for young candidates in 2023 State and Federal Houses of Assembly, #ReadyToVOTE & #IWillVOTE designed to increase voter registration, engagement and on election day actual voting, #TheAssembly designed to be the driving platform for engagement of identified candidates for elections,

#ReadyToWORK designed to empower youths and young graduates with employability and enterprise skills, #ReadyToTRADE designed to bridge the gap of information on the AfCFTA amongst youths to scale our impact. Improving democratic support is crucial for the success of our programmatic work and we have made strides due to our forward looking strategic outputs.

In this celebratory time of the New Year, I look back upon 2021 and the great successes we've had and look forward to 2022 and what's in front of us. There is much to be thankful for and much more to be excited to look forward to.

Ours is to Plough, Not to Plunder,

God bless Otubure
Global President
ReadyToLeadAfrica

Introduction

Nigeria is experiencing a huge decline in democratic structures and norms which a lot of citizens have embraced over the last two decades after a run of military dictatorships. The current regime of President Muhammadu Buhari has seen the erosion of democratic practices on a level never witnessed since the last military take-over of 1993 after the annulment of the June 12 election.

However, local non state actors and CSOs like our institution (ReadyToLeadAfrica) have continued to implement projects and activities geared towards preserving and sustaining our democracy, advancing youth inclusion in governance, empowering youths with skills needed to succeed in the workplace and entrepreneurship with support from organizations and other partners



1. YouthMarchForth For Electoral Reforms 2.0 (March 2021 Nation Wide)

YouthMarchForth for Electoral Reforms 2.0 is an RTLA nation-wide national day of action project in its second year of implementation. YMF was designed in 2020 to engage the RTLA State Chapters as key drivers in the advocacy for electoral reforms in Nigeria by working through the state constituency offices of the House of Reps and Senate members on the need to get electoral reforms done by the 9th National Assembly.

We were able to mobilize our different state chapters to print banners, produce T-shirts, engage media partners, produce placards as well as sort logistical needs as our state chapters worked out innovative strategies to engage their lawmakers by also submitting our 10 citizens demands for consideration.

Overt Project Impact:

- Lawmakers from both chambers confirmed on the floor that they received for the first-time submissions from their constituents on the electoral amendment subject matter through their constituency offices as against the conventional Abuja-driven submissions which they were used to.
- More than 3000 youths marched on the same day across Nigeria to demand action on electoral reforms
- RTLA also discovered as a result of the state level driven strategy, that there were lawmakers who did not have state constituency offices where they can engage with their constituents. This has led to a new call for all elected members to ensure they have local offices in their states where citizens can engage with them outside of election seasons



2. Electoral Reforms Summit -Transcorp Hilton, Abuja (June 13, 2021)



The ReadyToLeadAfrica Electoral Reforms Summit at Transcorp Hilton Abuja was designed to further advance the advocacy for the passage and signing into law of a new Electoral Amendment ACT for Nigeria.



The event brought together top leaders and key Stakeholders to influence the 9th National Assembly to pass the bill as soon as possible. The event was attended by Mandela Washington Fellows, professor Kingsley Moghalu, Minister of State Education, Jude ILO Country lead, OSONWA, Hamzat Lawal Founder CODE, Moses Siasia and many others.



Overt Project Impact:

- The House of Reps and the Senate went on to pass the bill as was advocated by top leaders and speakers at the Electoral Reforms Summit with electronic transmission of results as part of the final version of the bill.
- The RTLA Electoral Reforms Summit was the first opportunity for diverse set of professionals and

leaders to examine the impact of the June 12 election and how it has impacted our collective understanding of our electoral process.

- The RTLA Electoral Summit also saw the advancement of collective interest from participants as well as organizations such as OSIWA, TBAN, NPAG to increase funding towards the advocacy process for the passage of the bill.

3. National Assembly Protest for Electronic Transmission of Results (July 2021)

RTLTA organized a citizens-led protest to the National Assembly to demand the tabling on the floor of both chambers of the house to consider and pass the Electoral Reforms Bill whilst also narrowing down on the need to ensure Electronic Transmission of Results was part of the final version of the bill. RTLTA HQ Abuja worked with other partners to ensure the project was successful. We used the occasion to also implement a Call-Centre Strategy where we engaged volunteers to send text messages to all the Senators and House of Reps members on the strong desire by citizens home and abroad on the need to include e-transmission in the final version of the bill.



Overt Project Impact:

- Lawmakers were seen on National TV reading out the contents of our TEXT messages on the floor of the House of Reps and Senate to inform other colleagues of the growing interests by Nigerians to see a better electoral Act as we move forward to 2023.
- We also noticed that lawmakers came on TV to deny reports that they have been asked not to support electronic transmission of results as we stated in our 3 press conferences in July alone

4. #MarchForOurFuture on the Senate for the Adoption of E-Transmission of Results

The #MarchForOurFuture on the Senate for the Adoption of E-Transmission of Results and World Press Conference on Conference Committee to Harmonize Electoral Amendment Bill For Swift Signing Into Law by President was a response to the Senate's decision to initially subject INEC's powers to transmit election results electronically on the advice of the NCC and approval of the National Assembly before INEC can do its job.

The MarchForOurFuture was covered by TVC, AIT, ARISE TV, Channels TV, NewsCentral, ThisDay, Vanguard, TheNation Newspapers as it was the first time we would organize

citizens to march on the National Assembly after the controversial decision of the Senate. We worked with a cross section of CSOs to ensure we organized a minimum of 200 people who took part in the march. NPAG supported the process financially as well to enable us mobilize citizens and support our media partners who will be helping to further move the message forward.

Overt Project Impact:

- A day to the implementation of the #MarchForOurFuture project on the National Assembly, the Senate on hearing the aggregate size of the potential of citizens' march revised their position by voting during a plenary session to allow INEC keep its constitutional independence.
- The conference committee completed the harmonization of the bill and electronic transmission of results made it to the final version as advocated for.



5. West African Democracy on CODE RED Summit

We marked the International Day of Democracy with a summit in Abuja Nigeria's Capital on 30th September 2021 with focus on West African Democracies and its preservation for the future due to recent overt declines in the gains made in the last two decades which has seen Mali, Chad and more recently Guinea fall to military rule.

The African Democracy on CODE RED Summit brought together prominent representatives from the Nigerian diaspora, Commissioner Obi Felix (Joe Biden/Harris African Diaspora Lead) and Dr Iyore of NPAG who gave profound remarks on the topic of discussion through transmitted virtual channel which was for about 30 minutes. Various reputable organizations, present was Mr. Hamzat Lawal CODE, Senator Ajibola (NASS), Bulus Asten (NBA) Abuja Chapter Chairman, Oniofiok Kings (Ecowas Youth Ambassador), Ibrahim Farouk (YIAGA) and Dr. Benson Upah (Nigeria Labour Congress) representative



6. Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord (YAEVA)



The Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord – YAEVA (Youth Led Peace Accord) is a ReadyToLeadAfrica Peace Building Initiative designed to bring youths into the promotion of peace during elections via the signing of a peace accord by leading governorship candidates during elections. The youth-led peace accord has been signed in 3 states so far with Anambra State as the 4th state where the youth-led peace accord was signed.

The Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord – YAEVA (Youth Led Peace Accord) is similar to the Rev Kukah, Gen. Gowon and Gen. Abudsallami led peace accord signed by candidates during elections. YAEVA as it is also called, brings together candidates, youth groups, political leaders, and citizens to commit candidates to the tenets of peace during and after the elections.

We brought all the leading candidates of APGA, PDP, APC, ZLP, YPP, ACCORD and AAC to sign of the Youth-led Peace Accord on the 4th of November. Gen Abdulsalam Abubakar as well as the INEC Chairman Prof. Mahmud also endorsed the YAEVA initiative

7. The Ready Youth Conference

The #TheReadyYouth Conference was our ReadyToWORK maiden partnership conference with the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), Naija Champ Game and Jestone Education to provide employability, jobs search strategies, entrepreneurship skills development as well as youth active civic engagement trainings to young emerging leaders to enable them have fulfilling careers in the future whilst also becoming more civically engaged in the democratic process.



African Democracy- Meter Reports Initiative (ADRI)

Message from the President

With the actions of China and Russia in 2020, as well as the end of Donald Trump's reign as President of the US in 2020 which marked the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedom and democracy, today the data shows that countries experiencing deterioration in advancement and entrenchment of democracy outnumbered those with improvements by the largest margin recorded since the negative trend began in 2006. The long democratic recession is deepening.

“

The long democratic recession is deepening



Godbless Otubure
Global President
ReadyToLeadAfrica

The impact of the long-term democratic decline has become increasingly global in nature, broad enough to be felt by those living under the cruelest dictator, as well as by citizens of long-standing democracies. Nearly 75 percent of the world's population lived in a country that faced deterioration last year according to Freedom House USA.

For us all, the work to preserve, protect and promote democracy has never been more urgent. For us at ReadyToLeadAfrica, we believe that our effort to make the case for African democratic development and sustainability can not be over-emphasized.

We are Ready to do our best. Ours is to PLOUGH, Not to PLUNDER.

About the Authors



Stella Banino is a summer 2021 intern with ReadyToLeadAfrica from Sleepy Hollow, New York. She is in her second year at the University of Virginia, where she is studying Systems Engineering with a concentration in Global Development. At RTLA, Stella has helped launch The Ready Letter e-newsletter and works on outreach, graphic design, and voter turnout initiatives.



Tasia Courts is a summer intern with ReadyToLeadAfrica from Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the USA. As a second year at the university of Virginia, she hopes to major in Public Policy and Leadership with a Spanish minor. At RTLA, she has worked to create the ReadyToSpeak Blog and she is excited to contribute to the expansion of the Global Projects & Policy Think Tank.

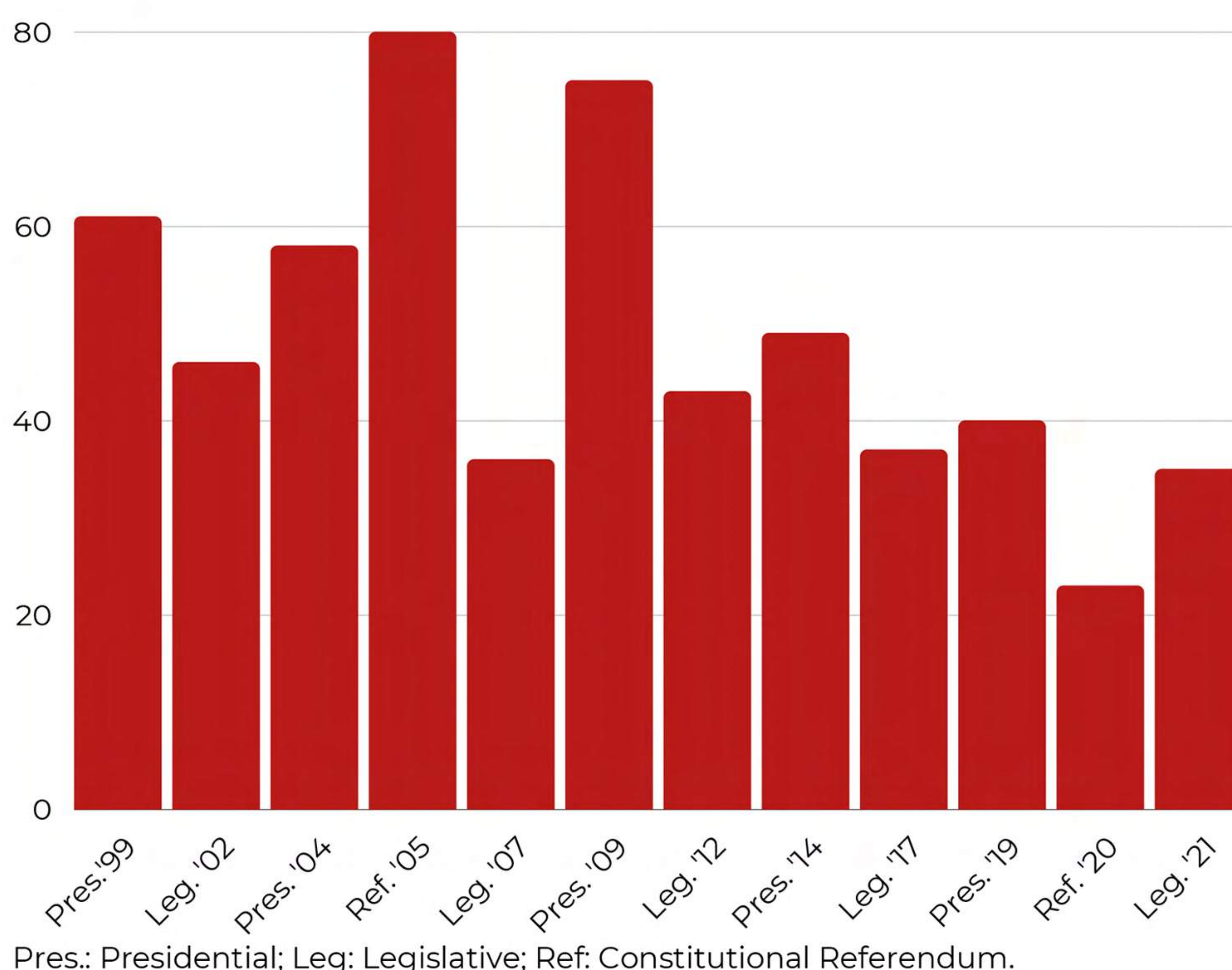


Abigail Thomas is a summer 2021 intern with ReadyToLeadAfrica from Fairfax, Virginia studying Public Policy and Leadership at the University of Virginia. In RTLA, Abigail works on voter turnout initiatives and the organization's social media presence.

Voter Turnout by Election

In February of 2019, despite a reinstatement of presidential term limits and a debilitating stroke he suffered, Bouteflika announced he would be running for a fifth term. The nation erupted in a series of protests known as the Hirak, which was led by young people and backed by the judiciary and the military. Under this intense pressure, Bouteflika stepped down from the presidency on April 2; however, his administration of old-guard elites, known as “le pouvoir”, retained their hold on power. The administration has begun implementing reforms, but Hirak says these reforms are just shallow distractions from continued corruption and authoritarianism in the government.

Hirak and the general public are deeply distrustful of elections held by this administration, given its history of election interference under Bouteflika. This fear was confirmed in the first presidential election since Bouteflika stepped down: the only approved candidates were of the old guard. Hirak and the public attempted to postpone and interfere with the election, but the army stepped in to ensure the election occurred. Just under 40% of the electorate participated (France 24, 2019).



Testimonials

Jude Ilo, OSIWA Nigeria: Having worked in this field for long, I think what ReadyToLeadAfrica has done here today is much more important than just the conversation we are having here. The ReadyToLeadAfrica Electoral Reforms Summit has opened up the needed interests for the Senate and the House of Reps to pass the electoral reforms bill without further delay. I am excited to see a diverse group of leaders together in one room discussing electoral matters.



Kingsley Moghalu, Former Presidential Candidate Nigeria: I am encouraged by the works of ReadyToLeadAfrica because it gives us hope to see young people committed to a better Nigeria and Africa. We need this as a matter of urgency to salvage what we have left of our country and continent. The ReadyToLeadAfrica Electoral Reforms Work has been more than impressive.



Senator. Ajibola Basiru: I am proud of what ReadyToLeadAfrica is doing with the West African Democracy on CODE RED program. It is important to continue to highlight the areas where more works needs to be done. To see young people leading these efforts, gives us hope for the future.



Hamzat Lawal, Executive Director CODE: I strongly believe ReadyToLeadAfrica is engaging and organizing the right conversations needed to drive the right kind of engagement for young leaders across the continent. I believe more young people should play more active roles in politics and leadership. (September 2021)



Moses Siasia, Chairman NYPF: ReadyToLeadAfrica has shown true commitment to the works they are doing. The Anambra Election engagement by ReadyToLeadAfrica made most of us who were not on the ground feel the pulse of the people as though we were active participants in the process. I have been part of ReadyToLeadAfrica's programs and always look forward to more because we see a growing organization committed to the work of civic participation and youth inclusion. (November 2021).



Bulus. Y Atsen, Abuja Chapter NBA Chairman: As a Lawyer and Abuja Chapter Chairman of the NBA, I will say that ReadyToLeadAfrica's program on West African Democracy on CODE RED is one event I wished we organized more. The threat to our modern way of life is real and ReadyToLeadAfrica is leading in calling our attention to our collective need to respond and ACT differently. (September 2021)

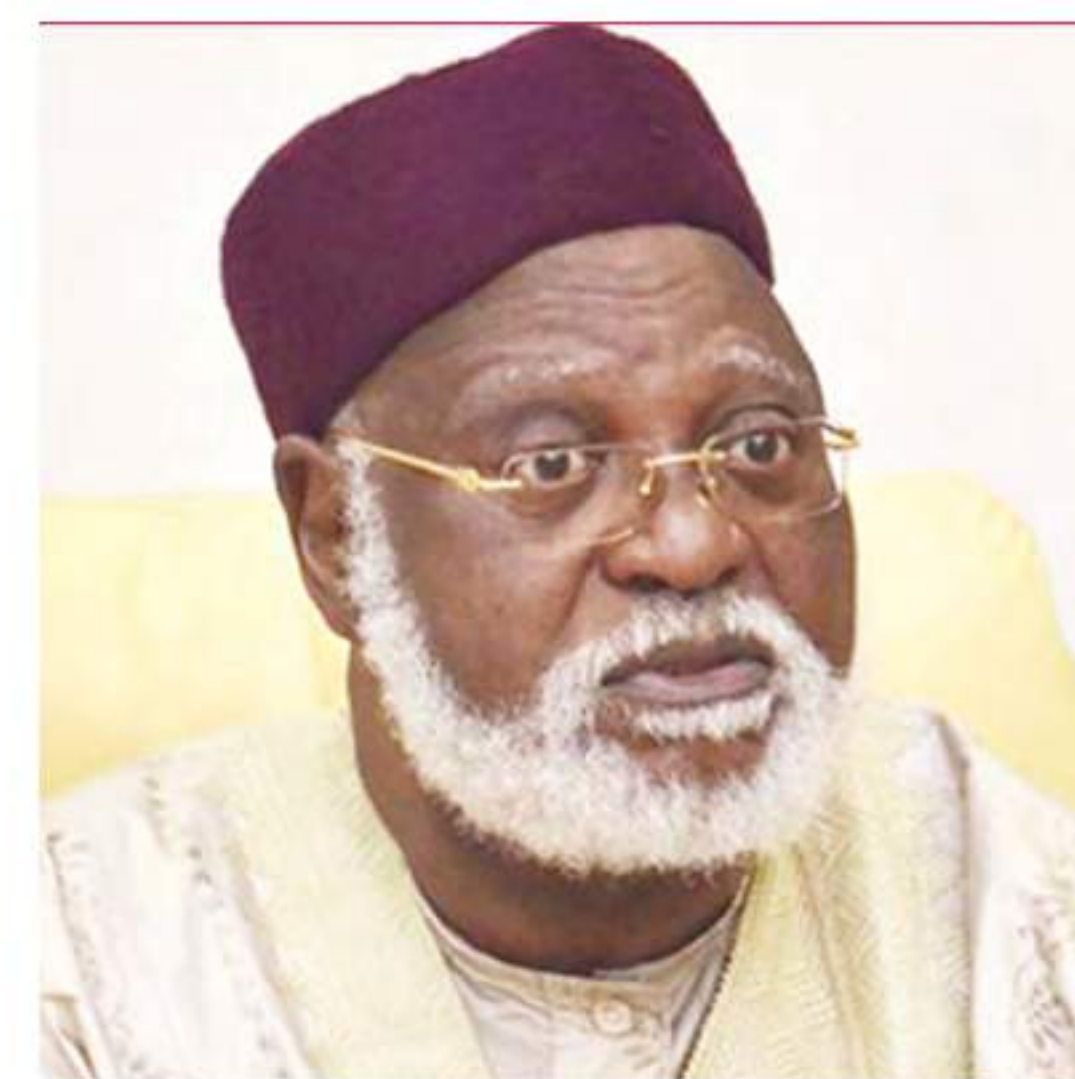


Ibrahim Farouk, Program Officer - YIAGA Africa: I am really excited to see the progress of RTLA in the last one year. Their Electoral Reforms Summit and the African Democracy on CODE RED programs have clearly highlighted the need for young generation leaders to take the issue of democratic participation more seriously. I believe (September 2021)



Endorsements

Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar: "I believe that young people are key in the fight to protect democracy and build bridges for peace in our country Nigeria. To see the Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord – YAEVA implemented in Anambra, I am happy and proud to stand with you people today. (November 2021)



Prof. Mahmood Yakubu - INEC CHAIRMAN: There is nothing more important than Peace in the electoral process. The YAEVA initiative is a welcomed idea by RTLA and I am pleased to stand here with these young Nigerians who are promoting peace in Anambra and across Nigeria (November 2021)



O. Felix Obi, Commissioner, Chair, Economic and International Trade Development Taskforce, Maryland Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, USA: I am indeed proud to be associated with RTLA because of their commitments to preserving democracy on the continent as well as their passion to advance the cause for youths to get involved in governance. As a speaker at the West Africa Democracy on CODE RED event, I really believe we need to support organizations like RTLA to keep building the right leadership connections needed to develop the African Continent.



Prof Chukwuma Soludo (Governorship Candidate APGA): I have signed the National Peace Accord document led by the older generation leaders like Abdulsalami to show my commitment to peace. But signing the ReadyToLeadAfrica's Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord led by youths, surely nails it for me. Our youths are now leading to protect their heritage and future. I am happy to see this happening.



Acknowledgments

We at ReadyToLeadAfrica acknowledges the support and partnership of institutions such NPAG, YIAGA Africa, Adopt A Goal, TVC, ARISE TV, Channels TV, TBAN, AIT, MiTV, Transcorp Hilton Hotel Abuja, Jestone Education, News Central

OUR 36 NIGERIAN STATES, AFRICA COUNTRIES CHAPTERS & OUR MOVEMENT LEADERS

We appreciate our 36 Nigerian states and African Countries chapter leaders who have served with us to further drive the ReadyToLeadAfrica's vision as well as our volunteers spread across the world.

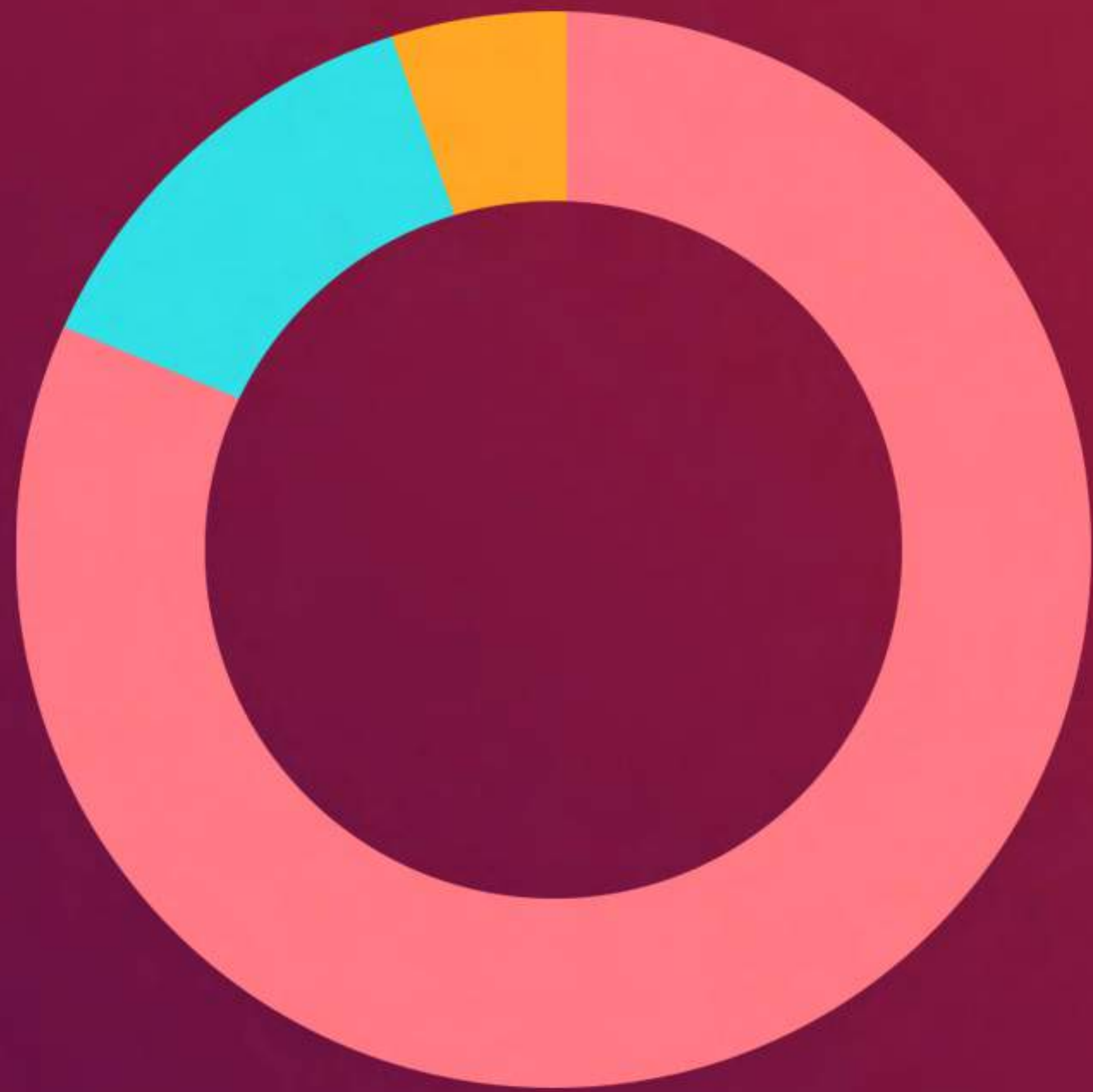
OUR IMPACTS IN NUMBERS

Over 10 Million Nigerians Reached
Four (4) Countries worked in
(Nigeria, Liberia, Algeria, Zambia)



ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR 2021

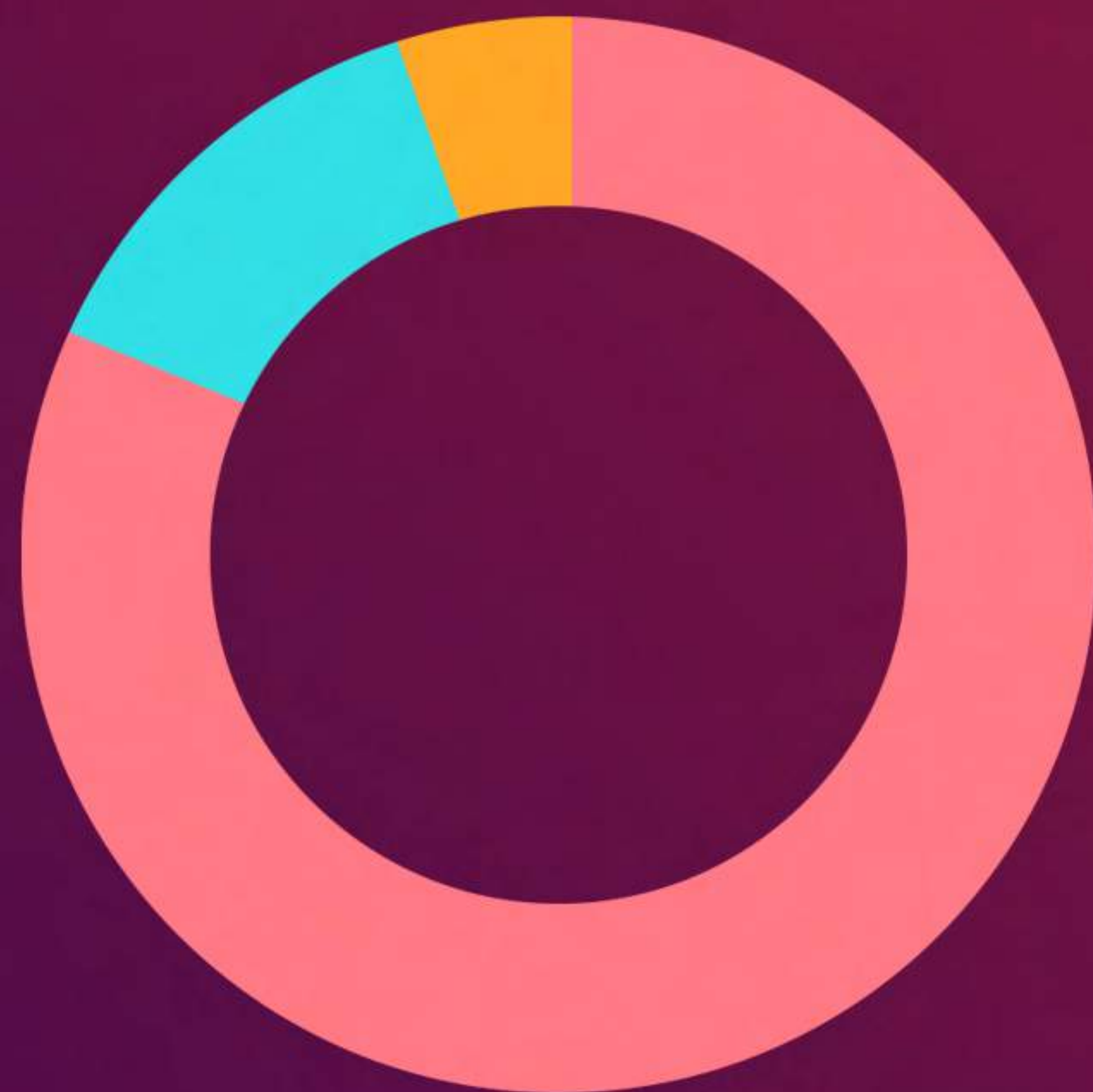


80%
PROGAMS

20%
MANAGEMENT
& GENERAL

5%
FUNDRAISING

HOW WE USED OUR RESOURCES



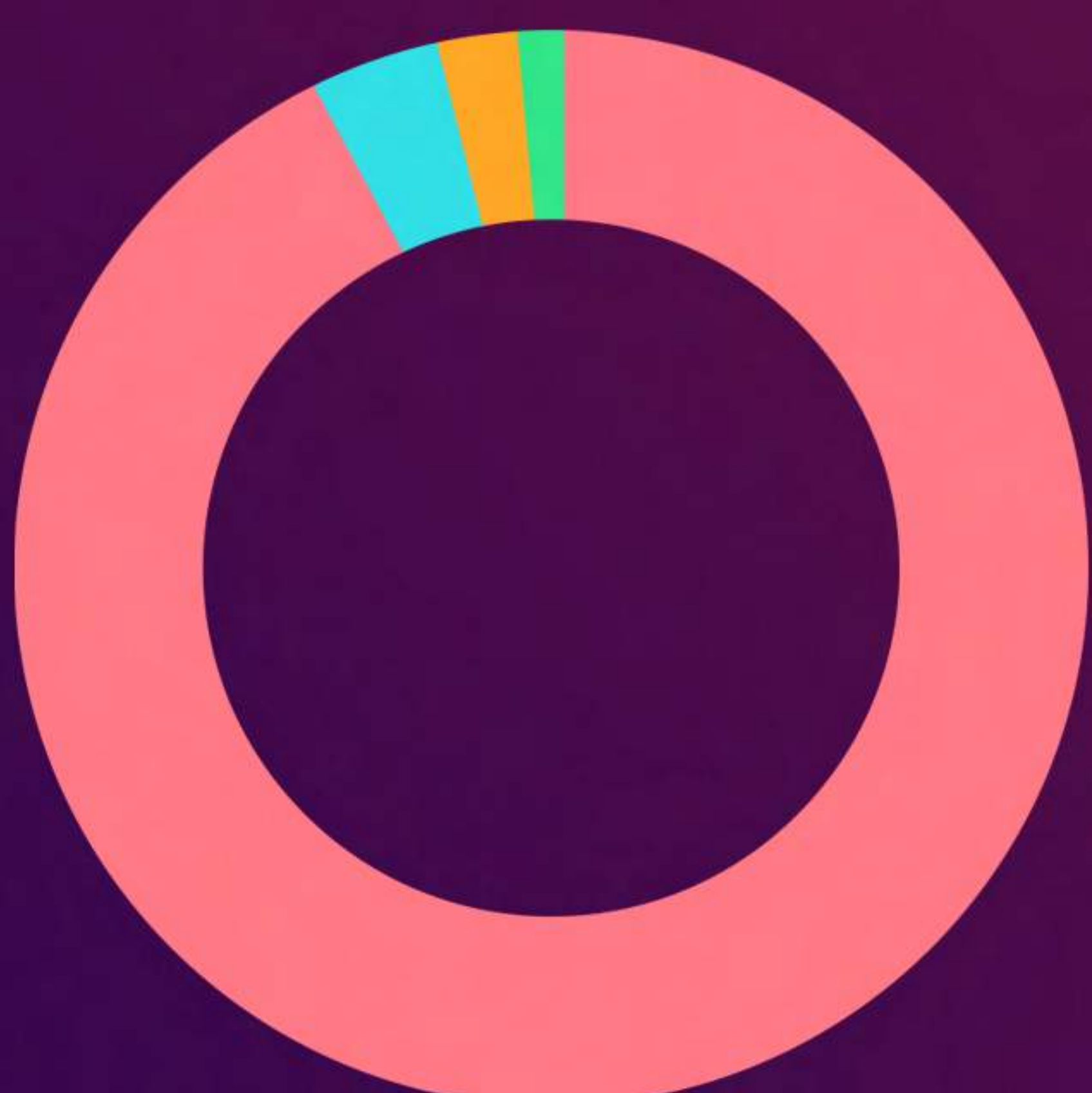
\$8,000
TOTAL EXPENSES

80%
PROGRAM SERVICES

15%
MANAGEMENT
& GENERAL

5%
PROGRAM SUPPORT,
PUBLIC INFORMATION
& FUNDRAISING

HOW WE USED OUR RESOURCES



90% NIGERIA

5% LIBERIA

3% ALGERIA

2% ZAMBIA

Our Signature and New Initiatives



The KeepersOfDemocracy Initiative is designed to mobilize Millennials and Gen-Zs through schools and campus workshops, street-style engagements, civic participation programs as well as voter registration drives to get involved in the hard work of protecting and preserving democracy in a bid to ensure we continue to have freedom and hold government accountable.

#ADRI (The African Democracy-Meter Report Initiative)

The African Democracy-Meter Report Initiative is our African democracy health watch and report initiative which begun in 2021 with our first engagement being the Algeria 2021 election. The ADRI project analyses history, political developments, new trends, youth participation levels in democratic process as well as offer probable solutions.



The ReadyToSERVE initiative from us at ReadyToLeadAfrica is our Young Political Candidates Support Platform (YPCSP) designed to organize digital and offline support in terms of practical trainings in political campaign design, grassroots mobilization, campaign messaging, manifesto design, policy formulation for those running for political offices at the State Houses of Assembly, House of Reps and Senate levels.



The ReadyToVOTE Initiative is our voter's mobilization and organizing engagement platform designed to encourage citizens to register to get their personal voters' card and vote during the electioneering process.



The ReadyToWORK Initiative is our youth employability and enterprise development angle of our work geared towards prompting jobs creation, workplace readiness and career advancement skills as well as entrepreneurship improvement skills.



The ReadyToTRADE Initiative is our Information Gap-Bridging and AfCFTA maximization opportunity for emerging leaders, youths and small businesses across Africa designed to spur Intra-African trade amongst young people as a result of the AfCFTA instrument that was widely ratified in July of 2021 by 37 African countries. Our objective is to ensure the next generation of political and economy leaders understand the importance of trade and its impact on democracy and politics.



The Assembly is a physical gathering of young would-be political office holders vying for elective offices across Nigeria and the African continent to build their capacity and forge solidarity. The Assembly (Nigeria) is a thoughtful gathering of young and vibrant candidates running for elective office in the 2023 elections in Nigeria.



The Youth Against Electoral Violence Accord is our peace building initiative during electioneering process in Nigeria and the African continent where we bring candidates, youths, political actors and election management bodies together before election day to sign a youth led peace accord geared towards ensuring pre-election and post-election violence is eliminated from the electoral process.



FollowTheResult is our Election tracking and reporting initiative across africa

Call to Action

As we move forward into 2022 and beyond, we believe your continued support and partnership will enable us to keep serving our communities, countries and continent.



DONATE: VOLUNTEER: JOIN OUR MOVEMENT

Contact

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