



Youth Community of Practice (CoP): A Policy Guide

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Youth CoP Policy Development Team

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Background

Background

- People below the age of 30 constitute 70% of Nigeria's estimated 212 million population.
- The youths of Nigeria have suffered decades of neglect and lack of adequate attention to the issues that impact their lives.
- These issues include poor representation in governance and decision-making, poor investment in young people's education, police brutality, unemployment, and general lack of access to opportunities for socio-economic advancement.
- These issues, exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic, came to a head in 2020 with the #EndSARS protest.



Introduction

Introduction

- The United Nations and the African Youth Charter define youth as people between the ages of 12-24 and 15-35 respectively. Nigeria's definition of youth is slightly different: 'young males and females in Nigeria and diaspora between the ages of 18 – 29 years, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria' (National Youth Policy, 2009:6; 2019).
- Regardless of disagreement across the world on its definition, what is clear is that the term refers to young people. The role of youth in the development of any nation cannot be overemphasized.
- From contributions to national productivity as engines of economic development, to peace-building, leadership of community-based organization, as well as political development, youths have a myriad roles to play in nation building.



Introduction

- It is often cited that Nigeria gained her independence due primarily to the active advocacies made by her youths.
- So, investing in this group of people is not only a smart thing to do by any nation, it is the only way to keep a nation alive. The motto of the Nigerian National Youth Council (NYC) is 'Build the Youth, Build the Nation' and that is quite apt. if Nigeria hopes to keep the country alive and growing, adequate investment in its young people must be a top priority.
- How much has Nigeria been living up to her obligations to her youths? The prevailing socio-economic situations, which disproportionately affect youth due to their sheer large population, answer this question.





Socio- Economic Issues Affecting Youths in Nigeria

Socio-Economic Issues Affecting Youths in Nigeria

- The current socio-economic situation in Nigeria is, by all account, a depressing one and it affects young people disproportionately, given their share of the country's population.
- Over the last 6 years, GDP growth in the country has averaged only about 2%, whereas population grows about 3%.
- Unemployment is about 33.1% with youth unemployment slightly higher at 35%.
- 83 million (40%) Nigerians live below poverty line, 53 million (25%) others are classified as economically vulnerable, and 12 million more are expected to fall into extreme poverty by 2023 (World Bank, 2020).



Socio-Economic Issues Affecting Youths in Nigeria

- The country's human capital development index in 2020 is abysmal at 150 out of 157 countries and this has not improved in any significant way over the years, due to insufficient investments in education and healthcare.
- Nigeria is said to have the largest number of out-of-school children – about 13 million – in the world.
- Public higher learning institutions in the country are frequently shut down by striking workers for reasons ranging from poor remuneration and lack of adequate and quality teaching aids.



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Previous Efforts to Address the Challenges Facing Youths in Nigeria

Previous Efforts to Address the Challenges Facing Youths in Nigeria

- Creation of the Ministry of Youths in the 1970s
- Establishment of National Youth Service Corps in 1973
- Establishment of Citizenship and Leadership Training Center
- Draft of First National Youth Policy, 1981
- Establishment of Ministry of Youth Development in 2006
- Inauguration of National Council on Youth Development, 2007.
- Development of the Second National Youth Policy, in 2009.



Previous Efforts to Address the Challenges Facing Youths in Nigeria

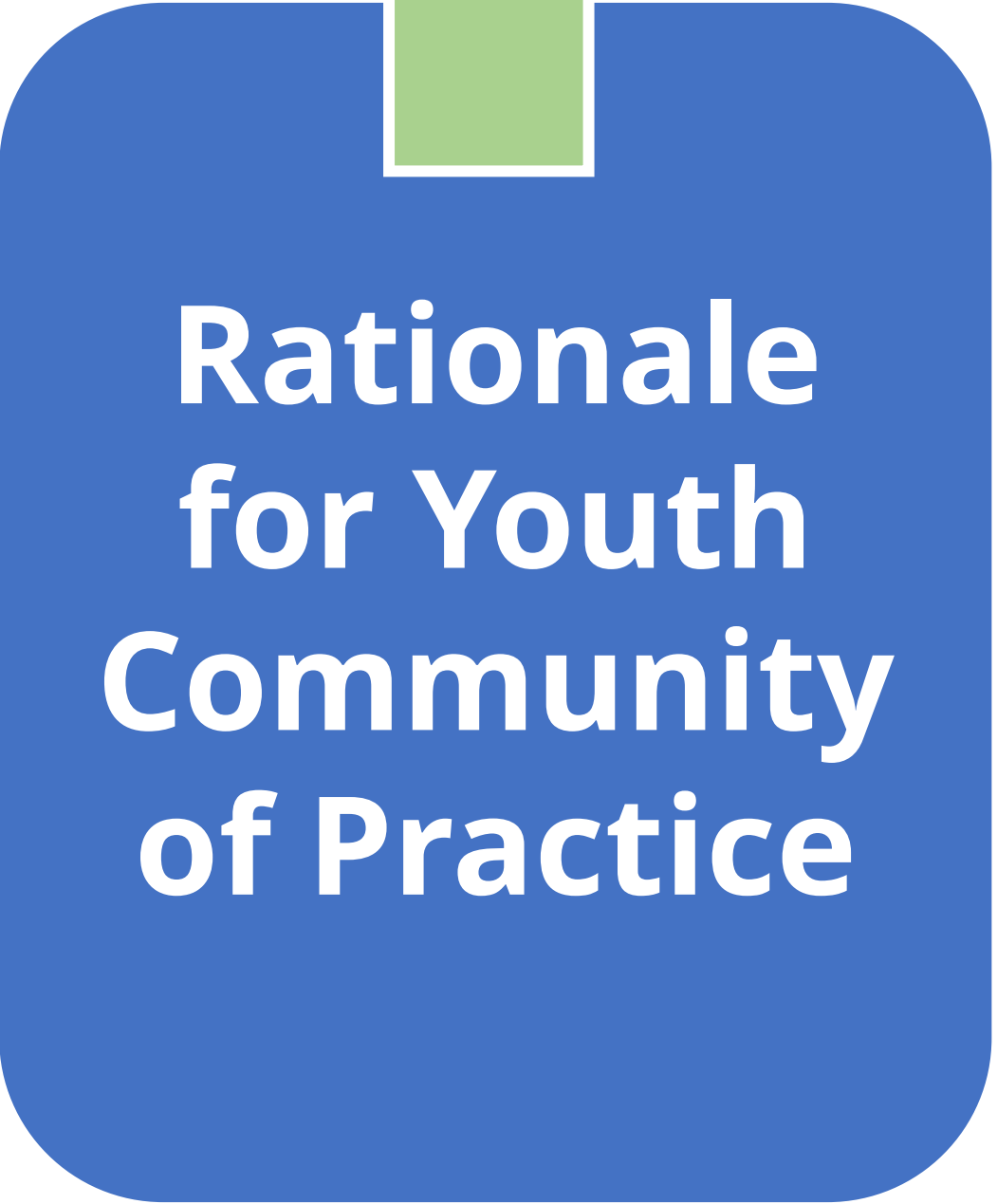
- Establishment of National Youth Council in 1964 (legally recognized in 1990),
- Pledge to implement ECOWAS Commission Policy on Youth
- Member of, and signatory to Africa Youth Charter
- Member of, and signatory to Commonwealth Youth Charter
- Signing of the #NotTooYoungToRun Bill into law, 2018.
- National Youth Policy 2019 edition
- Institution of N75 billion Naira Nigerian Youth Investment Funds



Private Institutions and NGOs Helping to Address Youth Challenges

- International Development Agencies (IDAs)
 - Ford Foundation,
 - Rockefeller Foundation,
 - UK's Department for Commonwealth and Overseas Development (formerly known as DFID). Etc.
- Private Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria.
 - LEAP Africa,
 - The Fate Foundation
 - Tony Elumelu Foundation etc.
- Other national and community-based youth-focused initiatives
 - National Youth Council of Nigeria
 - Etc.





Rationale for Youth Community of Practice

Problem Statement

- While various organizations have made some commendable impact at varying degrees, the fact that young people in the country still face significant hurdles in accessing economic opportunities and actualizing their full socio-political rights is a pointer that there is a big room for improvement on previous and ongoing efforts.



Problem Statement

Three issues need to be addressed -

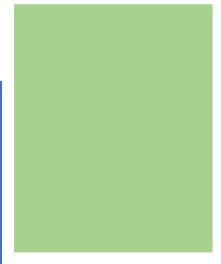
1. Consistent pattern of weak and poor performance in the implementation of government-led youth initiatives
2. Fragmentation of private sector-led efforts and lack of a national platform for facilitating collaboration and sharing of good practices
3. There is little or no interaction between the private and public sector actors and stakeholders in youth affairs in Nigeria.



Exploring a Way Out

- Establishment of a permanent platform for ensuring that programs and initiatives are thoroughly debated and confirmed to address people's real needs before commencement of implementation.
- Multi-stakeholder development of an effective mechanism for executing youth-targeted initiatives in the public and private sectors nationwide.
- Enhanced cooperation and collaboration among private sector players.
- A platform where stakeholders compare notes, diagnose problems from varied perspectives, collectively devise solutions, support one another to implement ideas, and engage in peer review that enhances program delivery.





Meaning and Objectives of Youth Community of Practice

The Platform – Youth Community of Practice

Definition – A group of people who share a common passion or a concern, and get together to share best practices, learn from one another, and strategize to improve the practice of their art.

Needs for CoP on Youth –

- Strengths in number: to pool resources and intellects for helping the youth
- To collaborate and share multiple perspectives for addressing youth problems
- To Strengthen the capacity of youth-serving organizations to achieve their missions
- To advocate policies and orchestrate engagements with government and the private sectors for youth



Objectives of CoP on Youth

The objectives of the youth community of Practice are designed to align with the NESG's Think Tank model which aims to influence through knowledge development and relationship building. The 4 cornerstones of this model are –

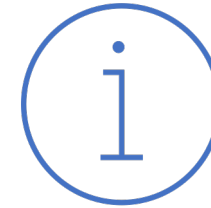
- **Dialogue Partner** - Shaping policies on youth by organizing public debates and conversations
- **Connector** - Helping youth-serving organizations to connecting them to opportunities for enhanced performance
- **Watchdog** – Advocating for accountability and shaping policies through research
- **Intervener** - Instituting programs and initiatives to enhance youth welfare



Objectives of CoP on Youth



Strategize and brainstorm solutions to youth-related problems



Share information on opportunities and learn best practices from one another



Build capacities of youth-serving organizations to make the most impact

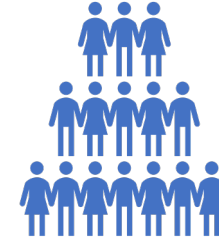


Support one another to implement programs that uplift young people

Objectives of CoP on Youth



Share resources and assets with one another



Collaborate and jointly work on issues that uplift young people in Nigeria



Serve as sounding board or board of advisors to one another

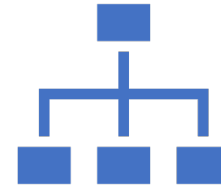


Hold regular conversations and summits to discuss youth-relevant issues

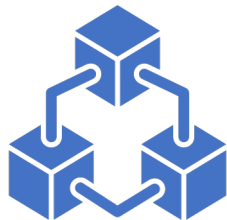
Objectives of CoP on Youth



Document, prepare and disseminate reports of activities



Interface with and orchestrate relationships/engagements that benefit Nigerian youths



Serve as a platform for peer review of each activity and initiative



Hold government and each member accountable



Setting Up a Youth Community of Practice

Steps for Setting Up a CoP

1. SELECT A FACILITATOR AND TEAM LEADS

The CoP on Youth will be structured in the same manner as the Policy Commissions, with a facilitator and four team leads for each of the four thematic areas which are to be agreed upon at the inaugural event. Candidates for these roles will be selected by the NESG secretariat.

2. ESTABLISH MISSION AND GOALS

Develop the community's vision and mission statement, clearly articulating what it's trying to achieve, then set specific goals for achieving this mission.

Proposed **Mission Statement** - *To identify and address the challenges and opportunities facing the Youths of Nigeria in their quest for personal and national progress and development, and to motivate us towards political and civic engagement.*

Steps for Setting Up a CoP

3. TEAM STRUCTURE

- **Facilitator** – the facilitator should have general experience/knowledge of the 4 selected thematic areas and lead the development of the groups strategies and overall goals. Their role is to plan, guide, motivate, and focus the group on achieving its goals. They should be a good communicator and multitasker, with excellent networking skills. Ensures community standards are upheld.
- **Team Leads** – a subject matter expert, the team lead is responsible for setting and driving goals specific to the thematic area and monitoring progress, designing programmes, supporting the facilitator, and assisting with preparing and leading community meetings. They should have strong communication, problem solving, organisational and delegation skills.
- **Members** - attend meetings, share knowledge, experience, and best practices, and support the core team in reaching community goals.

Steps for Setting Up a CoP

4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

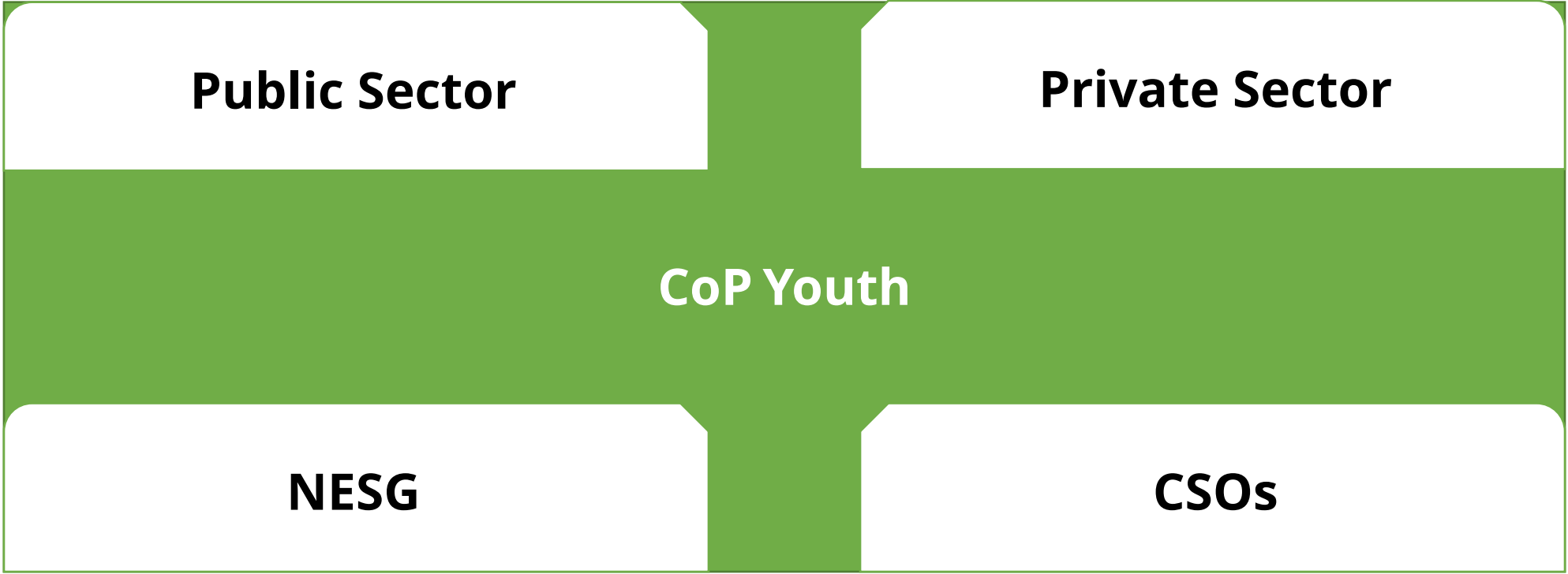
Develop a knowledge and document management system for storing information that is relevant, up-to-date, and easily accessible to members of the CoP.


5. ESTABLISH METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Establish method and frequency of communication and collaboration. CoP managers will create a schedule of regular meetings, meet-ups, and content creation sessions. A meeting should be scheduled at least once a month and can be physical or virtual. Other means of communications, using technology, will also be established.

Establish an event for sharing the achievements of the CoP with wider stakeholders. This can be an annual event.

Stakeholders

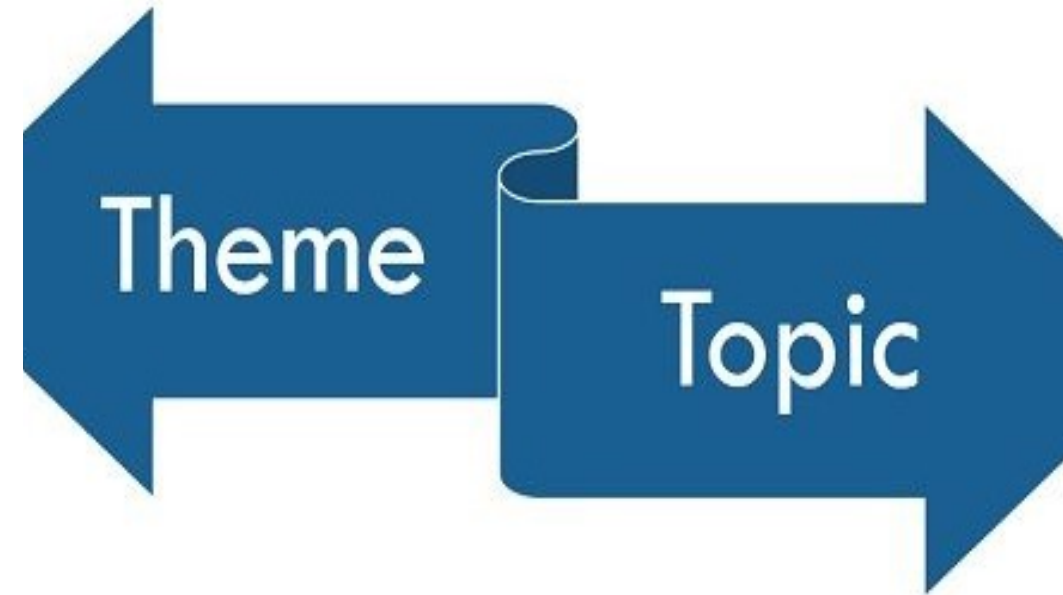




Proposed Thematic Focus

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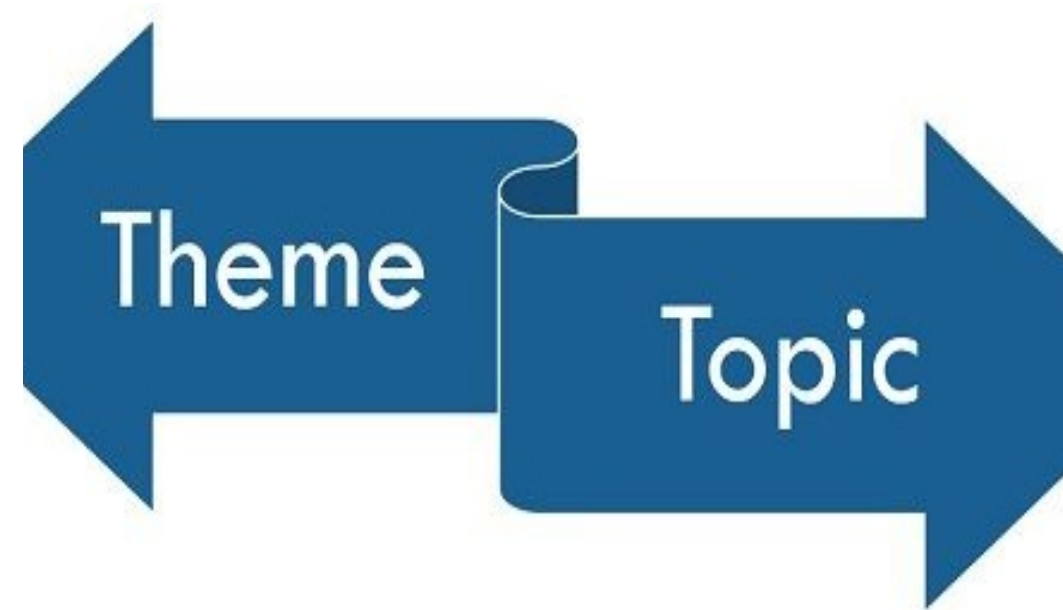
A list of 14 issues have been identified as being of particular relevance to the youths of Nigeria. Through consultation with Bridge Set 1 and 2, this will be shortlisted to 8 issues. The final 4 issues will be selected at the inaugural event, and these will form the 4 thematic areas of the CoP.



Proposed Thematic Focus

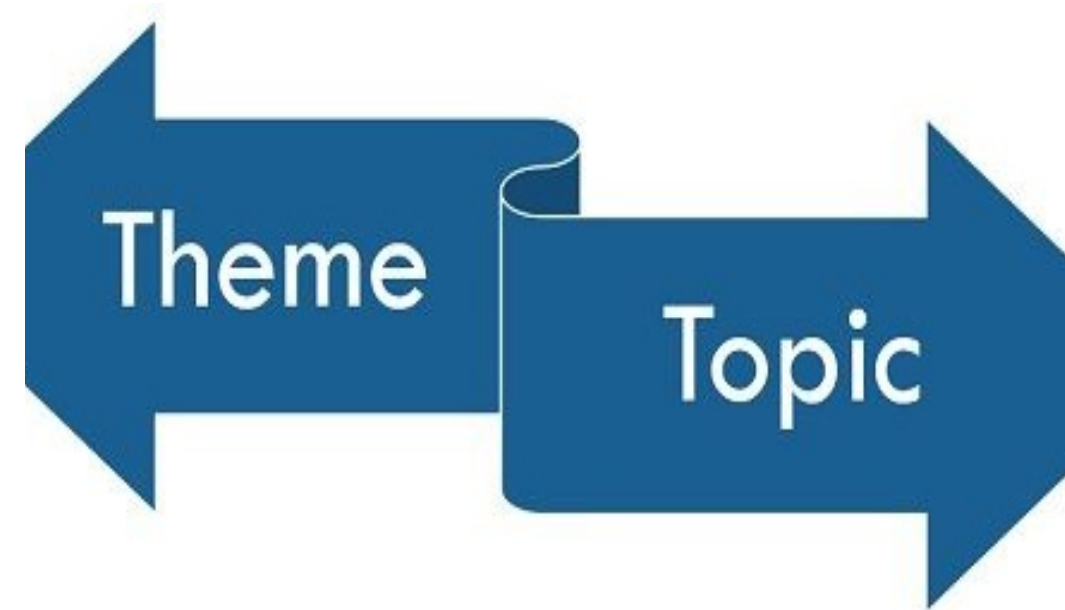
For each of the 4 thematic areas, the aim is to establish and achieve the following:

- The importance of the thematic area for youth progress and development.
- How youths currently fare within these thematic areas, the challenges and the opportunities.
- The goals and outputs to be pursued by the CoP under each thematic area.
- Share experiences.
- Make recommendations
- Document data needed to dimension the problem and support recommendations
- Develop policy arguments and create policy campaigns.
- Design initiatives to help achieve set goals.



Proposed Thematic Focus and Sub-Themes

1. Security & the breakdown of law and order
2. Police harassment and police reform
3. Corruption in the judiciary
4. Prison reforms
5. Adequate and affordable housing
6. Youth participation in politics - underrepresentation, prohibitive cost of participation, and voter apathy
7. Inflation and the general cost of living
8. Affordable health care
9. Overhauling NYSC
10. Workplace abuse and harassment
11. Addiction and mental health
12. Access to business funding and investment
13. Tertiary Education - increasing costs, incessant strikes, and abuse of power
14. Regulation and governance of fintech and social media



Thank You

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