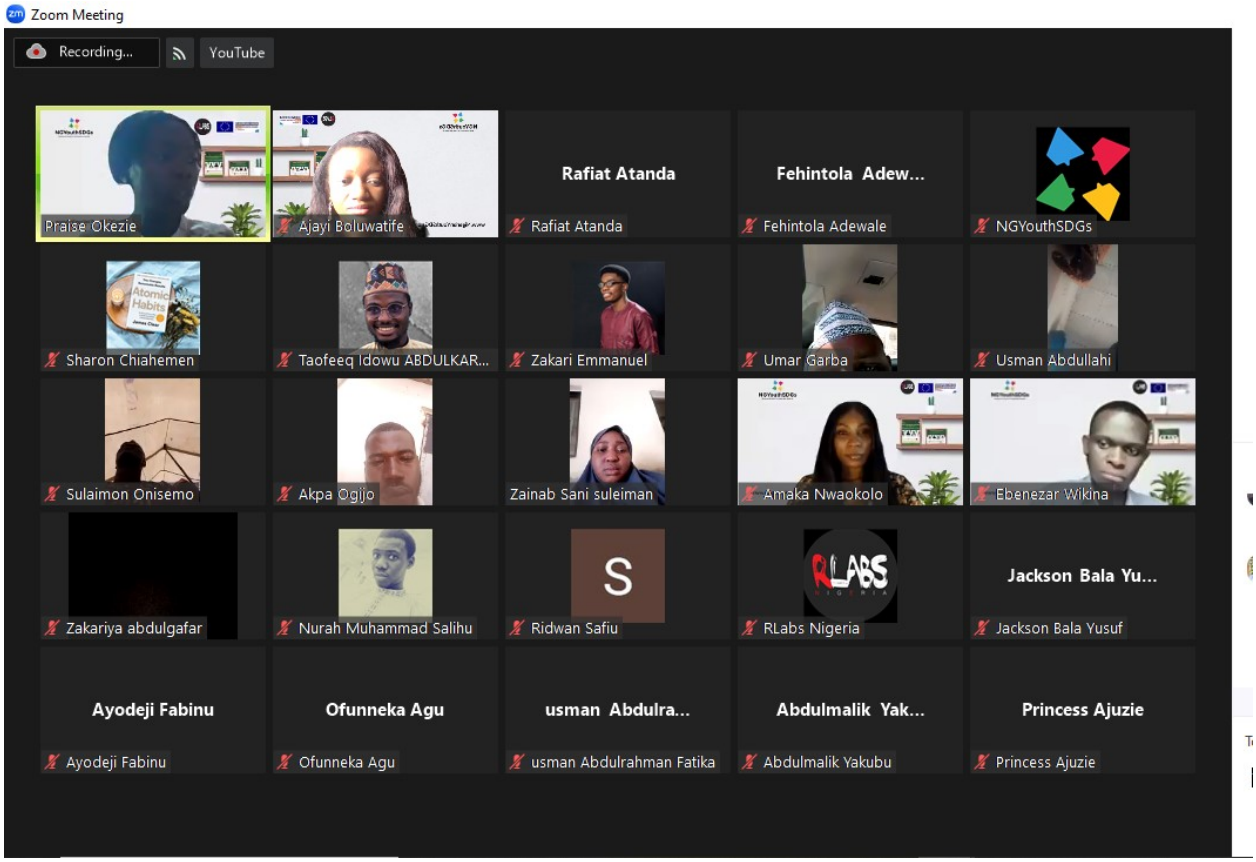
NGYouthSDGs
Network of Youth For Sustainable Initiative

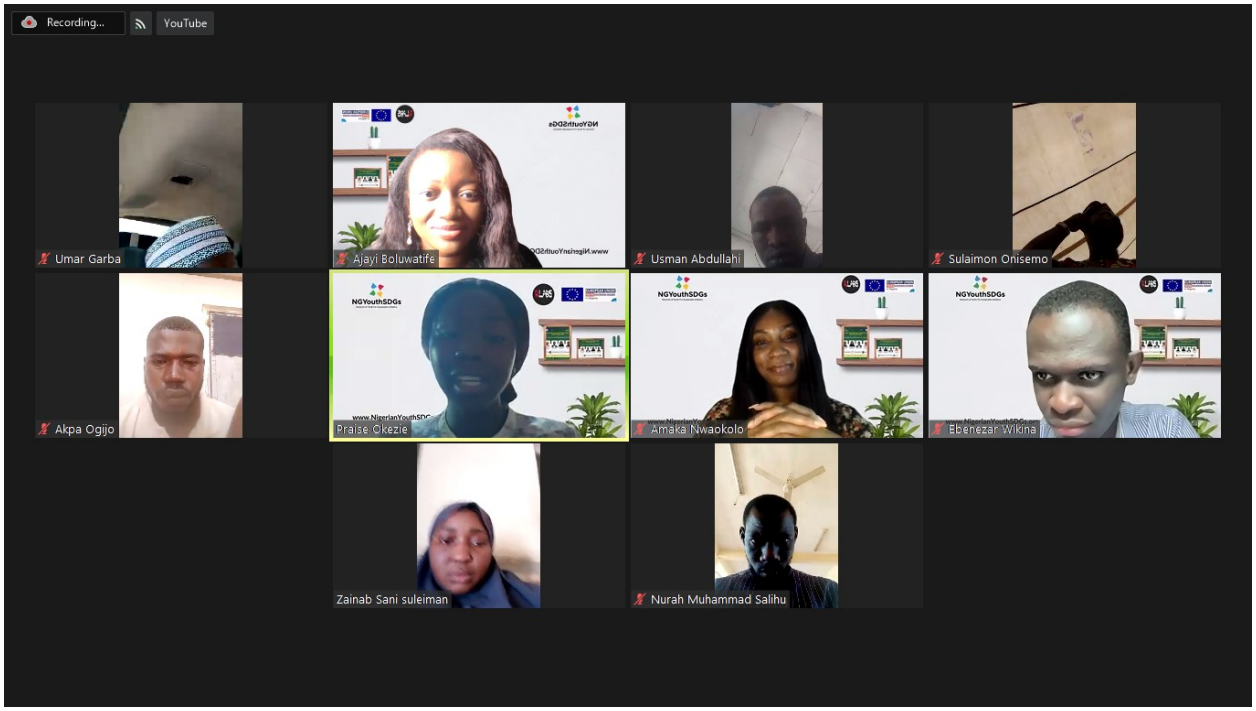
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS DAY 2023 REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International Volunteer Day serves as an advocacy tool to raise awareness about global issues such as climate change, gender equality, poverty, decent work, and employment. According to reports, over 1 billion people worldwide volunteer. This day also provides an opportunity to appreciate the contributions of volunteers to society and to encourage more people to volunteer for meaningful change.

Many young Nigerians are enthusiastic about volunteering and using their skills and energy to contribute to sustainable development. The theme for this year's International Volunteers Day, "The Power of Collective Action; If Everyone Did," highlights the importance of collaboration in meeting the 2030 Agenda and the crucial role of individuals, groups, and young people. In line with this, NGYouthSDGs, in partnership with the European Youth Sounding Board in Nigeria and RLabs Nigeria, hosted a virtual event to celebrate and encourage volunteers, and to showcase their stories of contributing to change in their communities. The event featured a storytelling session and game session that engaged the participants, bringing fun and excitement to the occasion.



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS DAY MAIN EVENT

The commemoration of International Volunteers Day was essential in highlighting the significance of volunteering in creating social impact. The virtual event was not only spectacular but also impactful, with over ninety registered participants in attendance. Young people from diverse backgrounds, youth-led organizations, volunteers, and other stakeholders gathered to celebrate volunteers and discuss the impact of volunteerism.

The event host Ms Rafiat Atanda, kicked off the event by welcoming guests setting the tone for the program and informing participants of the activities set out during the event

such as a storytelling session, and game activity. After this, the keynote address was taken by the Network of Youth for Sustainable Initiative Executive Director, Joshua Alade. He raised the importance of volunteering and emphasised the need to strengthen the agency of young Nigerians, empowering them to advocate for policies and programs that would enable them to lead and thrive. He centred on the program theme 'If Everyone Did' sharing that if everyone chose to volunteer in their unique ways, this would lead to a collective action that would in turn cause profound change across Nigeria. In addition to this, he shared with the participant's initiatives such as the International Youth Day Award, commemorating World Youth Skills Day, advocating for the implementation of the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP), the newly launched Youth Activators Lab which is a one year programme set to raise the next generation of change-makers.

The Programs Associate, Boluwatife Ajayi, stressed the importance of volunteering as it plays a pivotal role in social and economic development. She added that NGYouthSDGs is committed to driving positive changes that will benefit the youth and volunteers at large citing the "Youth Activator Lab" a revamped champions program, aimed at young people between the ages of 18 and 29 who aspire to lead systemic change in Nigeria.

The Spokesperson and secretary of the European Union Youth Sounding Board in Nigeria, Ms Rafiat Atanda spoke about the work of the board which is made up of 23 young social workers and professionals responsible for advising the European Union in Nigeria, monitoring and reporting, making sure the voices of young people are being captured.

During the storytelling session, European Union Youth Sounding Board in Nigeria member, Mr Mubarak Idris shared his volunteer experience with the participants. He explained how volunteering led to opportunities for him to grow and thrive. He went on to mention the need to take volunteering actions seriously and for people to endeavour to leave a trail of their volunteering actions which would enable people to know how best to support you and your work. In addition, Mr Mubarak emphasized the ability to network and leverage this for growth.

NGYouthSDGs Champion, Ms Rianat Abosede took to the stage to share her volunteer experience with the network. She shared the opportunities and impact she has been able to make in her community, one of which is organizing a youth lab dialogue towards the implementation of the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan in Ogun state. She went further to talk about being a part of the SDG Playbook launch and has been able to gain skills in project management, presentation, teamwork, program planning, and mobilization among others all by volunteering. Ms Rianat emphasized the need to leverage volunteering actions for personal and career development.

During the event, two members of the audience shared their experiences of volunteering. Ms. Sharon Chiahemen spoke about how she started as an unemployed individual who was advised to take up volunteering to gain experience. She expressed how this opportunity helped her grow from being a simple volunteer to a team lead of volunteers, gaining experience and knowledge about social impact and development. On the other hand, Mr Taofeeq Idowu shared how volunteering was instrumental in building his career experience and how he used it to take action for the development of his community.

NGYouthSDGs Communications Associate Praise Okezie introduced the panel speakers- Amaka Nwaokolo, Director and Head of Faith Institute, Ebenezar Wikina, Founder of Policy Shapers and Farida Yahya, VP, of Partnerships at Shecluded.

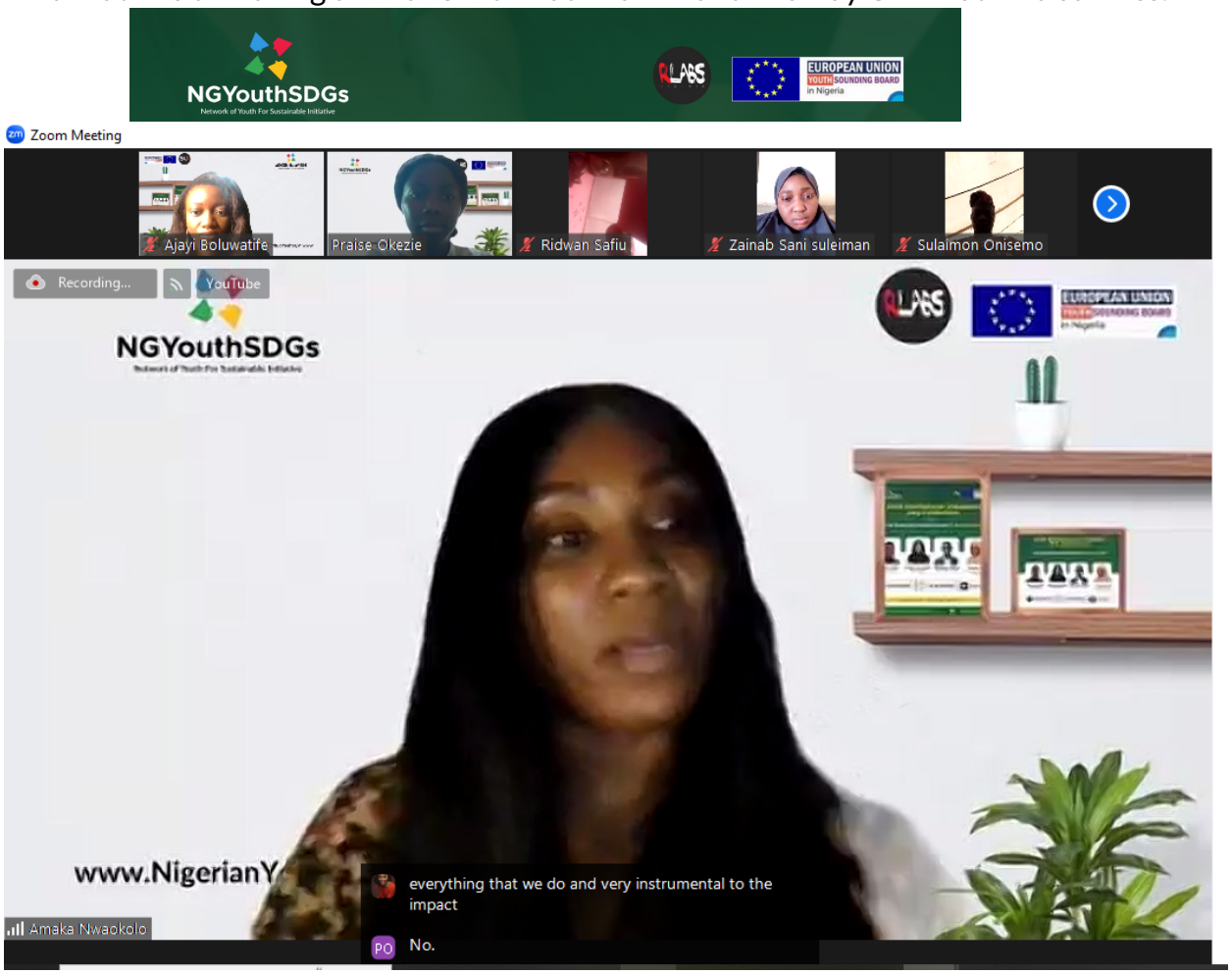
During the session, Ms. Amaka talked about the work of Fate Institute in policy advocacy and research for entrepreneurship growth. She mentioned that the impact and results of the Institute's work are largely driven by volunteers who have supported the execution of various projects. Ms. Amaka also explained how volunteering played a vital role in her career development by providing opportunities to work on different projects, which helped her build leadership, project planning, and problem-solving skills. All these experiences and skills paved the way for her to grow in her career and become the current Director of Fate Institute.

Ebenezar Wikina discussed measures young people can take to incorporate volunteering into their career and personal work. He explained that a lot of people don't count free work as volunteering such as religious work. He alluded to the fact that passion is essential for a successful and impactful volunteer path. It is important to identify which impact you would like to make and then seek initiatives/projects or organizations that align with such passion. According to Ebenezar, it is not compulsory to volunteer in person, volunteering can take a virtual form such as creating graphic designs, transcribing information to multiple languages and so much more.

Farida Yahya emphasized the linkage between passion, volunteering and purpose. She explained her first time applying for the Mandela Washington Fellowship but was met with a rejection. She highlighted the fact that despite her numerous volunteer work right from secondary school, she had not shown any clear direction which is important in navigating a volunteering path. One of the critical points mentioned by Farida was the importance of leaving digital footprints of your work and leveraging storytelling as a tool to share your volunteer experience.

The event also included a game session sponsored by RLabs Nigeria, where participants got to answer some trivia questions and 10 participants won prizes via the ZLTO platform.

NGYouthSDGs Director of Strategy and Programs, Ms Adenike Bamigbade, took the closing remarks by appreciating the volunteers, partners, and speakers for their time and contributions to making the 2023 International Volunteers Day Celebration a success.



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS DAY 2023 IN THE NEWS

DNN MEDIA

https://www.dnnigeria.com/ngyouthsdgs-extols-nigerian-youths-on-international-volunteers-day-calls-for-more-collaboration/

THE GUARDIAN NEWS NIGERIA

https://guardian.ng/news/international-volunteers-day-nigeria-can-still-achieve-sdgs-says-alade/amp/

Event Replay via YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiB_pl60F4o

COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

How satisfied were you with the event?

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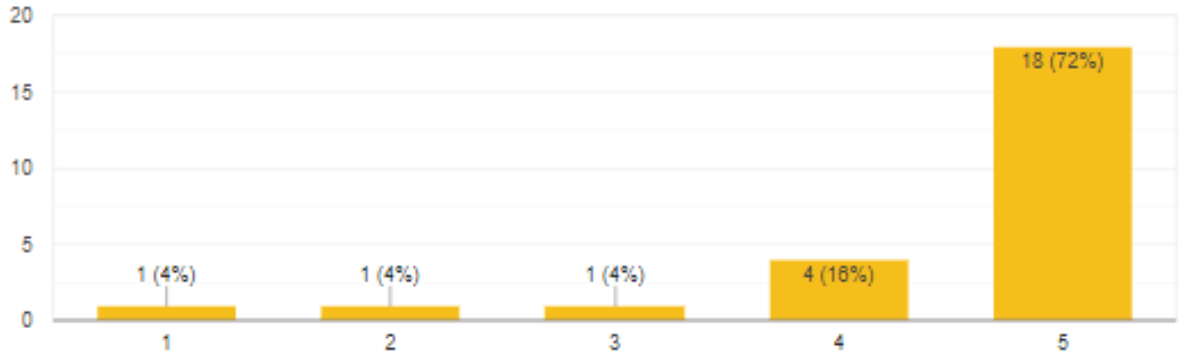
25 responses



How relevant and helpful do you think it was to your volunteering actions?

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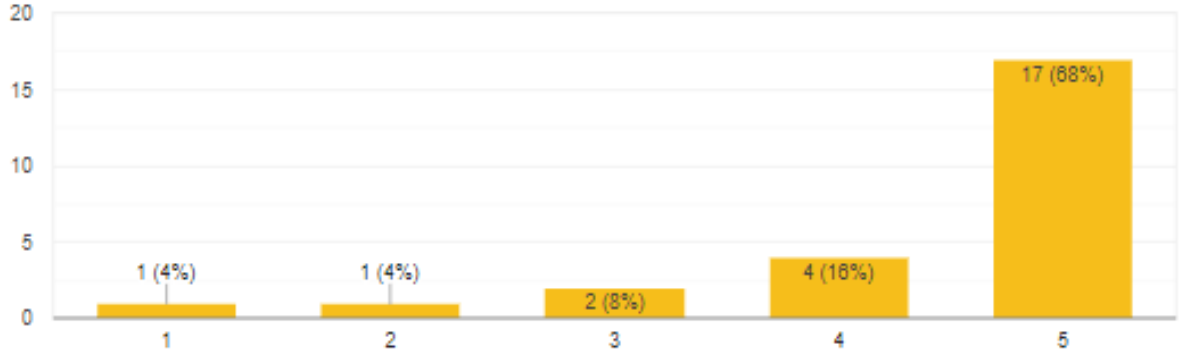
25 responses



I had a great time at the event! The speakers were engaging, and the networking opportunities were fantastic

The event was insightful and engaging.

What were your key take aways from this event?

16 responses

Importance and benefits of volunteering.
There's power in volunteering
Building career capacity diligently
The event was so educating and perfect, look forward to more interesting programs like these
I learn alot of things
The act of voluntaring is a selfless service to humanity. The need for more volunteers to create a better and positive impact .
Learning a good lesson abouts volunteering.
Learn about new ideas and concepts.
Knowledge and skills on human and community development

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

European Union Youth Sounding Board in Nigeria

- Rafiat Atanda
- Mubarak Idris
- Ismail Bello
- Ebuka Alumona

RLabs Nigeria

- Ebenezer Okoidigun
- Glory Ogbebor

NGYouthSDGs

- Joshua Alade
- Praise Okezie

- Adenike Bamigbade
- Boluwatife Ajayi