

The Civility



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Josephine Eche Omajari

As Nigeria moves steadily toward the 2027 General Elections, the need for active citizenship, transparent governance, and credible democratic institutions has never been more important. The choices made today by citizens, political actors, and public institutions will shape the country's democratic future. In this twelfth edition of *The Civility*, we present a collection of activities and insights that reinforce the importance of informed participation, accountability, and youth engagement in strengthening Nigeria's democracy.

This edition highlights the release of OCCEN's **Quarterly Political Intelligence Report**, which provides an evidence-based overview of political developments across Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kaduna, and Zamfara States. Against the backdrop of shifting political alliances, governance reforms, and preparations for the 2027 elections, the report offers valuable analysis of emerging trends and developments, equipping citizens, civil society organizations, policymakers, and development partners with timely information to better understand the evolving political landscape.

We also feature the voter education and civic engagement program organized by the Democratic Drivers Network (DDN) Jigawa in collaboration with the Students' Union Government (SUG) Federal University Dutse under the theme **"From Apathy to Action: Youth at the Ballot."** The program challenged young people to move beyond political indifference and recognize their vital role in promoting peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections through informed participation and civic responsibility.

Another major highlight is OCCEN's Civic and Political Education Radio Program, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Through engaging discussions on voter apathy, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and vote trading, the program continued to educate the public on key democratic issues while creating opportunities for citizens to participate through interactive call-in sessions. These conversations reinforced the importance of transparency, accountability, and electoral integrity as essential pillars of democratic governance.

This edition also celebrates the successful completion of the 2026 Youth Internship Program. Six outstanding interns concluded their one-month placements across various government institutions, civil society organizations, and development agencies, gaining practical experience in governance, public policy, civic engagement, and democratic development. Their achievements reflect OCCEN's continued investment in nurturing the next generation of democratic leaders.

On our Opinion Page, Abdulrazaq Alkali examines the high stakes surrounding Nigeria's next general elections in his article, **"Make or Mar: The Peril of Nigeria's 2027 General Elections."** The article offers a timely reflection on the collective responsibility of citizens, institutions, and political leaders in safeguarding democratic values and ensuring that the 2027 elections strengthen rather than weaken Nigeria's democracy.

Together, the stories in this edition reflect OCCEN's unwavering commitment to promoting informed citizenship, strengthening democratic institutions, and creating platforms for meaningful public participation. As the nation prepares for another defining electoral cycle, we encourage every citizen to remain informed, engaged, and committed to building a more transparent, accountable, and inclusive democratic society.

Disclaimer: *The views expressed in this newsletter are those of OCCEN and do not necessarily reflect the views of its partners or supporters.*

Kaduna Aligns Youth Power Plan with State Policy to Deepen Participation in Governance

From Femi Oyelola, Kaduna

Kaduna State has taken steps to strengthen youth participation in governance by aligning the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Youth Engagement Power Plan with the Kaduna State Youth Policy, ensuring greater youth involvement in policymaking and decision-making.

The initiative was formalised during a policy dialogue on strengthening citizens' engagement in OGP and democratic

“This engagement is not just about participation; it is about building confidence, amplifying voices, and ensuring that young people are actively involved in decision-making processes,” she said.

“As we often say, you are not just part of the government—you are the government. If you do not engage in the policies and issues that affect your lives, then who will carry that responsibility forward? The future rests with you,” she added.

Ibrahim described participants as “Youth Bridges” and urged them to embrace their roles with integrity, innovation, and confidence.

“We are counting on your insights—your fresh ideas, your lived experiences, and your creativity—to help shape policies that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of young people in Kaduna State,” she said.

Highlighting ongoing efforts, the OGP Point of Contact for Kaduna State, Tara Jeremiah Uwah, said the government had created an enabling environment for youth participation through the Open Gov Youth Innovation Hub.

“Kaduna State has opened up the space for young people to engage, which is the first step. The government is not pressuring or restricting them but providing a platform for engagement,” she said.

Uwah added that Kaduna's model is gaining wider recognition, noting that the state's OGP Co-Chair, Mubarak Abdulganiy, has represented Kaduna at international forums, including in Kenya, to showcase its youth-led governance framework.

She also noted that Kaduna has one of the highest numbers of



governance. The event was organised by the Youth Advocacy Coalition on Demographic Dividend, an initiative of the Civic Impact for Sustainable Development Foundation.

The dialogue, supported by the Organisation for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), brought together youth leaders, civil society organisations, and government stakeholders under the theme: “OGP Youth Engagement Power Plan: An Enabler for Effective Citizens' Participation and Engagement in Democratic Governance.”

Developed with direct input from young people and supported by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Youth Engagement Power Plan is being integrated into the Kaduna State Youth Policy, which provides a framework for sustained government engagement with young people.

Speaking at the event, the Commissioner for Youth Development, Barrister Gloria Ibrahim, said the Ministry of Youth Development was established last year by Governor Uba Sani to bridge the gap between young people and governance.



youths participating in the OGP Youth Collective globally.

“That is strong evidence that Kaduna State has a well-organised structure that enables youth to engage with government,” she said.

Also speaking, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the Planning and Budget Commission, Yerima Zakari Jatau, said the state's commitment to youth inclusion is rooted in the understanding that democracy cannot thrive without their participation.

“For every democracy to thrive, there is a need for youth involvement. The Kaduna State Government has identified that gap and recognised the importance of youth participation in its activities, programmes, and policymaking,” he said.

Jatau described the forum as “fascinating” and commended the enthusiasm of participants, urging them to embrace the principle of co-creation.

“If young people respond to the call to work together with government, Kaduna State will be better for it,” he said.

The dialogue outlined key objectives, including presenting the OGP Youth Engagement Power Plan in line with the Kaduna State Youth Policy and OGP State Action Plan (SAP III) commitments on citizens' engagement; identifying priority pathways for immediate implementation; and securing commitments from Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to integrate the plan into their annual work plans. Participants also proposed the establishment of a youth-led OGP monitoring committee to produce biannual progress reports.

Ibrahim assured young people of the government's continued support for youth-led initiatives and expressed appreciation to development partners for their contributions.

The forum concluded with a call for sustained collaboration, with stakeholders expressing optimism that the “Youth Bridges” platform would serve as a model for youth participation in governance across Nigeria.

Meet Our 2025 Democracy Drivers Network (DDN) Interns

As part of our commitment to strengthening youth civic participation and democratic governance, the Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) is proud to spotlight a cohort of outstanding young leaders. These individuals are **2025 trained members of the Democracy Drivers Network (DDN)** and are currently serving as **OCCEN interns across key institutions**, contributing to governance, civic education, and community development.

Umar Abdu Yunusa- Kano State

Mr. Umar Abdu Yunusa is a graduate of Health Education from Bayero University Kano and an active civic advocate dedicated to promoting democracy and good governance.

He has contributed to initiatives focused on voter education, election monitoring, advocacy for policy reforms, and youth mobilization. His leadership experience includes serving as Departmental Senator and Chief Protocol Officer of the National Association of Kano State Students (NAKSS), BUK Chapter.

A 2025 trained Democracy Driver, Mr. Umar is currently serving as an OCCEN Intern with the National Orientation Agency (NOA), where he supports public enlightenment and civic awareness initiatives aimed at strengthening citizen participation in governance.



Mr. Abdulmajid Abubakar Labbo- Zamfara State

Mr. Abdulmajid Abubakar Labbo, an indigene of Tsafe Local Government Area of Zamfara State, is a final-year Cybersecurity student at Bayero University Kano and a certified Ethical Hacker.

He has demonstrated leadership through roles such as Assistant Secretary General of the Zamfara State Students' Association (ZAMSSA), BUK Chapter, and has actively contributed to student advocacy and organizational development.

As a 2025 trained Democracy Driver, he is currently serving as an OCCEN Intern with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Zamfara State, where he contributes to voter education and electoral support initiatives. His work is driven by a commitment to leveraging technology to enhance transparency and accountability in governance.

Amb. Muhammad Nur Adam- Kano State

Ambassador Muhammad Nur Adam is a seasoned civic education teacher, youth advocate, and peacebuilding practitioner with over a decade of teaching experience.

He is actively involved in youth development, democracy promotion, and peacebuilding initiatives, and has impacted over 1,000 students through civic sensitization programs and peace conferences. He also serves as President of the Students for Peace Club, Kano State.

A 2025 trained Democracy Driver, Muhammad is currently serving as an OCCEN Intern with the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Kano Branch, where he supports civic education, legal awareness, and community engagement initiatives



Miss. Maimuna Ilyas Kaduna state

Miss. Maimuna is a civil servant working with the Nigerian Defence academy kaduna, Maimuna is 26 years old bred and brought up in kaduna state but she is an origin of Borno state, miss Maimuna is from the northern part of Borno which made her to be a Babur/bura lady. She attended model primary school sabon afaka mando from 2005 to 2011 where she obtained her first school leaving certificate, then went to king's comprehensive college mando from 2012-2017 where she obtained her O levels and further obtained her Bsc. Hons in environmental biology from the prestigious university of Maiduguri where she finished with a second class upper division.

Maimuna is passionate about humanitarian activities where she voluntarily work with different non governmental organisations. Currently she is a human/girl child activist, maimuna happen to be among the first 20 young girls who advocated for free pad for girls in northern Nigeria in 2021. Maimuna started to join the community services groups in the year 2019 till date. joining the community services made me realise a lot of potentials that I seems not to realise before, the passion of leading/rulling/governing , the passion of fighting for others, the passion of clearing road for others to lay an example.

Part of the organisations I work with are zenith of the girl child, legal women initiates brave development initiatives and many others.

Joining the Non Governmental Organisations/ community services made me understand a lot of things, made me learn a lot, and also joining these organisations sharpens my mindset, made me think straight, made me more stronger to stand stigma because being an advocate from a Hausa community one has to be fit to stand for it's opinion if not small talk will make one change his mind , but I stood my ground .there are a lot of lessons that I learned which is only open to individuals in such circles.

Hafsat Inuwa- Jigawa State

Hafsat Inuwa is a graduate of Nutrition and Dietetics from Bayero University Kano and a dynamic youth leader with extensive experience in student leadership and community mobilization.

She has served in multiple leadership roles, including former Vice President of the National Association of Jigawa State Students (NAJISS), and currently holds leadership positions within the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) and Jam'iyyar Matasa. A trained paralegal, she is deeply committed to civic advocacy and youth empowerment.

As a 2025 trained Democracy Driver, she is currently serving as an OCCEN Intern with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Jigawa State, where she contributes to voter education and inclusive participation in electoral processes.



Mashkur Zakariyya- Katsina State

Mashkur Zakariyya is a student leader, educator, and civic advocate from Katsina State. He is the Executive President of the National Association of Katsina State Students (NAKATSS), BUK Chapter, and a final-year B.Sc. Ed. Geography student at Bayero University Kano.

He is also a digital entrepreneur and founder of MASH-MAP Digital Branding & Printing, leveraging innovation to support youth development and enterprise.

As a 2025 trained Democracy Driver, Mashkur is currently serving as an OCCEN Intern with the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Katsina State, where he supports civic education and public engagement efforts to promote democratic values.



Highlights of OCCEN Weekly Radio Program on Civic and Political Education

Week 4:

The fourth week featured Dr. Muazu Abdallahi Ishaq of the Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Federal University, Dutse. The program examined the negative impact of youth involvement in political violence on Nigeria's democratic development. The guest speaker stressed that political violence undermines peaceful elections, weakens public trust in democratic institutions, and threatens national stability. He encouraged young people to reject political thuggery, resist manipulation by politicians, embrace peaceful political participation, and promote dialogue, tolerance, and civic responsibility. The episode concluded that reducing youth political violence is essential to safeguarding Nigeria's nascent democracy and ensuring credible elections and sustainable national development.



Week 5:

In this episode, Barrister Sani Ammani, the Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association, Kano state branch was the guest. Together with the host, they examined the key provisions of Nigeria's Electoral Act 2022 and their implications for democratic governance. The legal icon explained how the "Electoral Act" seeks to improve the credibility, transparency, and fairness of elections through electoral reforms, while strengthening the legal framework governing political parties and electoral processes. He emphasized the need for political parties, candidates, electoral institutions, and citizens to comply with the provisions of the Act to ensure free, fair, and credible elections. The discussion concluded that effective implementation of the Electoral Act 2022 is essential for consolidating democracy and promoting good governance in Nigeria.



Week 6:

For week six, Dr. Mustapha Isyaku, a Research Fellow with the Aminu Kano Center for Democratic Research, Kano was the guest. The role of party primaries and consensus candidacy in Nigeria's democratic process was the topic discussed. The guest speaker explained that transparent, inclusive, and credible party primaries are essential for strengthening internal party democracy and producing legitimate candidates. He noted that while consensus candidacy is legally recognized, it must be voluntary, transparent, and compliant with the Electoral Act to protect members' rights and public confidence. The discussion concluded that democratic candidate selection processes are fundamental to promoting free, fair, and credible elections and



Week 7:

This episode of the program featured Sumayya Umar Tofa, a Governance, Strategy and Digital Innovation Specialist. The episode was on the importance of increasing women's participation in democratic governance and political decision-making in Northern Nigeria. The guest speaker highlighted the barriers limiting women's political involvement, including socio-cultural norms, financial constraints, and unequal access to leadership opportunities in Northern Nigeria. She emphasized on the need for inclusive policies, civic education, capacity building, and support from political parties and communities to enhance women's participation. The program concluded that empowering women to actively engage in the democratic process is essential for promoting inclusive governance, strengthening democratic institutions, and achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.





Week 8:

In week eight, Umar Hamisu Kofar Na'isa, the Executive Director, SEDSAC was the guest. The critical role of Nigerian youths in promoting and sustaining democracy was examined. The guest emphasized that young people should be given the enabling environment to actively participate in the democratic processes by registering, voting, and aspiring for positions during elections, engaging in civic education, demanding accountability from leaders, and contributing to peaceful political activities. He also stressed the importance of rejecting electoral violence, vote buying, misinformation, and political apathy. The discussion concluded that meaningful youth participation is essential for strengthening democratic governance and ensuring sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Week 9:

Hamza Ibrahim, a Disinformation Analyst from the Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) was the guest. He explored the opportunities and challenges that artificial intelligence (AI), misinformation, and disinformation present to democratic governance in Nigeria. The guest explained that while AI can enhance civic engagement and access to information, it can as well be misused to spread false information, manipulate public opinion, and undermine trust in democratic institutions. He emphasized the importance of digital literacy, fact-checking, responsible use of social media, and collaboration among government, civil society, the media, and citizens to combat misinformation.



Week 10:

Shehu Abdullahi, the State Coordinator, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Kano state branch was the guest. He discussed the important role of citizens in promoting and protecting human rights by reporting violations to the appropriate authorities. The guest speaker emphasized that timely reporting of human rights abuses strengthens accountability, supports justice for victims, and helps prevent future violations. He encouraged citizens to be aware of their rights, document incidents responsibly, and make use of lawful channels such as the National Human Rights Commission and other relevant institutions. The program concluded by stressing that active citizen participation in reporting human rights violations is essential for upholding the rule of law, protecting fundamental freedoms, and strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria.



Week 11:

Abdulrazaq Alkali, the Executive Director, Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) was the guest. He critically reviewed Nigeria's democratic journey since the return to civilian rule in 1999, highlighting the country's achievements, challenges, and prospects for democratic consolidation. Mr. Alkali acknowledged the progresses recorded in sustaining constitutional governance and regular elections while noting persistent issues such as electoral malpractice, political violence, weak institutional accountability, and low citizen participation. He emphasized the need for continuous electoral reforms, stronger democratic institutions, active civic engagement, and greater accountability by political leaders. The program concluded that safeguarding Nigeria's democracy requires the collective commitment of government, political parties, civil society, the media, and citizens.



Make or Mar:

The Peril of Nigeria's 2027 General Elections

By Abdulrazaq Alkali

By the time Nigerians head to the polls in 2027, the outcome may already have been shaped—not just by ballots cast on election day, but by the political choices, institutional conduct, and civic vigilance (or lack of it) in the years leading up to it.

This is why the 2027 general elections are not merely another cycle in Nigeria's democratic calendar. They represent a defining moment—one that could either consolidate democratic progress or expose its fragility in ways the country can ill afford.

There are already troubling signs.

Across the political landscape, tensions are rising earlier than expected. Opposition activities have faced disruptions in some quarters, while political rhetoric is becoming increasingly combative. These are not isolated incidents; they are early warning signals. Nigeria has seen this pattern before—when heated pre-election environments spiral into violence, voter intimidation, and, ultimately, disputed outcomes.

Equally concerning is the state of the opposition. A healthy democracy depends on credible alternatives, yet many opposition parties appear weakened by internal divisions, defections, and leadership crises. The danger here is not simply partisan imbalance; it is the gradual erosion of competitive politics. When elections begin to look like formalities rather than contests, public confidence declines—and democracy itself is diminished.

At the heart of the matter lies trust.

The credibility of the electoral process remains a persistent concern. Any reforms or administrative decisions—especially those affecting voter registration or accreditation—must be handled with transparency and broad public engagement. Even the perception of exclusion or manipulation can be as damaging as the reality. In a country as diverse and politically sensitive as Nigeria, trust is not optional; it is foundational.

Yet 2027 presents a new layer of complexity that Nigeria has never fully confronted: the digital battlefield.

The next election cycle is likely to be heavily influenced by misinformation, coordinated propaganda, and emerging technologies capable of distorting reality itself. Deepfakes, targeted disinformation, and algorithm-driven narratives could shape opinions long before voters arrive at polling units. The risk is clear, elections may be decided not by informed citizens, but by manipulated perceptions.

In response, authorities are tightening controls on media and broadcast content. While the intention—to curb hate speech and prevent incitement—is understandable, there is a fine line between regulation and repression. A democracy cannot thrive if the space for dissenting voices is quietly suffocated in the name of order.

Beyond politics and technology lies a more immediate driver of voter behavior: economic reality.

For millions of Nigerians, daily life is defined by rising costs, unemployment, and insecurity. Elections conducted under such conditions are rarely

calm or predictable. They become emotionally charged, often framed as a choice between hardship and hope. This raises the stakes—not just for politicians, but for the stability of the system itself.

And then there is the youth population—the largest, most energetic segment of the electorate. Their role in recent electoral cycles has shown both promise and limitation. While moments of mobilization have captured national attention, sustained engagement remains uneven. If young Nigerians participate fully, they could redefine the political equation. If they disengage, they risk reinforcing the very structures they often criticize.

All of this leads to a simple but sobering conclusion: the 2027 elections will be a stress test for Nigeria's democracy.

They will test whether institutions can act independently and credibly. They will test whether political actors can prioritize national stability over personal ambition. And they will test whether citizens still believe in the power of their vote.

Nigeria has navigated difficult elections before. It has also paid the price when those elections fell short of credibility and inclusiveness. The lessons are well known; the question is whether they will be applied.

The line between “make” and “mar” is not drawn on Election Day, it is being drawn now.

If the warning signs are ignored, the risks will compound. But if stakeholders—government, opposition, civil society, media, and voters—act with foresight and restraint, 2027 could become a turning point for democratic renewal.

Nigeria's 2027 general elections are more than a political contest—they are a national stress test. The outcome will not only determine leadership but also define the future of democracy in the country. The difference between “make” and “mar” will depend on choices made now: by political elites, institutions, civil society—and ultimately, the voters themselves.

The choice is stark, but it is still a choice.



"250 Years of Liberty: From Apathy to Action – Youth at the Ballot Through Civic Participation and Democratic Responsibilities"

Organized by: Democracy Drivers Network (DDN), Jigawa State

Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN)

In Collaboration with the Student Union Government (SUG), Federal University Dutse (FUD)

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Democracy Drivers Network (DDN), Jigawa State, under the aegis of the Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN), in collaboration with the Student Union Government (SUG) of the Federal University Dutse (FUD), organized a one-day sensitization and awareness programme on Monday, 20th July 2026, at the Window on America, J.D. Amin Library, Federal University Dutse. The programme was convened under the theme: "250 Years of Liberty: From Apathy to Action – Youth at the Ballot Through Civic Participation and Democratic Responsibilities."

The programme brought together a total of 100 participants, comprising students, youth leaders, resource persons, and stakeholders in electoral democracy, who converged to reflect on the place of young people in Nigeria's democratic journey and to encourage active, peaceful, and responsible civic participation among youths, particularly students of tertiary institutions.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

- To sensitize youths, particularly university students, on the importance of active civic and political participation in a democracy.
- To address the growing culture of political apathy among young people and reposition them as active stakeholders in governance.
- To educate participants on the electoral process, voter registration, and the responsibilities of citizenship



beyond the ballot box.

- To promote peaceful, credible, and issue-based political engagement, devoid of violence, votebuying, and misinformation.
- To position students and youths as ambassadors of democratic values within their communities.

3.0 PROGRAMME PROCEEDINGS

3.1 Opening and Welcome

The programme commenced at 10:00 AM with a welcome address delivered by

comdr. Umar Garba, who served as the host of the event. The welcome remarks appreciated the collaborating organizations and set the tone for the day's engagement, emphasizing that the future of Nigeria's democracy rests significantly on the shoulders of its youthful population.

Goodwill messages were subsequently received from the Organizer for Community Civic Engagement



(OCCEN), the Democracy Drivers Network (DDN), Jigawa State, and the Dean of Student Affairs, Federal University Dutse, Ass. Prof. Abubakar Yahaya, PhD, all of whom reaffirmed institutional support for youth-focused civic engagement initiatives.

3.2 Presentation One: The Role of Youths in Democracy – The Perspective of National Orientation

The first paper was presented by the Director, National Orientation Agency (NOA), titled "The Role of Youths in Democracy; from the Perspective of National Orientation." The presentation examined the mandate of the National Orientation Agency in shaping citizens' values and attitudes towards nation-building, and situated the Nigerian youth as a critical vehicle for national re-orientation. The presenter emphasized that democratic culture is nurtured through consistent civic education, positive value re-orientation, and the deliberate involvement of young people in community and national affairs, rather than through elections alone.

3.3 Presentation Two: Youth Participation in Politics and Democratic Consolidation – Lessons from the United States of America

The second paper, presented by Dr. Usman Suleiman Sarki, PhD, Head of Department of Sociology, Federal

University Dutse, was titled "Youth Participation in Politics and Democratic Consolidation: Lessons from the United States of America." The presentation drew comparative insights from the American democratic experience, highlighting how structured youth mobilization, civic education, and institutional trust have historically strengthened democratic consolidation, and drew lessons applicable to deepening youth participation within the Nigerian democratic space.

3.4 Presentation Three: Youth, Civic Participation, and the Electoral Process (INEC Perspective)

A presentation was also delivered by Zainab Saleh, Head of Youth and Gender, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Jigawa State. Her remarks were anchored on the theme of the programme and are summarized as follows:

The presenter noted that democracy does not thrive merely because elections are conducted, but flourishes when citizens, especially young people, actively participate in shaping their society. She observed that Nigeria is one of the youngest countries in the world, with young people constituting a significant proportion of the population, and stressed that the future of the nation's democracy rests largely in the hands of

the youth.

She identified political apathy the belief among many young people that politics is "dirty," that a single vote does not matter, or that leaders will emerge irrespective of their participation as a major threat to democratic development, noting that when responsible citizens remain silent, decisions affecting them are made by others.

On civic participation, she clarified that it extends beyond voting on election day to include: voter registration; collection of the Permanent Voter Card (PVC); peaceful voting; respect for the rule of law; holding leaders accountable; participation in community development; promotion of peace and tolerance; and the rejection of violence, hate speech, and misinformation. She emphasized that democracy is not a one-day event but a continuous responsibility. Speaking on the role of INEC, she assured participants that the Commission remains committed to conducting credible, inclusive, transparent, and peaceful elections, while noting that INEC alone cannot build democracy political parties, civil society, security agencies, the media, traditional institutions, and citizens all have complementary roles to play.

She charged the students, as future leaders whose leadership begins today and not after graduation, to be informed citizens, verify information before sharing it, reject vote buying and electoral violence, encourage peaceful participation, and serve as ambassadors of democracy within their communities, concluding that good governance begins with responsible citizenship.

3.5 Panel Discussion

The presentations were followed by an interactive panel discussion moderated with contributions from Mal. Sagir and Comdr. Umar Garba as panelists, alongside Mal. A. Ibrahim, Director, National Orientation Agency (NOA), who also featured among the guest presenters. The panel session addressed questions from students and participants on voter education, security during

elections, and practical ways students could remain civically engaged beyond the classroom.

3.6 Questions and Answers Session

The panel discussion generated considerable interest among participants, with a large number of students raising their hands to seek clarification on issues raised during the presentations. Some of the key questions and the corresponding responses are summarized below:

Question 1: A student asked why many young people feel that a single vote does not make any difference, and how this mindset of political apathy could be changed.

Answer: Panelists explained that this belief is one of the major drivers of youth apathy, noting that election outcomes are decided by the accumulation of individual votes, and urged students to see their vote as part of a collective civic responsibility rather than an isolated, inconsequential act.

Question 2: A participant asked what practical steps students could take to remain safe during elections, given past experiences of election-related violence in some parts of the country.

Answer: The panelists advised students to vote only at their accredited polling units, avoid inducements or vote-buying offers, remain calm and orderly, and promptly report any suspicious activity to security agencies and INEC officials, stressing that security personnel, INEC, and community leaders work together to protect the electoral process.

Question 3: Another participant, a student schooling away from home, asked how such students could register for or collect their Permanent Voter Card (PVC).

Answer: The INEC representative clarified that students could register or transfer their registration to the locality of their present institution, and that PVCs could be collected at designated INEC offices within their Local Government Area, urging students to always confirm registration and collection timelines

ahead of scheduled elections.

Question 4: A student asked how young people could protect themselves from falling victim to misinformation and fake news, especially on social media, during election periods.

Answer: The presenter from the National Orientation Agency advised participants to always verify information from official and credible sources before sharing it, to be wary of sensational or unverified claims circulating online, and to actively promote accurate civic information within their peer networks.

Question 5: A participant asked what students could do to stay civically engaged beyond casting a vote on election day.

Answer: Panelists encouraged students to join or form student-led civic and democracy clubs, participate in community development activities, hold leaders accountable between elections, and take up advocacy roles that promote peace, tolerance, and issue-based political engagement all year round.

4.0 KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Strong turnout of students and youth leaders demonstrating growing interest in civic and democratic issues within the university community.
- Convergence of institutional voices NOA, INEC, academia, and civil society around a common message: youth participation is central to democratic consolidation.
- Renewed emphasis on the need to shift youth engagement from mere voting to sustained, year round civic responsibility.
- Practical guidance provided on voter registration, PVC collection, and peaceful, issue-based political engagement.
- A call for students to see themselves as leaders and ambassadors of democratic values from now, and not only after graduation.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sustained collaboration between OCCEN/DDN, INEC, NOA, and tertiary institutions in Jigawa State to institutionalize periodic civic education programmes for students.
- Establishment of student-led civic engagement or democracy clubs within Federal University Dutse and other institutions to sustain the momentum generated by the programme.
- Continuous voter education and PVC collection drives targeted at eligible students ahead of future elections.
- Deliberate efforts by stakeholders to counter misinformation, vote-buying, and electoral violence through youth-focused advocacy.
- Replication of similar sensitization programmes across other tertiary institutions and communities in Jigawa State.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The one-day sensitization and awareness programme achieved its objective of reawakening democratic consciousness among students and youths of Federal University Dutse. Through the goodwill of the Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN), the Democracy Drivers Network (DDN), Jigawa State, the Student Union Government of FUD, and the resource persons drawn from the National Orientation Agency, the Independent National Electoral Commission, and academia, participants were reminded that democracy is sustained not merely by the conduct of elections, but by the consistent, informed, and peaceful participation of citizens especially the youth in the affairs of the nation. The programme closed with a resounding charge to participants: "Stand up for your future through active participation and responsible representation."



Adieu, Sameera Modibo: Honouring the Life and Legacy of a Courageous Advocate for Democracy, Youth and Women's Rights

August 6, 2026

With profound sadness, we bid farewell to Sameera Modibo, whose unwavering commitment to democracy, justice, and the empowerment of youth and women touched countless lives. Her courage, compassion, and steadfast dedication to advancing equality and defending fundamental freedoms leave an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire generations.

Though she is no longer with us, her vision, values, and tireless service remain a guiding light for all who strive for a more just and inclusive society. Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) and Democracy Drivers Network (DDN) a network that she belonged to honors her remarkable life, celebrate her immeasurable contributions, and extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, colleagues, and all who were privileged to know and work alongside her.

May her legacy live on in the hearts and actions of those who continue the causes she so passionately championed.

We pray that Allah (SWT) grant her eternal peace and Jannatul Firdaus, Amen!!!

Abdulrazaq Alkali

Executive Director

OCCEN Nigeria