



VOTER TURNOUT

**LAGOS AND
CROSS RIVER
CASE STUDY**



Introduction

Project 2023 is an initiative of Run To Win (RtW) which aims to holistically address the issues which hinder improved election outcomes in Nigeria. The 2023 elections will be the 7th cycle since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999. With no incumbent at the presidential level and 17 new governors set to be elected, this cycle promises to be very competitive.

However, the dividends of democracy have yet to bear fruit for most Nigerians. The reasons for these are varied and must be addressed for our system of government to deliver much needed prosperity and security.

The 2023 elections will occur against the following background with respect to electoral issues:



Electoral Patterns

Low voter turnout: Voter turnout has been on the decline for the last few cycles. In 2019, only 35% of registered voters cast a vote for president, a number that appears to decline even further in this cycle. The Anambra governorship elections in October 2021 saw only 10% turnout, as did the Lagos East Senatorial bye-elections in October 2020, just a few months after the #EndSARS protests and the Lekki Massacre. Declining voter participation influences the legitimacy of political office holders and should be tackled with focus.

Exclusion of young people and women from governance: The struggle continues for greater representation of young people and women in governance, especially elected offices. 70% of Nigeria's population is under 40 years old and half the population are women, but elected offices are yet to reflect this reality. The barriers to young people and women include funding and social norms which hinder them from actualizing their ambitions. Also, this lack of representation has a direct impact on policy, with important legislation to safeguard the rights of women, children and youth making little progress.



Electoral policies: The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, BVAS, developed by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, could be a potential game changer in the forthcoming elections by closing the gap between electoral democracy as an enterprise in political numeracy and Nigerian elections as a cynical exercise in political voodoo.

The tool, imbued with AI capabilities, has already been tested in Isoko South 1 State Constituency election on September 11, 2021; the Anambra State Governorship election of November 9, 2021 and the just-concluded FCT Area Council elections on February 12, 2022. Even while there have been several complaints by voters, it has proven an ability to produce cleaner elections by reducing multiple voting and eliminating guesswork in voter identification and accreditation.





ADDRESSING VOTER APATHY

**- THE RESEARCH & PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT**

Background

At the beginning of the Continuous Voter Registration exercise in June 2021, INEC had targeted registering an additional 20 million voters, which would take the total number of registered voters to over 100 million. To further this goal, an online pre-registration was setup. However, with just a month to the end of the CVR exercise for the 2023 cycle, only 9,238,991 new registrations have been done online and only 5,845,751 of those have completed the physical registration process.

Voter apathy remains the main issue in Nigeria's electoral process. Among young voters, who remain the biggest population, understanding and addressing the problem and the contributing factors have become more critical for a more vibrant and inclusive democracy. However, the reasons for this apathy should be identified first and foremost.



Closely allied is the need for research on issues that matter to the electorate. The introduction of the BVAS methodology by INEC means that the 8,103,011 who cast their votes in the 2015 election, representing 27.5 percent of the total votes cast (29,432,083), will be excluded. If we connect that to the 35% turnout in the subsequent election, it paints a potentially grim picture for turnout in the 2023 election.

To better understand the turnout problem amongst young people, Run To Win commissioned opinion polls in Lagos and Cross River states to determine the following:

- How likely they are to vote in the 2023 general elections;
- The voting intention of young people using a representative sample size (i.e Are they going to vote)
- Why young people 18 - 35 years do not participate in elections in Nigeria;
- The biggest problems facing young voters in the elections;
- The major media platforms where they access political news, opinions, commentaries, etc.

Our intention is to replicate this nationwide to examine these issues, and therefore, analyse and execute different tactics and opportunities that can drive young voters to the polls



Study Methodology

A combined research method of quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed. The quantitative survey interviewed young people between 18 and 35 years, both male and females in 10 LGAs in Lagos state; a total of 500 youths were interviewed. In Cross River, 450 young people were surveyed. In both instances, 50 people were selected at random in every local government.

The qualitative method utilized Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), which were conducted in two different LGAs in Lagos (Surulere and Eti-Osa). In Cross River, the FGDs were conducted in Yakurr and Calabar Municipal LGAs. All the FGDs conducted consisted of 8 – 10 participants, both males and female who were willing to discuss in detail their perceptions of the electoral process.

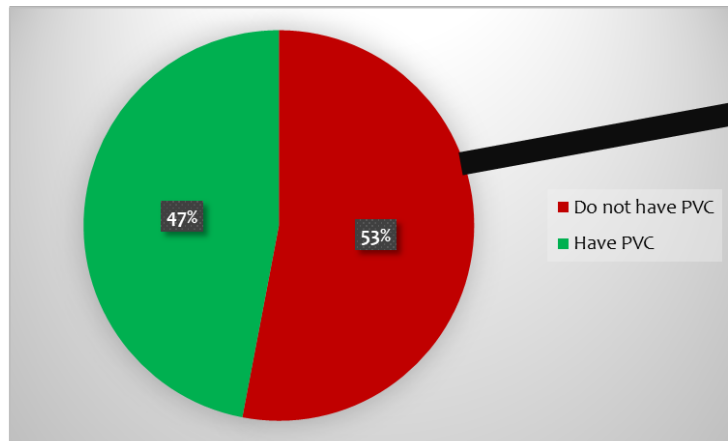


General Perception of Youths' Participation in Election in Lagos

PVC possession

Of the 500 young people surveyed, more than half still do not have their PVCs. The difference between the various age groups is significant. Only 21% of 18–25-year-olds in Lagos have PVCs, compared to 73% of Millennials (26-35 years old). Of those who do not yet have PVCs, 63% are very likely or somewhat likely to obtain those PVCs.

Permanent Voters Card (PVC) Possession



| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Very Likely | 25% |
| Somewhat likely | 38% |
| Not likely | 13% |
| Not at all likely | 22% |
| Don't Know | 2% |

| | Gen Z (18 - 25 years) | Millennials (26 - 35 years) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Have PVC | 21% | 73% |
| Do not have PVC | 79% | 27% |

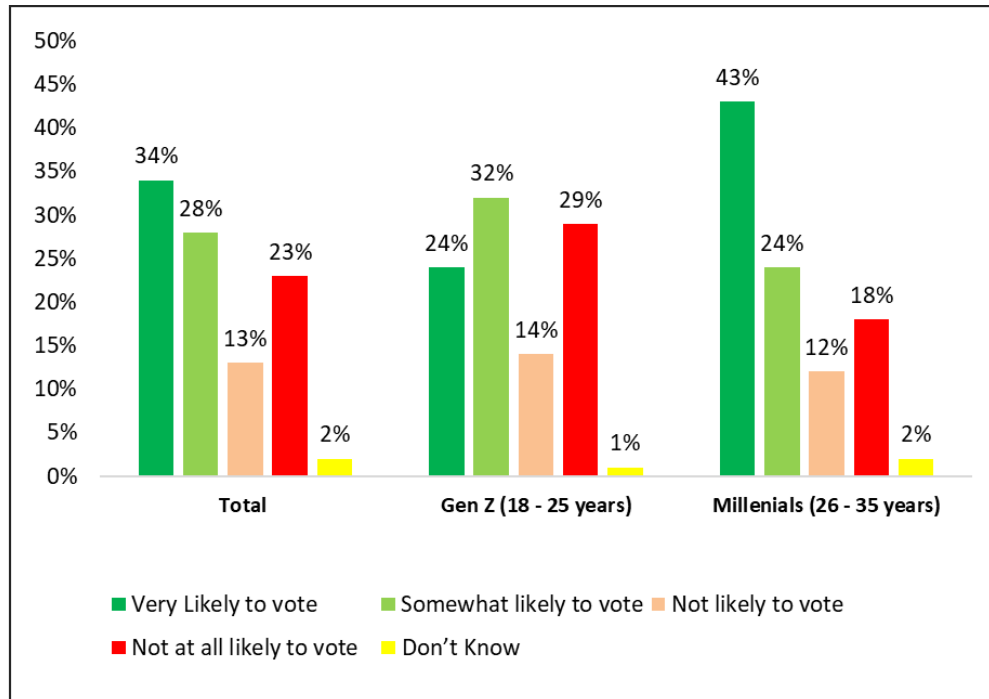
Likelihood of voting

The highest proportion of those unlikely to vote is Kosofe with 15%, while in the other LGs, the average is 9 or 10%. In terms of likelihood of voting, 67% of Millennials say they are very or somewhat likely to vote compared with 56% of Gen Z.

Meet those Unlikely to Vote

| Categories | (%) |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Male | 43% |
| Female | 57% |
| 18 – 26 yrs (Gen Z) | 59% |
| 26 – 35 yrs (Millennials) | 41% |
| Single | 72% |
| Married | 28% |

Base = 181 (36% of total)



Meet those Unlikely to Vote

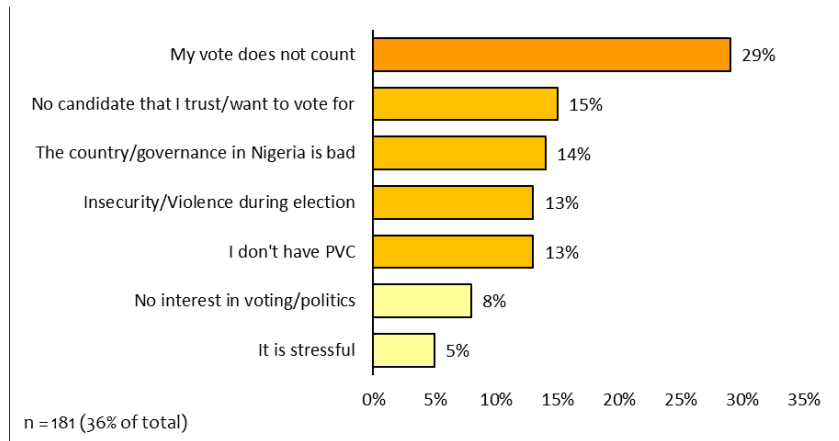
| LGA | (%) |
|--------------|-----|
| Alimosho | 10% |
| Amuwo-Odofin | 9% |
| Epe | 9% |
| Eti-Osa | 9% |
| Ibeju-Lekki | 8% |
| Ikeja | 10% |
| Ikorodu | 9% |
| Kosofe | 15% |
| Lagos Island | 10% |
| Surulere | 9% |

Base = 181 (36% of total)

Reasons for (not) voting

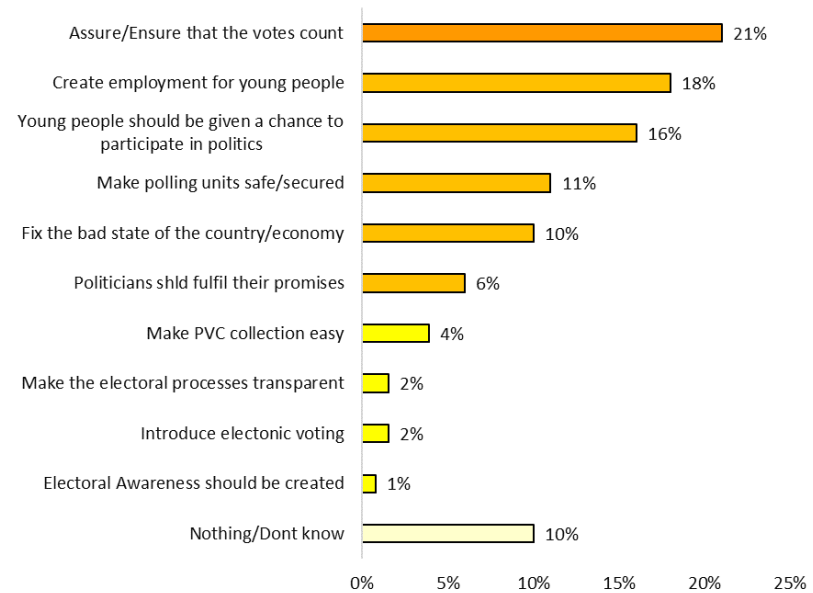
For young people in Lagos, the clear reason for not voting is that ‘My vote does not count’. This is followed by ‘No candidate that I trust/ want to vote for’. This is the major area to address in any voter turnout campaign.

Reasons Young People are unlikely to Vote in 2023 Election



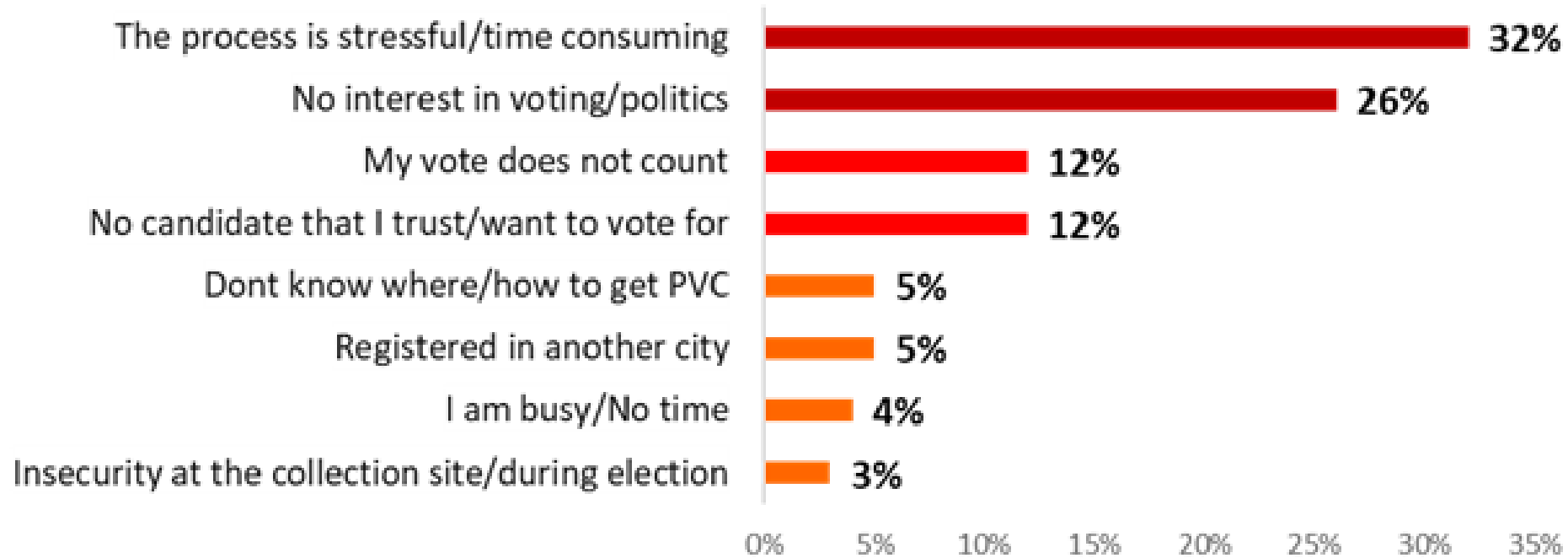
| | Gen Z (18 - 25 years) | Millennials (26 - 35 years) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| My vote does not count | 30% | 27% |
| No candidate that I trust/want to vote for | 9% | 23% |
| The country/governance in Nigeria is bad | 9% | 20% |
| Insecurity/Violence in Nigeria is bad | 15% | 11% |
| I don't have PVC | 16% | 8% |

What can be done to encourage or make young people vote in the 2023 elections



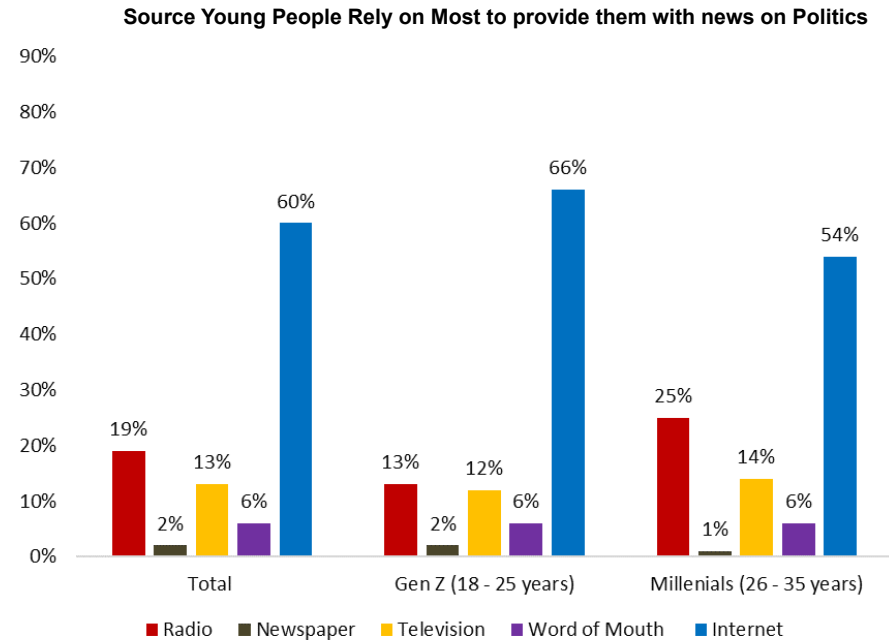
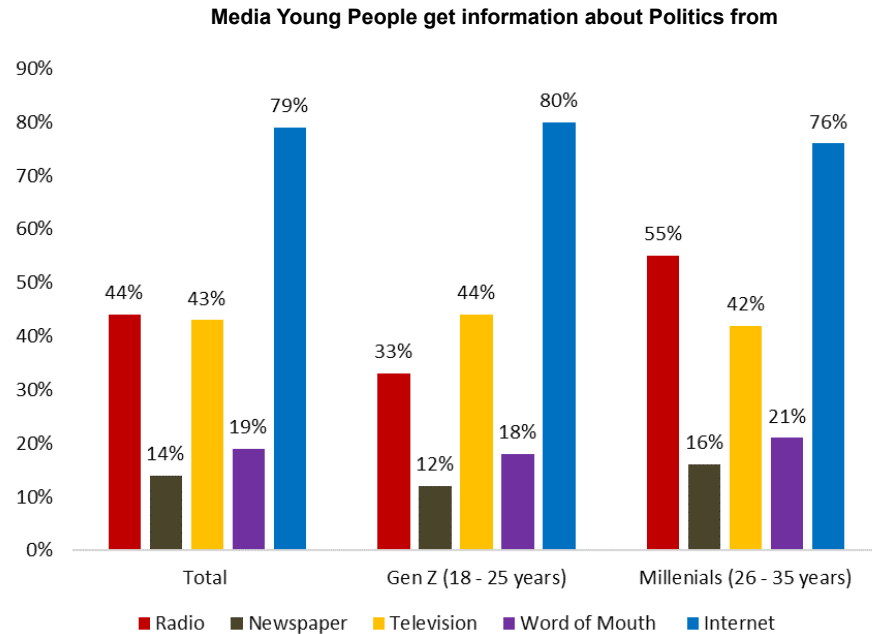
Reasons for not collecting PVCs

The main reason PVCs are not collected because the process is stressful and time consuming, according to our respondents. This is followed by 'no interest in voting/politics' with 26%.



Reaching potential voters

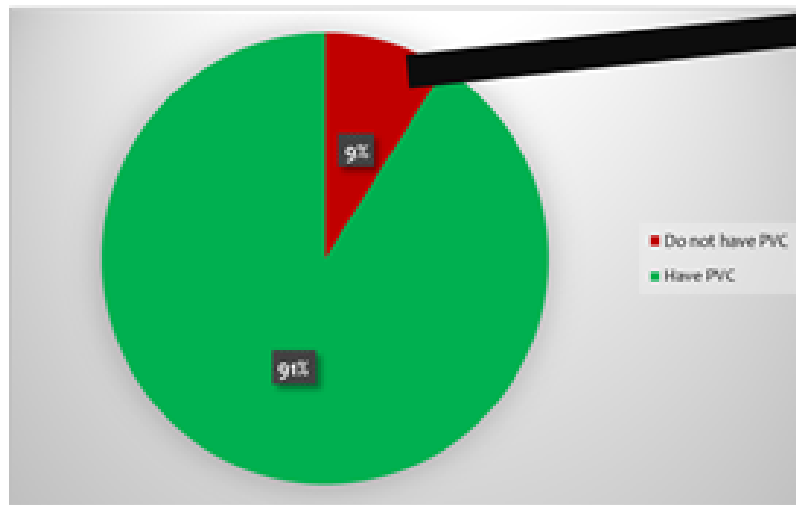
The most effective way to reach potential voters in Lagos is through the internet. It is by far the most popular way by which young voters can access information about political events.



CROSS RIVER SURVEY

The PVC correction in Cross River paints a far better picture. Only 14% of Gen Z year olds are without PVCs, compared with just 4% of Millennials in the state

Permanent Voters Card (PVC) Possession



Likelihood of getting PVC ahead of the 2023 elections

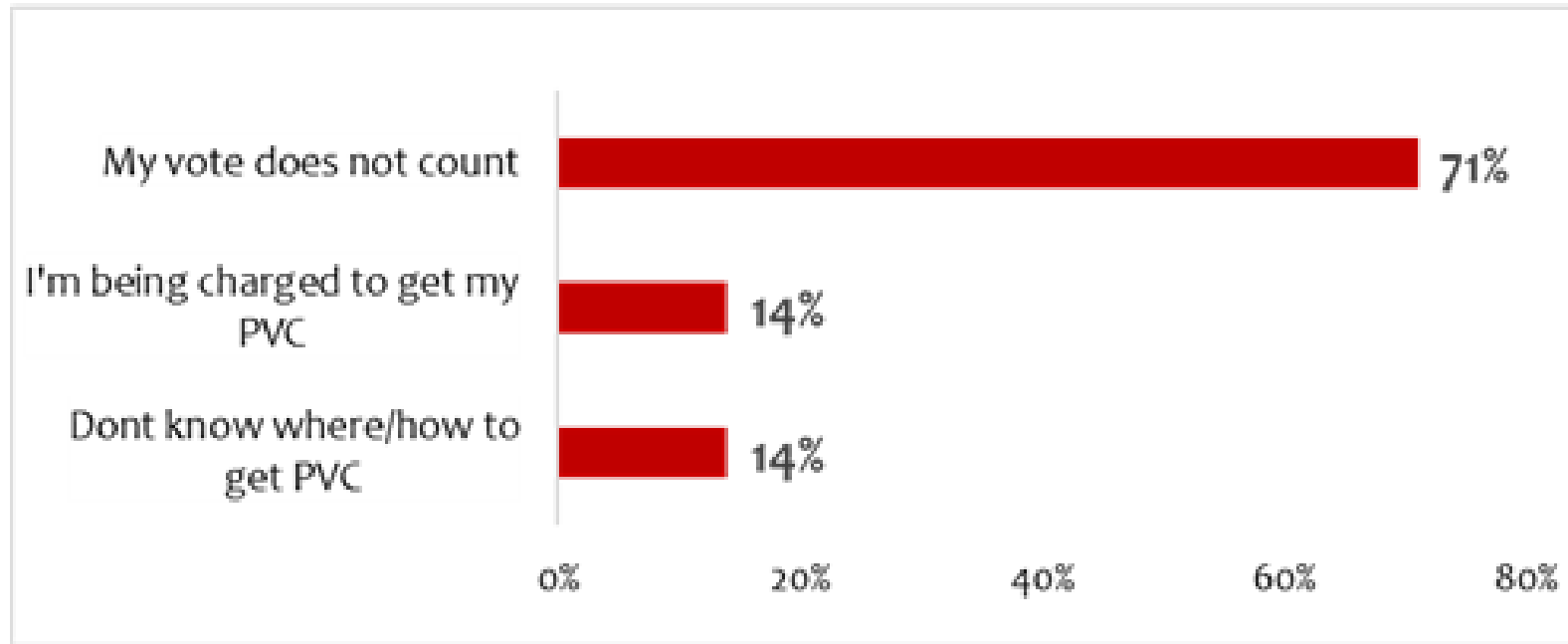
| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Very Likely | 69% |
| Somewhat likely | 17% |
| Not likely | 10% |
| Not at all likely | 2% |
| Don't Know | 5% |

| | Gen Z (18 - 25 years) | Millennials (26 - 35 years) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Have PVC | 86% | 96% |
| Do not have PVC | 14% | 4% |

Reasons for not getting PVC

Just like Lagos, the main reason is 'My vote does not count'. 71% of respondents say this, with 14% saying they are charged to collect their PVCs or don't know how/where to get them.

Reasons People are Unlikely to get their PVC



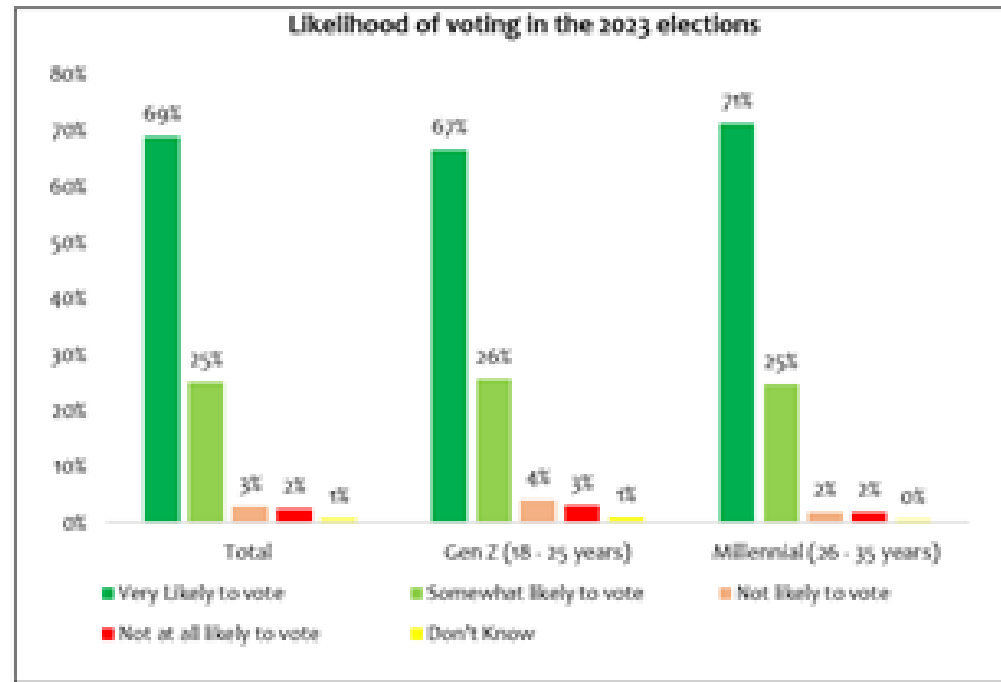
Likelihood of voting

In keeping with the high percentage of PVC collection, 94% of respondents are either very likely or somewhat likely to vote. Of the 23 respondents statewide who said they were unlikely to vote, a majority (22%) came from Yakurr LGA.

Meet those Unlikely to Vote

| Categories | (%) |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Male | 30% |
| Female | 70% |
| 18 - 26 yrs (Gen Z) | 65% |
| 26 - 35 yrs (Millennials) | 35% |
| Single | 74% |
| Married | 26% |

Base = 23 (5% of total)



Meet those Unlikely to Vote

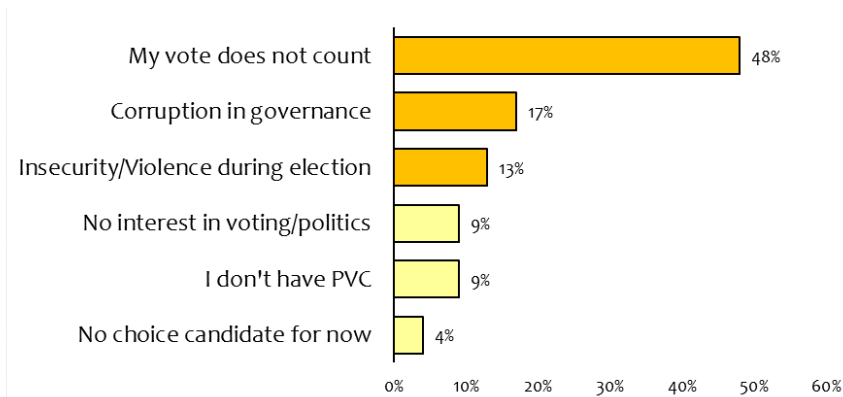
| LGA | (%) |
|---------------|-----|
| Municipal | 13% |
| Calabar South | 9% |
| Yala | 4% |
| Ogoja | 13% |
| Obudu | 4% |
| Ikom | 9% |
| Boki | 13% |
| Yakurr | 22% |
| Odukpani | 13% |

Base = 23 (5% of total)

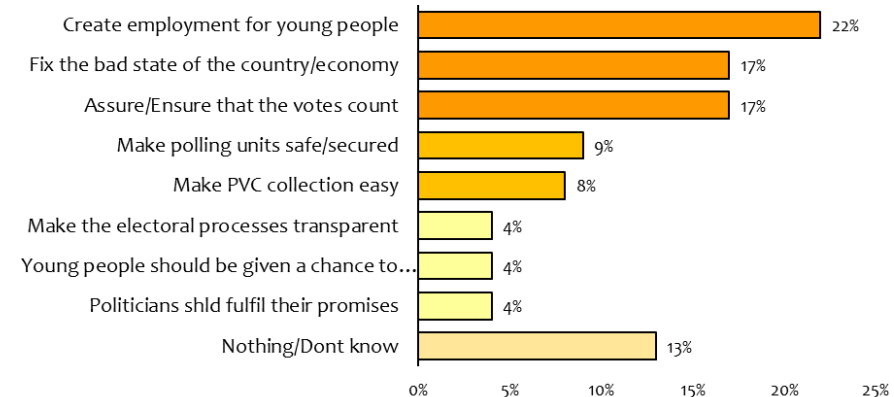
Reasons for not voting

The main factor likely to keep young Cross Riverians away from the polls is the view that their votes don't count. This sentiment is mirrored in Lagos as well to a large extent.

Reasons Young People are unlikely to Vote in 2023 Election



What can be done to encourage or make young people vote in the 2023 elections



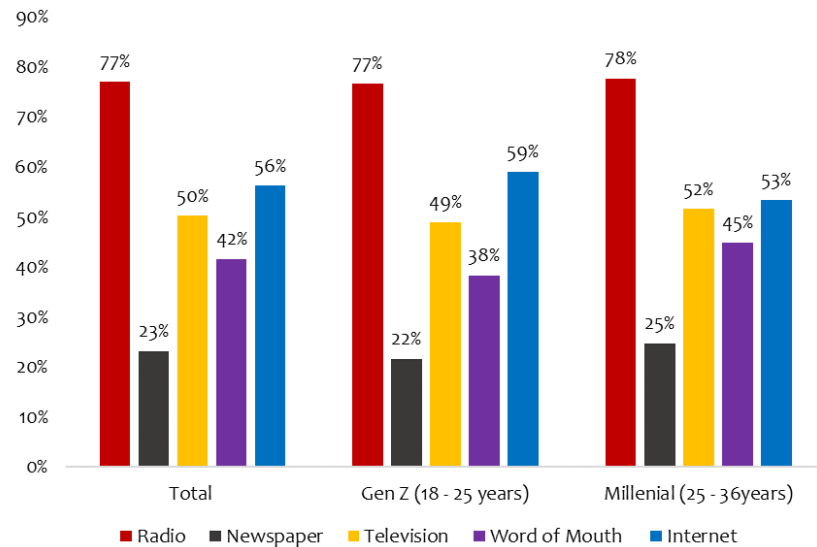
| | Gen Z (18 - 25 years) | Millennials (26 - 35 years) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I don't have PVC | 6% | 13% |
| Insecurity/Violence during election | 20% | 0% |
| My vote does not count | 33% | 75% |
| No interest in voting/politics anymore | 20% | 0% |
| I don't have any candidate for now | 6% | 0% |

| | Gen Z (18 - 25 years) | Millennial (26 - 35 years) |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Make electoral processes transparent | 0% | 25% |
| Create employment for young people | 20% | 25% |
| Fix the bad state of the country/economy | 7% | 38% |
| Assure/Ensure that the votes count | 27% | 0% |
| Make polling units safe/secured | 13% | 0% |

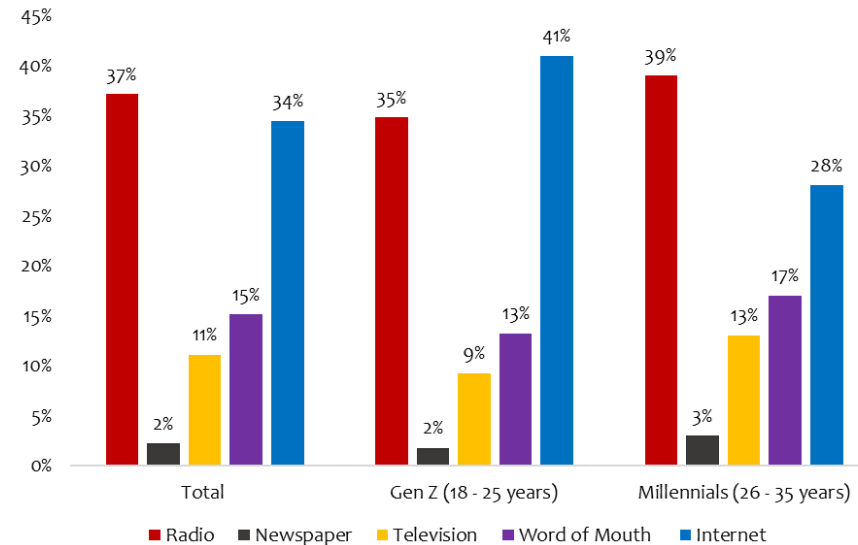
How to reach potential voters

In Cross River, the radio (77%) is the best way to reach potential voters, followed by the internet (56%).

Media Young People get information about Politics from



Source Young People Rely on Most to provide them with news on Politics



Conclusion

With the Continuous Voter Registration exercise set to be suspended on June 30th 2022, time is running out to engage young people on the necessity of exercising their franchise. INEC have already complained about the slow uptake of new registrations, with projected targets missed. The survey from Lagos suggests that this is coming from the 18–25-year-old age bracket.

There are two main issues preventing higher registrations and likelihood of voting. The first of these is the view that votes don't count, followed by the stressful and time-consuming process. The latter issue can be addressed somewhat by partnering with INEC to make the process more flexible. However, the former is a issue of messaging and should be treated as such. There needs to be a broad campaign to convince those who have either not registered or are unwilling to vote that their votes do and will count, and that they can influence their surroundings.

The channels by which these messages will be communicated will vary. Already, there is a clear preference for the internet in Lagos and radio in Cross River. The latter medium will be more dominant across the country. Other mediums can and should be used to supplement outreach efforts.

In terms of both voter registration and willingness to vote, there is a significant difference between Lagos and Cross River. Youths in the latter state appear much more likely to have PVCs and be willing to vote. One reason for this might be voting inducements by party agents during elections, which are not accessible without PVCs.

**RUN
TO
WIN**