



CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION FOUNDATION

## CYPF and NACAT to Host "Play Strong, Stand Tall" Football and Wellness Event in Abuja

**ABUJA, FCT.** On **May 15, 2026**, the Child and Youth Protection Foundation (CYPF) and the Network Against Corruption and Anti-Trafficking (NACAT) will host "**Play Strong, Stand Tall**," a specialized football and mental wellness engagement for secondary school boys. The event, held at **Monoliza Park**, commemorates the **International Day of the Boy Child** by addressing the unique mental health challenges and social pressures faced by young males in Nigeria.

### Breaking Barriers Through Sport

In Nigeria, societal norms often equate masculinity with emotional suppression, isolation, and a reluctance to seek help. According to UNICEF, approximately **1 in 10 boys** in Nigeria experiences abuse before the age of 18, yet these issues are frequently overlooked in broader child welfare discussions.

"Play Strong, Stand Tall" uses football as a safe, high-energy environment to lower these barriers and open the door to meaningful dialogue. The project aims to promote positive self-image and mental resilience, ensuring that boys are equipped with the values needed to avoid exploitation and violence.

### Event Highlights

- **Inter-School Football Tournament:** Teams from at least five secondary schools in Abuja will participate in friendly matches designed to foster teamwork and sportsmanship.
- **Mental Health Engagement:** Post-match sessions led by professionals will cover emotional intelligence, peer pressure, and managing anxiety or depression.
- **Inclusive Participation:** The event features adapted activities and sign language interpreters to ensure boys with disabilities are fully included and heard.
- **Resource Sharing:** Participants will receive take-home materials and contact information for support services and mental health resources.

### A Vision for Healthy Communities

"This project is more than a football event; it is an intentional investment in the lives of boys growing up in a society that rarely gives them permission to be vulnerable," the project

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concept states. CYPF and its partners believe that empowering boys to be mentally aware is a critical step toward building healthier, more just communities.

#### Event Details:

- **Date:** 15th May 2026
- **Venue:** Monoliza Park, Abuja, FCT
- **Time:** 11AM
- **Partners:** NACAT, Secure The Future Foundation, Federal Ministry of Youth and Development, Secondary Education Board and Monoliza

**About Child and Youth Protection Foundation (CYPF):** CYPF is an organization dedicated to the protection and holistic development of children and youth in Nigeria, focusing on advocacy and impactful community interventions.

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