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TAF Africa
... Disability Inclusion Champion



CAN DEMOCRACY BE COMPLETE WITHOUT INCLUSION?

A Compelling Account of TAF Africa's Journey
Toward A Disability-Inclusive
2025 Anambra Governorship Election



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2025 ANAMBRA ELECTION REPORT

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• The election highlighted progress and persistent barriers, demanding intentional reforms to ensure truly inclusive democratic participation.	

ACRONYMS AND MEANINGS

ABS	Anambra Broadcasting Service
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
EU-SDGN	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
JONAPWD	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities
LGA	Local Government Area
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
OPDs	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PU	Polling Unit
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
SLI	Sign Language Interpreters
ASLIN	Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Nigeria



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Democracy finds its truest meaning when every citizen, regardless of ability, has an equal opportunity to participate in shaping the future of their society. Yet, for millions of persons with disabilities (PWDs) across Nigeria, this ideal remains only partially fulfilled. While progress has been made in advancing electoral reforms and civic participation, the question still echoes across polling units, town halls, and political spaces: **Can democracy be complete without inclusion?**



PWD Voters - Participants at TAF Africa's AbleToVote Voter Education in Anambra

It was in pursuit of an answer to this question that TAF Africa undertook a series of deliberate, data-driven, and human-centered interventions before, during, and after the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election.

Funded by the European Union through its Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme, and in collaboration with partners and

institutions committed to equity and good governance, TAF Africa worked tirelessly to ensure that the voices and votes of persons with disabilities were not only recognized but respected.

The foundation of TAF Africa's intervention is grounded firmly in the legal obligations established by the Electoral Act 2022, particularly Section 54, which mandates clear protections for voters with disabilities.

Section 54(1) states that:

“A Voter with visual impairment or other form of disability who is otherwise unable to distinguish symbol or who suffers from any other physical disability may be accompanied into the polling unit by a person chosen by him or her and that person shall, after informing the Presiding officer of the disability, be permitted to accompany the voter into the voting compartment and assist the voter to make his or her mark in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Commission.”



TAF Africa's CEO, Amb Jake Epelle, and Board of Trustees Member, Dr. Amina Zakari at the official opening of TAF Africa's PWD Election Hub

Furthermore, Section 54(2) requires that:

“The Commission shall take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with disabilities, special needs and vulnerable persons are assisted at the polling place by the provision of suitable means of communication, such as Braille, large embossed print, electronic devices, sign language interpretation, or offsite voting in appropriate cases.”

These statutory provisions place a legal duty on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to guarantee accessibility, provide assistive tools, and ensure that PWDs can vote independently and with dignity. They also create a framework for civil society organizations, including TAF Africa, to monitor compliance, support voter education, and advocate for systemic improvements.

Guided by these obligations and by the broader commitments embedded in the 2018



Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, TAF Africa implemented a multilayered strategy that combined voter empowerment, institutional engagement, technology deployment, and real-time observation.

1 PRE-ELECTION INTERVENTIONS

Capacity Building:

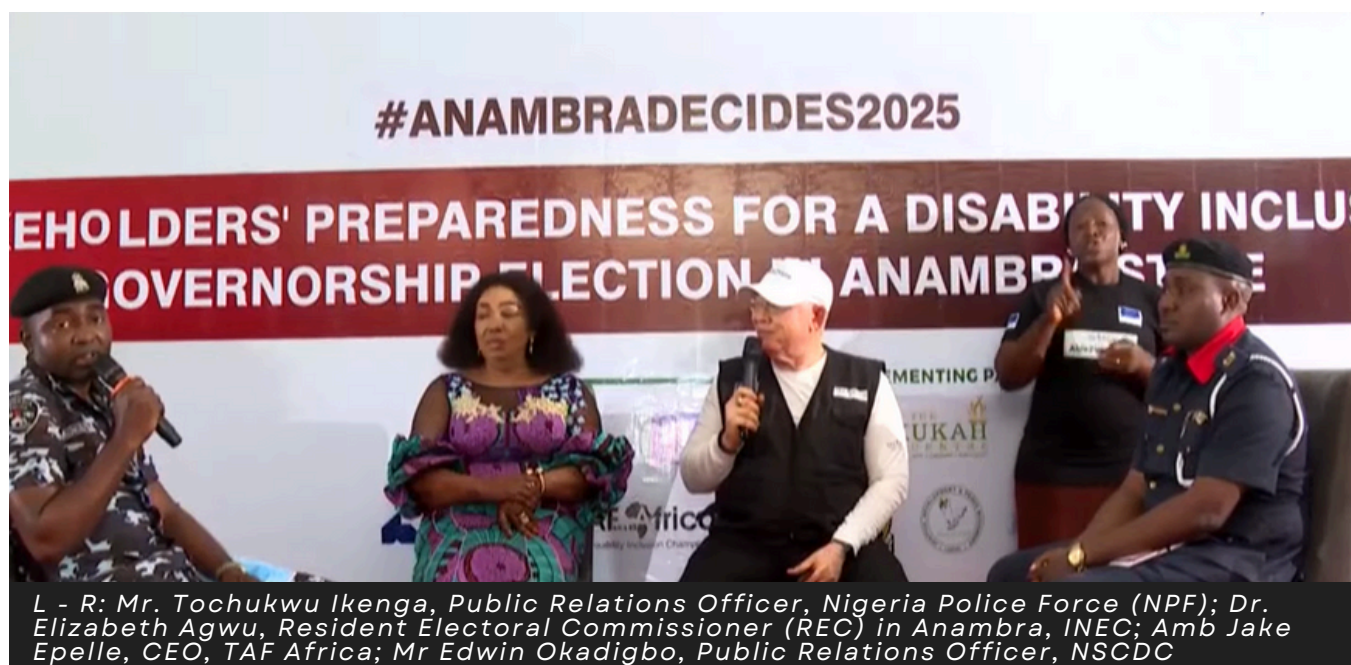
- 150 disability-focused observers were trained on accessibility indicators, ethical observation, and the use of the TAF Disability Hub Application.
- 25 Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) were trained through a first-of-its-kind partnership with INEC, in line with Section 54(2)’s requirement for suitable communication tools.

Voter Education & Sensitization:

- Through the Able2Vote campaign, TAF Africa educated PWDs, election officials, security agents, media stakeholders, and communities on accessibility provisions, voter rights, and the legal foundations that protect PWDs' participation.

High-Level Stakeholder Engagement:

- A statewide Live Televised Town Hall, airing across three stations, provided a platform for INEC, security agencies, OPDs, and the media to publicly articulate their readiness to uphold Section 54 during the election.



2 ELECTION-DAY COORDINATION AND OBSERVATION

The PWD Election Hub

A physical coordination center managed real-time data, verified field reports, and supported rapid response through a team of analysts,

communications personnel, and observers' liaisons.

Technology Deployment:

The TAF Disability Hub Application enabled structured reporting, while its Third Eye Feature empowered citizens to report accessibility challenges,

rights violations, and critical incidents affecting PWDs.

Field Findings:

Observers documented:

- Instances where INEC officials implemented the provisions of Section 54 by deploying assistive tools.
- Cases where braille ballot guides, large-print materials, or priority voting procedures were properly deployed.
- Persistent obstacles, including inaccessible polling units and inconsistent distribution of assistive devices.

3 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Increased institutional accountability through pre-election engagements and public sensitization.
- First-ever structured deployment of SLIs to polling units in Nigeria.
- Strengthened media framing and public understanding of electoral accessibility.
- Improved visibility and participation of PWDs across the state.

4 IDENTIFIED GAPS

Despite progress, gaps remain:

- Weak disability data validation during CVR processes.
- Inconsistent deployment of assistive tools required by Section 54(2).
- Inaccessible polling units, especially in rural locations.
- Limited coverage of sign language interpreters.
- Lingering attitudinal barriers among some election personnel.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR INEC

- Fully operationalize Section 54 through standardized nationwide deployment of assistive tools.
- Institutionalize accessibility audits of polling units.
- Mainstream SLIs into national election planning.
- Strengthen disability data collection during CVR.

FOR SECURITY AGENCIES

- Expand disability-sensitivity training.
- Deploy officers trained to support PWD voters and safeguard their rights.

FOR GOVERNMENT

- Ensure funding for Disability Act implementation.
- Improve accessibility of all public structures used as polling units.

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY & OPDS

- Scale grassroots civic education for PWDs.
- Monitor political party practices for inclusion.
- Partner with INEC on disability data mapping.

FOR THE MEDIA

- Scale grassroots civic education for PWDs.
- Monitor political party practices for inclusion.
- Partner with INEC on disability data mapping.

The 2025 Anambra Governorship Election demonstrated measurable progress toward disability-inclusive elections, reinforced by legal protections under Section 54 of the Electoral Act 2022 and the 2018 Disability Act.

Through observer deployment, technology, stakeholder engagement, and systematic monitoring, TAF Africa contributed meaningfully to expanding the participation and protection of PWD voters.

However, true inclusion requires continuous reform. This publication outlines the progress made, the gaps that remain, and a roadmap for building a democratic system that fully respects the rights and dignity of all citizens.

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ONE

**INTRODUCTION:
THE ROAD TO
ANAMBRA 2025**

INTRODUCTION: THE ROAD TO ANAMBRA 2025

In every election season, Nigeria's democracy renews its promise to give every citizen the power to choose, to be heard, and to belong. Yet, for many persons with disabilities (PWDs), the journey to the polling unit is often marked by barriers that silence participation long before the ballot is cast. These barriers are not just physical; they are systemic, social, and institutional.

As the 2025 Anambra State governorship election approached, TAF Africa saw both a challenge and an opportunity: a challenge to confront exclusion where it still existed, and an opportunity to demonstrate what an inclusive electoral process could look like when accessibility and participation were treated as rights, not privileges.

True democracy extends beyond counting votes; it measures how well every citizen is empowered to cast one. Inclusion is therefore not a gesture of goodwill; it is a constitutional and moral imperative. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to participate fully in political and public life. Every inaccessible polling station, every ballot paper without braille, every election without a magnifying glass

for voters with disabilities in their polling units is a quiet violation of that right.



A voter with physical disability at a Polling Unit (PU) in Anambra on Election Day

Guided by its commitment to strengthening democratic inclusion for all citizens, TAF Africa began early preparations, rooted in research, advocacy, and community engagement. The organization recognized that for many voters with disabilities, meaningful participation depended not only on awareness but also on the readiness of electoral systems and institutions to meet their diverse needs.

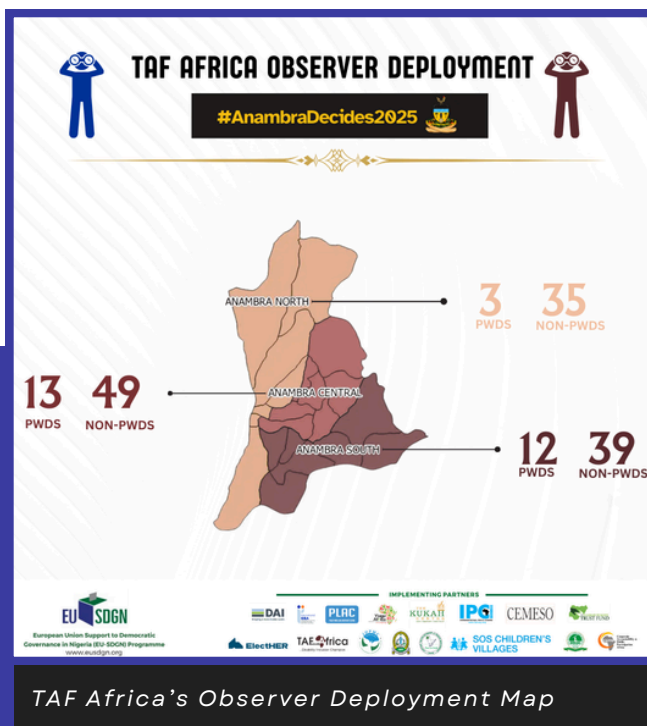
TAF Africa set out to create an enabling environment for PWDs to participate actively and confidently in the Anambra election. This collaboration gave birth to a comprehensive framework of activities: Stakeholder engagements with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Security Agencies, media sensitization, training of observers, and deployment of sign language interpreters to bridge communication gaps.

To strengthen coordination and visibility, TAF Africa established two complementary platforms that redefined its election observation model. The TAF Disability Hub Application, a technology-driven command application, was designed

to collect, analyze, and visualize real-time data from the 150 trained disability observers across the state.



Through this tool, observation data on accessibility, assistive tools, and voter experience were transmitted instantly and securely.



On election day, this system fed directly into the PWD Election Hub, a physical situation room in Awka that served as a public-facing engagement center. There, stakeholders, media, and partners could access live updates, analyze aggregated data displayed on a real-time dashboard, and discuss ongoing findings from the field.

TAF Africa's pre-election efforts also included voter education campaigns, both offline and across digital platforms, aimed at increasing awareness among PWDs about their electoral rights and encouraging them to turn out on election day.



The organization's engagements with the media helped shift public narratives, ensuring that conversations around democracy and governance began to reflect the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

These deliberate steps transformed what could have been another routine election cycle into a powerful statement of inclusion, accountability, and innovation.

Through collaboration with government institutions, civil society partners, and the disability community itself, TAF Africa positioned Anambra 2025 as a test of Nigeria's democratic conscience, not merely as an election.

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: TAF AFRICA'S PRE- ELECTION STRATEGY

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: TAF AFRICA'S PRE-ELECTION STRATEGY

In every election, the groundwork determines the outcome, not in terms of who wins, but in how democracy itself is defined. Before a single vote was cast in the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election, TAF Africa had already set in motion a wave of activities designed to ensure that the process would be inclusive, accessible, and representative of every Nigerian voice.

At the heart of these efforts was the understanding that participation begins long before election day. It starts with awareness, empowerment, and systems built to uphold equality.

This chapter tells that story, not of a single event, but of a movement that built bridges of understanding, inclusion, and dignity across every corner of the state.

1

The Able2Vote Campaign: Voter Education for the Disability Community



The Able2Vote Campaign became one of TAF Africa's most visible and transformative pre-election efforts. Designed to tackle voter apathy and promote inclusion, the campaign travelled across the three senatorial districts of Anambra -

Anambra North, Anambra Central, and Anambra South - delivering a simple but powerful message:

Through community engagements and sensitization drives, the Able2Vote campaign

brought together persons with disabilities (PWDs), electoral officials, civil society organizations, and security agencies.

At each location, the campaign was a conversation.

In Awka, participants spoke candidly about years of frustration; long distances to polling units, stairs without ramps, and ad hoc staff untrained to assist voters with disabilities.



TAF Africa's CEO and Founder, Jake Epelle flanked by INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Anambra State and other stakeholders after Voter Education in Anambra Central

INEC's officials responded with commitment. At Onitsha, INEC's Public Relations Officer reaffirmed their commitment to accessible polling units, priority voting, and the deployment of assistive tools such as Braille ballot guides for blind voters, magnifying glasses for voters with Albinism, and Form 30 E (PWD) for deaf voters.

The campaign's heartbeat was the people. In Nnewi, Comrade Ugochukwu Okeke, Chairman of the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD)

described it best

“This gives us reason to believe that our votes really matter.”

The sessions combined storytelling with law, unpacking the 2018 Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act and Section 54 of the Electoral Act, which mandates priority voting and provision of assistive tools for persons with disabilities.

The Able2Vote campaign educated and reignited hope among persons with disabilities. It turned disability inclusion from an abstract policy into a living, breathing movement across Anambra State.

2

Able to Vote Media and Security Engagements: Changing Perceptions, Ensuring Safety



TAF Africa's Senior Communications Officer, Lynn Agwuncha delivering a presentation at Able To Vote: Bridging Media and the Disability Community for an Inclusive Participation in Anambra

Beyond voter education, TAF Africa recognized that inclusion also depends on how society perceives and protects persons with disabilities.

Through themed engagements under the Able2Vote framework, the organization convened journalists, editors, and security officials for specialized sessions that bridged empathy with

expertise. In Awka, journalists gathered under the theme “Able to Vote: Bridging Media and the Disability Community for Inclusive Participation in Anambra.”



Participants' Group Photo For AbleToVote Media Engagement Session

Facilitated by media rights advocates and disability leaders, the workshop challenged stereotypes and trained journalists to report on disability issues ethically and accurately.

Security agencies also participated in a dialogue.

Representatives from the Police, NSCDC, and DSS pledged to protect persons with disabilities on election day, promising mobility support and priority access at polling stations

Mrs. Stella Onwuakagba, Deputy Commandant and Head of Campaign and Electioneering of the NSCDC, captured the spirit of the engagement: "We've learned to protect and support PWDs, not as an act of pity, but as a fundamental right."

Officers left better prepared; journalists left better informed. Both groups became allies in inclusion.

3

Live Television Town Hall: Accountability in Real Time



L - R: Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Tochukwu Ikenga, INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Anambra, Dr. Elizabeth Agwu, TAF Africa CEO and Founder, Amb Jake Epelle, and NSCDC's Mr. Edwin Okadigbo

To further deepen public awareness and institutional accountability, we convened a Live Television Stakeholders' Town Hall, broadcast simultaneously on ARISE TV, Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS), and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Awka.

Under the theme "Stakeholders' Preparedness for a Disability-Inclusive Anambra Governorship Election," the Town Hall became a national moment; a televised

conversation that brought together INEC, security agencies, media executives, and leaders of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Dr. Elizabeth Agwu, Anambra State Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), revealed INEC's accessibility audit results and plans to deploy assistive tools, including braille ballot guides, magnifying glasses, and the Form 30 E (PWD) poster.

Security agencies also took the stage. Superintendent Okadigbo Edwin of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) described how the Corps had created Disability Desk Officers in all commands and trained officers in basic sign language communication.

From the police, Superintendent Tochukwu Ikenga assured that men of the police force will provide adequate support to voters with disabilities at the polls.

In the second session, media leaders like Mr. Chris Molokwu, the Managing Director of ABS, and Mrs. Franca Uzoma-Olua, the General Manager of NTA Awka, committed to inclusive programming and the consistent use of sign language interpreters in broadcasts.

The televised dialogue turned inclusion from an idea into a national conversation, engaging millions of viewers and reinforcing TAF Africa's belief that accountability must be seen, not just heard.



L - R: Mrs. Franca Uzoma-Olua, General Manager, NTA Awka; Mr. Tochukwu Ikenga, Public Relations Officer, Nigeria Police Force; Comrade Ugochukwu Okeke, State Chairman of the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD); Amb Jake Epelle, CEO, TAF Africa; Dr. Elizabeth Agwu, INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Anambra; Mrs. Ugochi Ehiahurike, Executive Director, SDEC; Mr. Edwin Okadigbo, Public Relations Officer, NSCDC

Training and Deployment of Sign Language Interpreters: A National First



Participants' Group Photo For TAF Africa's Training for Deployment of Sign Language Interpreters

Among all TAF Africa's pre-election interventions, one stood out as truly unprecedented: the National Advocacy and Pilot Intervention for Sign Language Interpretation in Elections, the first of its kind in Nigeria's democratic history.

The journey began with advocacy visits to INEC Headquarters in Abuja and INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner in Awka,

conducted in partnership with the Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Nigeria (ASLIN). The objective was to secure institutional endorsement for the deployment of sign language interpreters at polling units with high concentrations of deaf voters.

At INEC Headquarters, TAF Africa's delegation, led by the CEO/Founder, met with Professor

Kunle Ajayi, National Commissioner for Outreach and Partnership. He described the initiative as a ***“welcome development and a continuation of a progressive partnership.”***

With that endorsement secured, the focus shifted to Anambra State, where 25 ASLIN members underwent a two-day intensive training in Awka.

During the training, participants were taken through sessions on polling unit procedures, electoral ethics, and communication protocols for interacting with deaf voters. INEC’s Head of Electoral Operations in Anambra state, Mr. Ejikeme Ejimofor, called the initiative “a masterstroke in advancing accessibility.”

The interpreters were not only equipped with electoral knowledge but also with an understanding of neutrality, professionalism, and confidentiality - essential virtues in electoral contexts.

The training concluded with renewed optimism. For the first time, deaf voters in Anambra would go to the polls knowing that communication barriers had been deliberately removed.

For many deaf voters, this intervention meant the difference between exclusion and empowerment. The interpreters’ presence on election day would enable clear communication with INEC officials, restoring dignity to a group often invisible in civic life.



TAF Africa’s Advocacy Visit to INEC HQ, Office of Professor Kunle Ajayi, National Commissioner for Outreach and Partnership

This initiative marked the first-ever deployment of sign language interpreters in Nigeria's electoral process, a pilot project that would serve as a model for future elections nationwide.

5



Training 150 Election Observers: Preparing the Eyes and Ears of Democracy



L - R: Participants' Group Photo at the Election Observation Training in Nnewi, Anambra State. Participants at the Election Observation Training in Onitsha

Central to TAF Africa's pre-election architecture was the training and deployment of 150 election observers. These individuals were carefully selected from across the state and trained to monitor polling units with the highest concentration of registered voters with disabilities.

The first phase of training took place in Nnewi (Anambra South) and marked the beginning of a three-phase exercise across all senatorial districts. Participants were trained on ethical observation, personal

and data reporting using the TAF Disability Hub App, a digital innovation that allowed observers to transmit real-time reports from the field.

Observers were trained not only to record facts but to understand human experiences; how to identify accessibility barriers, monitor the use of assistive tools, and document the treatment of PWDs at polling units.

With every module completed, a quiet confidence grew among the observers. By the end of the program, TAF Africa had built a network of well-trained, tech-enabled observers ready to defend the principles of inclusion at the grassroots level.

6

The Third Eye: Technology as a Protector of Democracy

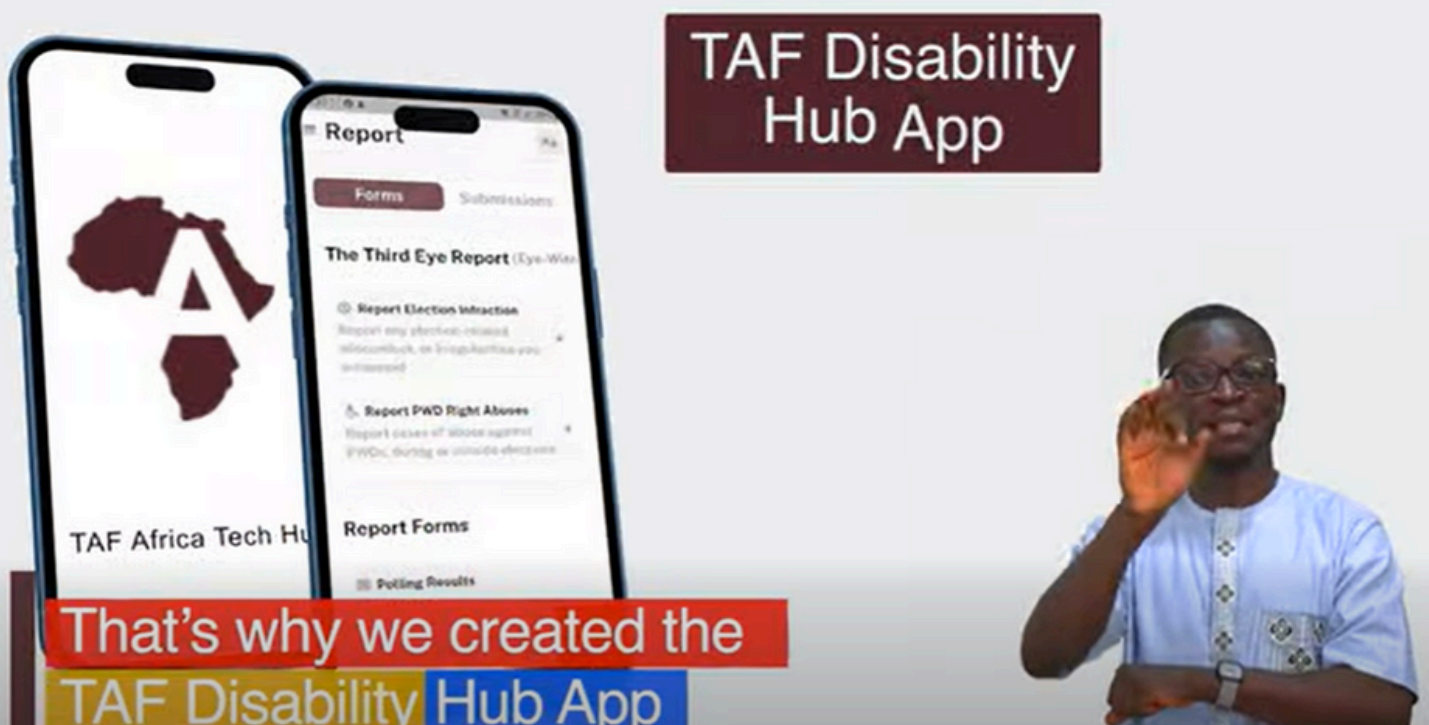


As part of its commitment to using innovation for inclusion, TAF Africa introduced a feature within the TAF Disability Hub Application known as “The Third Eye.” Unlike the main data-collection function of the app, which was used exclusively by trained observers, the Third Eye feature was open to the public, transforming ordinary citizens into active defenders of democracy and accountability.

As part of its commitment to using innovation for inclusion, TAF Africa introduced a feature within.

Every submission was instantly geo-tagged and time-stamped, enabling real-time verification and aggregation at the PWD Election Hub, TAF Africa’s physical command center in Awka, Anambra state. This integration of technology and civic engagement created a feedback loop of transparency and responsiveness, ensuring that no act of exclusion went unseen.

Before the election, TAF Africa launched an intensive public awareness campaign on both



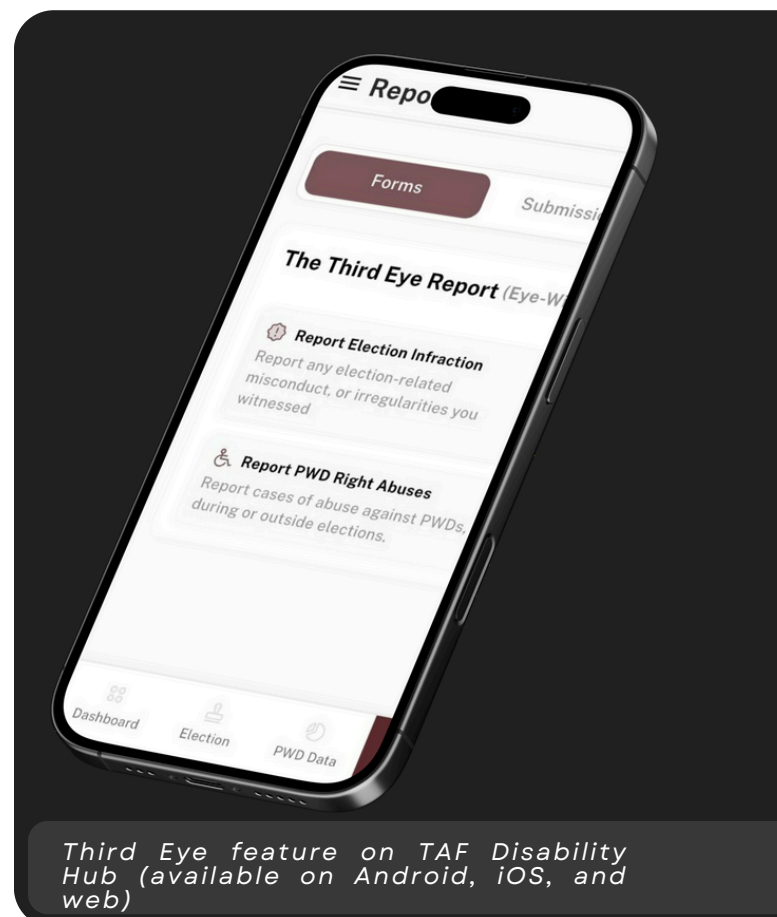
The TAF Disability Hub app

social media and mainstream media to promote the Third Eye feature. Branded with the tagline “Be a Protector of Democracy,” the campaign encouraged citizens to download the TAF Disability Hub App and use the feature to stand in solidarity with voters with disabilities.

Radio jingles, short explainer videos, and social media graphics were rolled out weeks before election day.

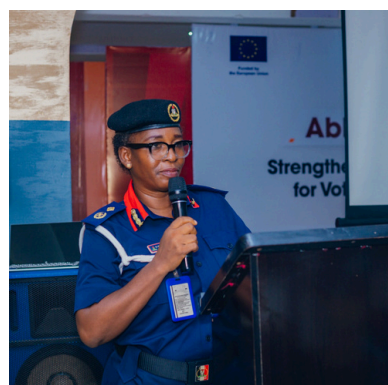
The campaign resonated widely, attracting attention from civic tech enthusiasts and members of the disability community across Nigeria.

It marked a major step forward in public ownership of the inclusion agenda, shifting disability inclusion from being a specialized concern to a collective civic duty.



By election day, the Third Eye had evolved into a symbol of shared responsibility, empowering citizens to safeguard the democratic participation of persons with disabilities. Through this initiative, TAF Africa reminded the nation that democracy thrives best when everyone not only participates but also protects one another's right to participate.

TAF Africa's pre-election strategy proved that inclusion is a framework and a system. It is the belief that when every citizen participates freely and fully, democracy does not just function, it flourishes.



CHAPTER

THREE

THE PWD ELECTION HUB



THE PWD ELECTION HUB

Every great idea begins with a question.

For TAF Africa, that question was simple

“How can we make the inclusion of persons with disabilities visible, measurable, and accountable in real time?”



That question birthed the PWD Election Hub, a physical coordination and command center established by TAF Africa to monitor, analyze, and respond to issues affecting voters with disabilities during the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election.

The concept was clear: while trained observers were stationed across the state transmitting data

through the TAF Disability Hub Application, there needed to be a central, physical space where that information could converge. The PWD Election Hub became the heart of TAF Africa's Election Day strategy (approach), a nerve center of democracy in action, designed to ensure that no report, no incident, and no voice went unheard.

1 Inside the Hub

That question birthed the PWD Election Hub, a physical coordination and command center established by TAF Africa to monitor, analyze, and respond to issues affecting voters with disabilities during the 2025 Anambra Governorship Election.

Observers' liaisons received calls, verified incidents, and categorized reports into themes: accessibility, security, assistive tools, priority voting, and general conduct.

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TAF Africa's Data Clerks at the PWD Election Hub

Observers' liaisons received calls, verified incidents, and categorized reports into themes: accessibility, security, assistive tools, priority voting, and general conduct.

2 Technology, Collaboration, and Real-Time Data Collection

At the core of the hub's operations was the TAF Disability Hub Application, a digital innovation that connected 150 trained observers across the 21 LGAs to the PWD Election Hub in Awka.

Each observer, equipped with a smartphone and the app, reported on key indicators: whether polling units were accessible, whether assistive tools were present, if priority voting was implemented, and whether PWDs faced any barriers or discrimination.

As reports came in, the app's backend system organized them into visual maps, charts,

and summaries displayed on a digital screen in the Hub. This allowed analysts to track patterns and flag areas requiring immediate attention.

Complementing this was the Third Eye feature, a public-facing tool that enabled ordinary citizens to submit verified incident reports.

THE THIRD EYE

An Eye-Witness Feature of TAF Disability Hub

The Third Eye: Eye-Witness Feature on the TAF Disability Hub

The synergy between digital tools, human observers, and institutional partners represented a revolution in electoral inclusion. Through this fusion of technology and trust, TAF Africa redefined how democracy could be monitored; transparently, inclusively, and in real time.

3 Stories from the Field

a Human-centered accounts from Stationary and roving observers through the TAF disability hub application.

“The security agents found someone who was sharing money at the polling unit and almost locked him up, and that brought some commotion between the party agents. Thanks,” - **Akunna Mmesoma – Enem Hall I, Otolu II, Nnewi North**

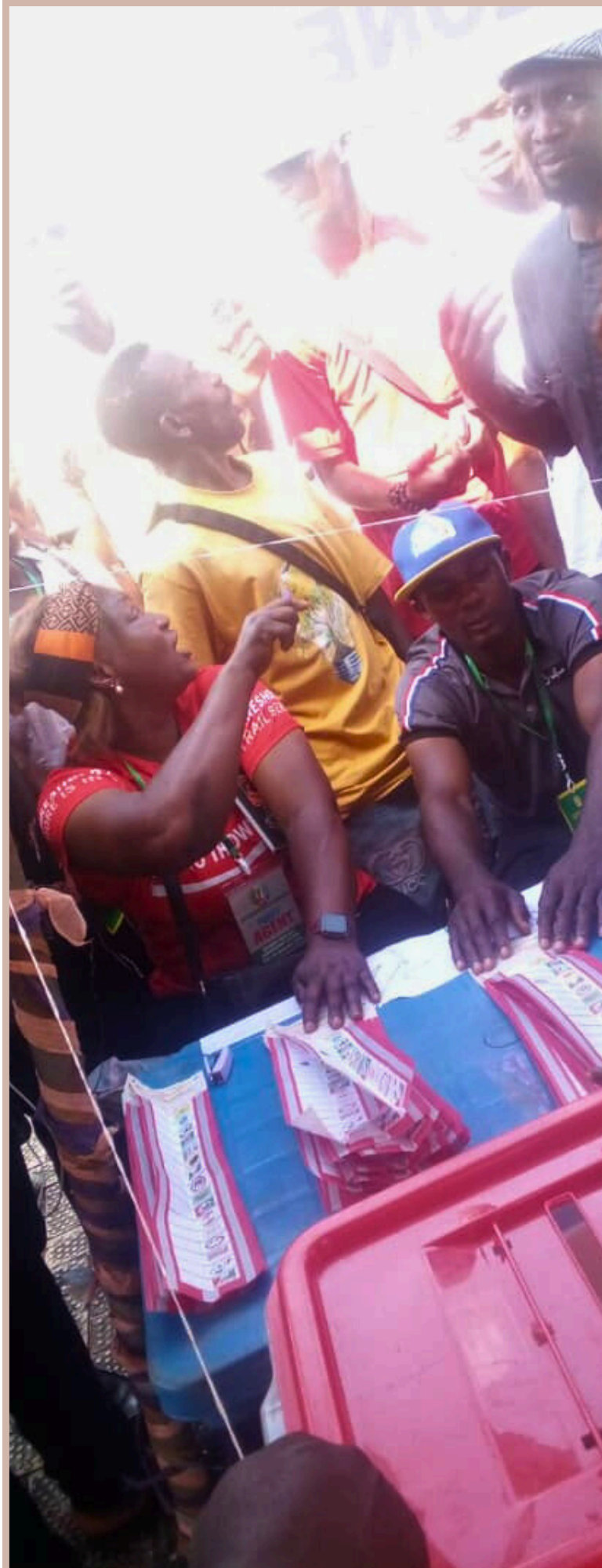
“As an observer with a physical disability, Form EC40H is not available in my polling unit.” - **Ikechukwu Dominic, Egbebelu Hall PU 008, Nanka Ward 1**

“The INEC officials here said they have no assistive device (braille ballot paper, magnifying lenses). A lady who they said is visually impaired came to vote. Some persons around (a few of whom I believe are party agents) said she cannot see, and one of them was allowed to assist her with the voting.” – **Chinenye Ikele - Isiakpu Hall III (Open Space Beside Isiakpu Hall), Nise I, Awka South**

“The PO assigned to migrant farmers primary school, Ukwulu ward, isn't available, and the second PO doesn't know how to upload the result in the IREV” – **Godson Dibor, Dunukofia, Ukwulu I, Migrant Farmer's School, Ukwulu**

“The PWD in my Polling unit requested for money before voting, He insisted that he must be given N5000 before casting a vote.” – **Sopuluchukwu Onyibor, Ayom Na Okpala Square II, Awka II, Awka South**

“There is no Braille ballot guide for a visually impaired voter at Igwebueze Primary School 1.” – **Joy Egwumba, Igbewueze Primary School I, Awka II, Awka South**



Candid Image on Election Day of Voters and INEC Officials

b Progress and Gaps: The Data Behind the Stories

In the early afternoon of the election day, preliminary data from the TAF Disability Hub App painted a nuanced picture of progress:

Indicator	Positive Compliance	Non-Compliance
Polling Unit Accessibility	89.58%	10.42%
Availability of Assistive Tools (Braille, Magnifiers, EC30PWD)	57.14%	42.86%
Priority Voting for PWDs	68.70%	31.30%
Security Officers Demonstrating Accessibility Awareness	36.10%	63.90%

c Challenge and Breakthrough

The hub's Election Day operation faced a few technical challenges. Five (5) observers in remote areas struggled with poor network connectivity, and this was rectified when they changed the locations and received better connectivity.

By the end of the day, the Hub had received hundreds of field reports, categorized, verified, and transformed into actionable insights, all in real time.

The PWD Election Hub had achieved what many once thought impossible: it made inclusion measurable, visible, and responsive.

The story of the PWD Election Hub is the story of how far Nigeria has come, and how much further it can go. It is proof that democracy can be both digital and human, both data-driven and deeply compassionate. Through the hub, TAF Africa built a system of accountability and inclusion that gave every citizen, with or without disability, a reason to believe in the power of participation.

And in doing so, it redefined what it means to watch democracy unfold.

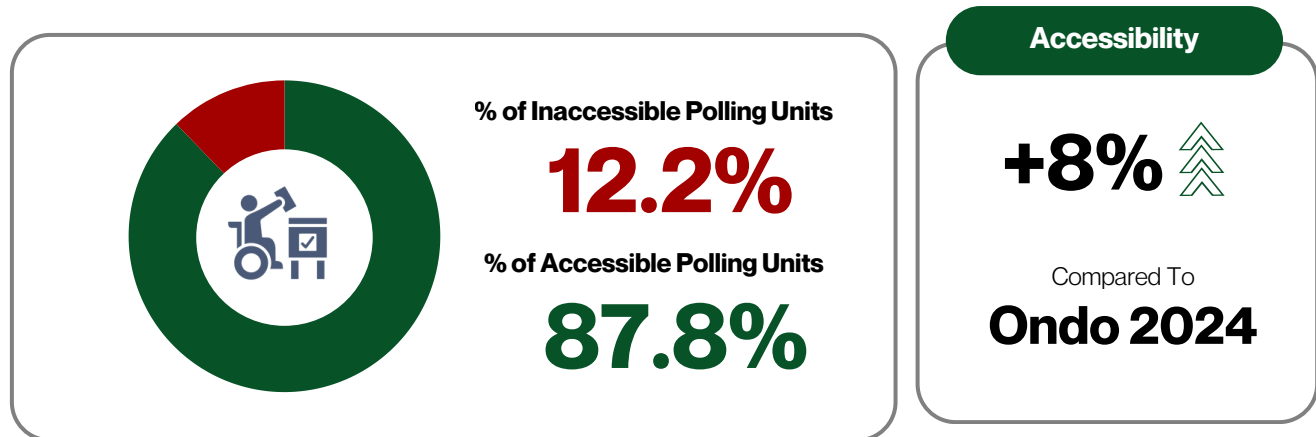


L - R: Head of Section, Democratic Governance, Migration, and Peace & Security, EU in Nigeria, Mr Ruben Alba Aguilera, ASLIN Anambra State Secretary, Enoch Emmanuel, and Programme Manager, Democracy, Rule of Law and Gender - Governance, Peace & Migration Section - Delegation of the European Union to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS, OlaOluwa Olawumi

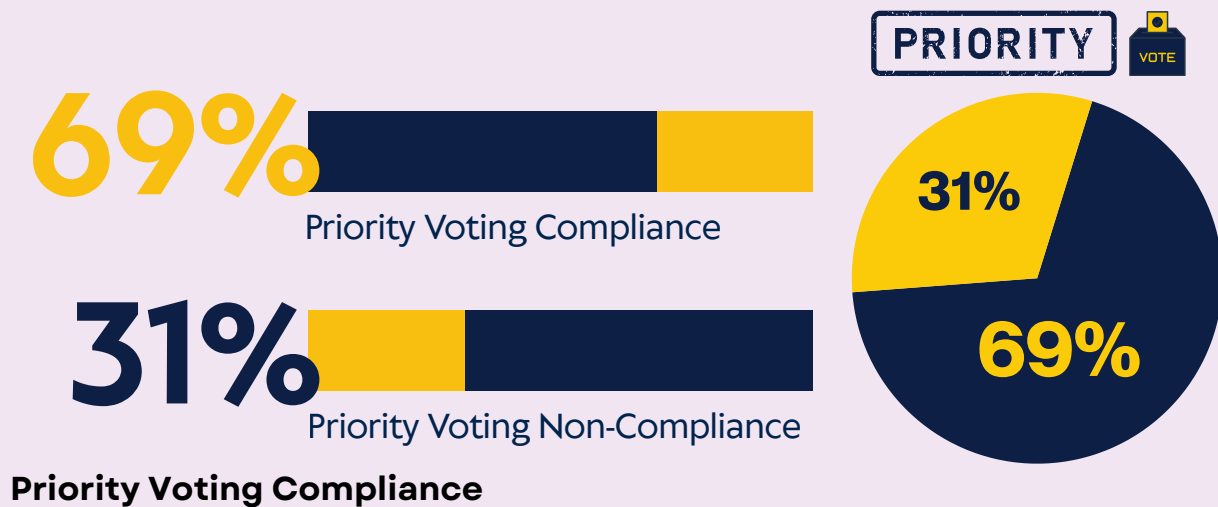
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA SPEAKS: WHAT THE NUMBERS TELL US

DATA SPEAKS: WHAT THE NUMBERS TELL US



Polling Unit Accessibility Compliance

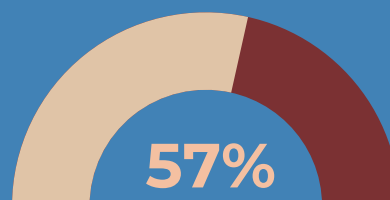


Priority Voting Compliance

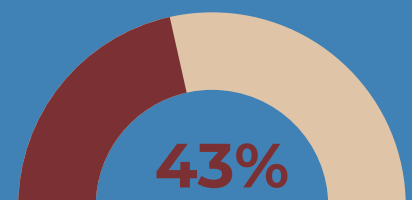


Assistive Tools Compliance

Deployment of Assistive Tools



**Assistive-Tools
Deployed**



**No Assistive
Tools Deployed**

A Comparison

Across Three (3) States

Priority Voting



#EDO2024

60%



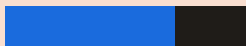
#ONDO2024

96%



#ANAMBRA2025

69%



Polling Unit Accessibility



EDO
2024

88%



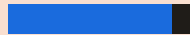
ONDO
2024

80%



ANAMBRA
2025

88%



Assistive Tools Deployment



60%



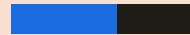
EDO
2024

60%



ONDO
2024

57%



ANAMBRA
2025

TAF POST-ELECTION ASSESSMENT



To ascertain the validity of the data provided by the 150 polling unit observers deployed by TAF Africa, a post-election assessment was conducted by TAF Africa to examine the level of disability inclusion, focusing on voter participation, accessibility of polling units, availability of assistive devices, and the overall voting experiences of persons with disabilities (PWDs).

A total of 130 PWD respondents participated in the survey, providing quantitative and qualitative insights into the inclusiveness of the electoral process.



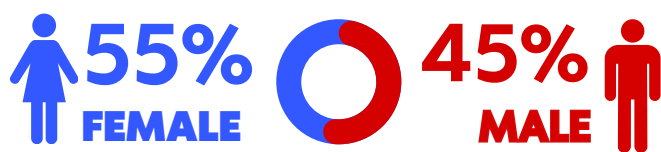
TAF Africa's Data Clerks at the PWD Election Hub

Findings

Participants' Demography

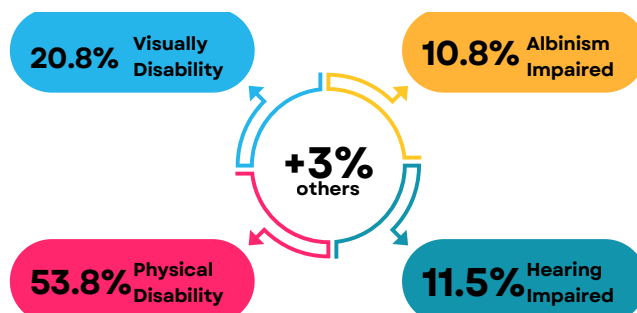


The survey shows slightly higher female participation (55%) compared to males (45%), with a large majority of respondents (83%) aged 18–45, indicating a predominantly younger voting population among persons with disabilities.



Respondent profiles reveal that most participants had physical disabilities (53.8%), followed by visual impairments (20.8%), hearing impairments (11.5%), albinism (10.8%), and other disabilities (3%), highlighting the diversity of disability representation. Overall, the disability types emphasize the importance of inclusive electoral strategies that address the

specific needs of all disability groups to ensure equitable participation.



The Impact of TAF Voter Education Campaigns

Voter turnout was strong, with 80% reporting they voted. The post-election survey revealed that 88% attended the TAF Able2Vote voter education campaign, and 83% felt it inspired them to vote, underscoring its impact.



Similarly, 73% engaged with TAF Live TV and other awareness initiatives, and 70% said these influenced their decision. However, 19% did not participate in any awareness activities, highlighting a gap in outreach that could be addressed in future voter education efforts. See figures 2a and 2b for more details.

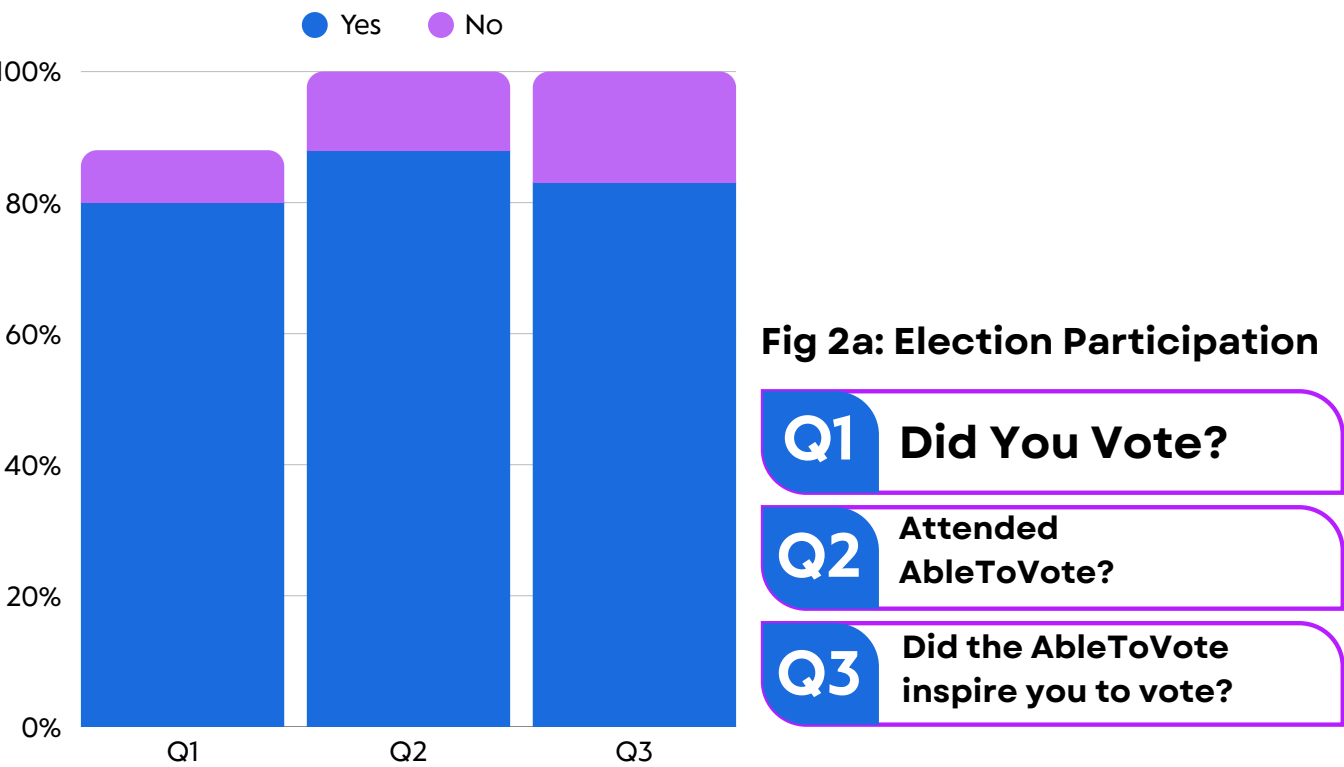
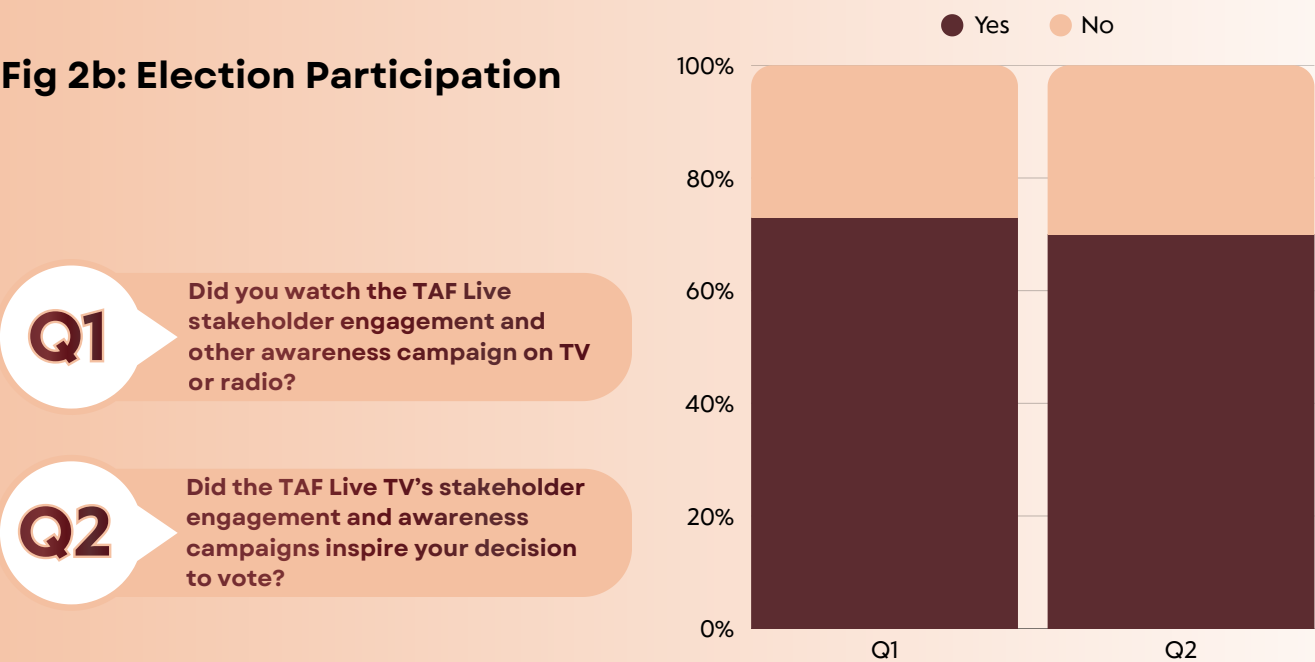


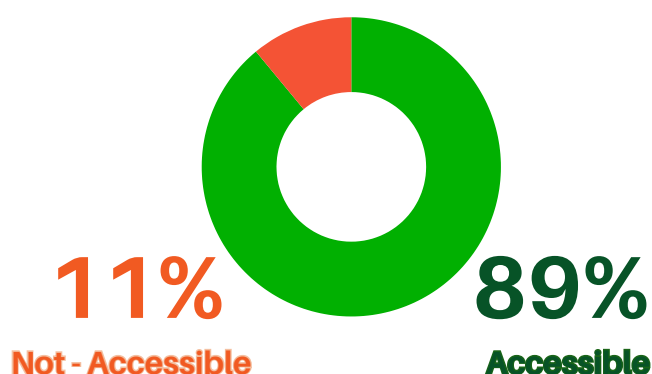
Fig 2b: Election Participation



Polling Unit Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodations

The findings show that 89% of respondents reported that their polling units were accessible and that they received priority or support when voting, while 11% did not. This reflects significant progress in accessibility and inclusion, indicating that most persons with disabilities experienced supportive polling environments during the 2025 Anambra State governorship election.

Fig 3: Polling Unit Accessibility



Administration of Form EC40H

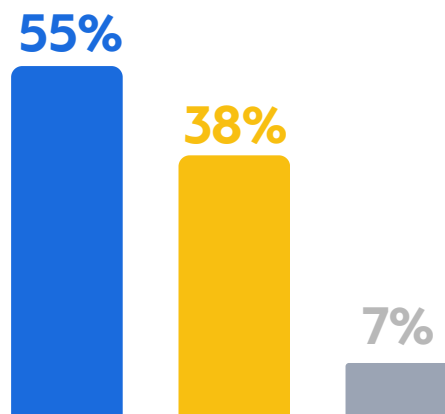


Fig 4: Given Form EC40h after voting

The survey shows that 55% of respondents did not complete Form EC 40H after voting, while 38% did, and 7% said it was not applicable as INEC already documented their disability status. The low completion rate signals gaps in inconsistencies in implementing disability-inclusive electoral procedures, underscoring the need for stronger training, logistics, and oversight to ensure consistent documentation in future elections.

Provision of Assistive Devices

The survey indicated that 35% of respondents received an assistive device, 31% did not, and 32% said it was unnecessary; probably they are persons with physical disability who probably did not require an assistive device. This reflects variability in accessibility support at polling units, with some voters assisted while others lacked support or did not require it.

Fig 5: Provision of Assistive Devices

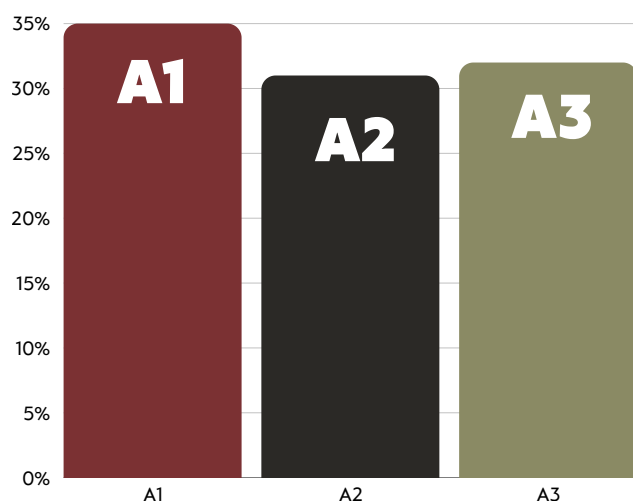
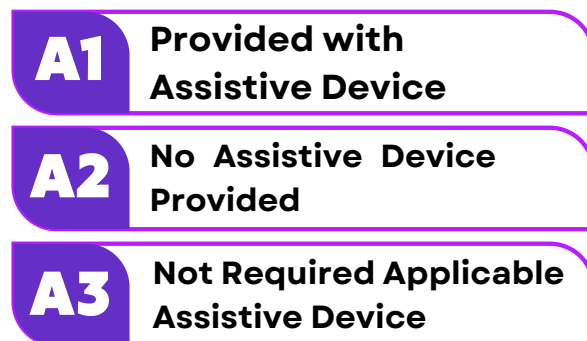


Fig 2a: Election Participation



Key Polling Unit Support Provided for Voters with Disability

Priority voting was the most common support at polling units, reported by 42% of respondents, while other measures such as sign language interpreters and braille guides (12% each), wheelchair access (9%), large-font posters (7%), and magnifying glasses (5%) were less frequent; 10% cited other forms of assistance. These findings highlight that while priority voting was widely implemented, other accessibility measures were inconsistent,

underscoring the need for more comprehensive and standardized support for persons with disabilities.

Fig 5: Support provided for PWDs during Voting

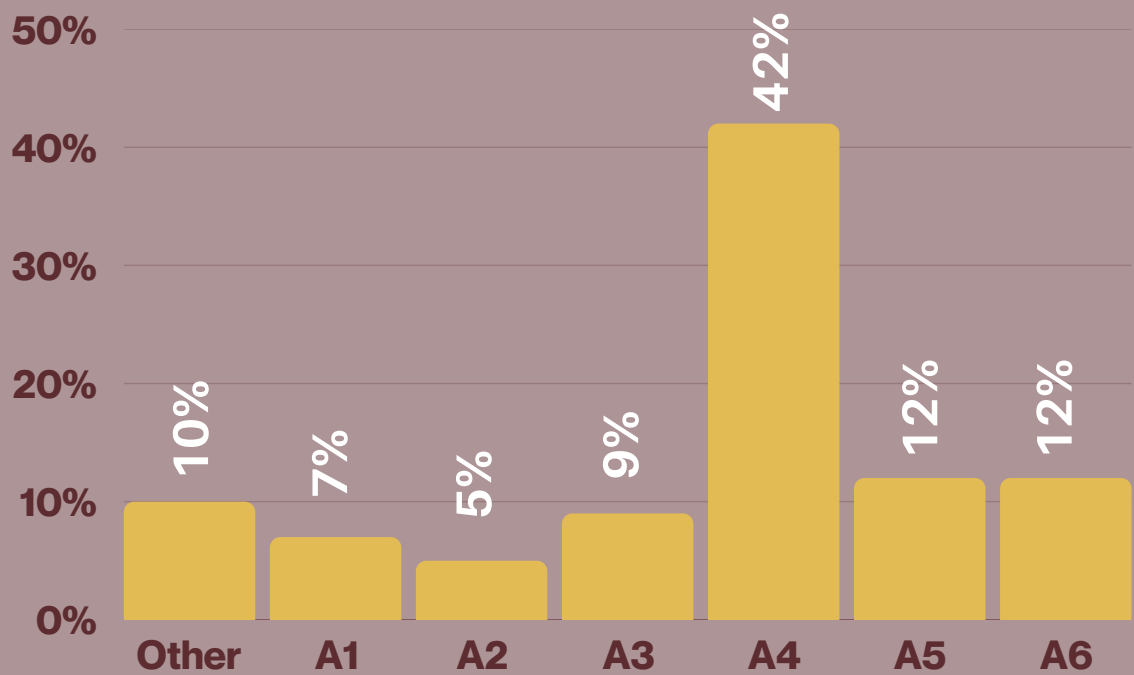


Chart Legend

- A1** Large Font Posters
- A2** Magnifying Glasses
- A3** Wheelchair Access
- A4** Priority Voting
- A5** Braille Ballot Guide
- A6** Sign Language Interpreters

Key Challenges/Barriers Experienced by PWDs During Voting

Transportation challenges 31% and lack of assistive devices 23% were the most reported barriers,, followed by inaccessible polling and attitudinal discrimination 12% each.

Other issues included limited accessible information 11%, security concerns 3%, and miscellaneous challenges 4%, underscoring persistent logistical and the need for improved mobility support, assistive tools, and inclusive voter education.

Fig 6: Challenges Experienced by PWDs during Voting

31%



Transportation Challenges

31% of Responders reported challenges with transportation on election day



12%

Attitudinal barriers

12% of Responders reported attitudinal discrimination on election day

3%



Security Threats

3% of Responders reported security threats, harassment, or intimidation



11%

Inaccessible Information

11% of Responders reported lack of information in accessible formats

12%



Inaccessible Polling Units

12% of Responders reported inaccessible polling units

23%



Absence of Assistive Devices

23% of Responders reported a lack of assistive devices at their polling unit



4%

Others

4% of Responders reported Other Challenges

Overall Experience of Voters with Disabilities

The survey revealed that 92% of respondents were satisfied with their voting experience, describing the process as peaceful and well-organized, with positive feedback on priority voting, sign



language interpretation, and TAF Africa's sensitization efforts.

Despite this progress, challenges such as transportation barriers, inaccessible polling units, lack of assistive devices, and inconsistent use of Form EC40H persisted, highlighting the need for better INEC staff training and more disability-friendly polling environments to ensure full and equitable participation in future elections.



George Anwayi, TAF Africa's Assistant Programme Manager, flanked by a deployed Sign Language Interpreter (Left) and a TAF Accredited Election Observer (Right)

Comparative analysis with previous elections (2023 - 2025)

TAF Africa's election observation missions over the last years reveal a steady improvement in disability inclusion since the 2023 general elections. The 2025 Anambra governorship election reflected notable progress in disability inclusion, with 89% of accessible polling units and priority support reported. However, gaps remain as only 38% completed Form EC40H, signalling weak enforcement of INEC procedures that relate to PWD inclusion.

Comparative trends show steady improvement since 2023, where priority voting for PWDs was observed at 83% of polling units in the Presidential election and 77% in the Gubernatorial

election, with accessibility still limited.

Subsequent off-cycle elections in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa showed incremental progress, recording accessibility levels of 85%, 78%, and 90%, respectively.

This upward trend continued in 2024, with the Ondo State Governorship election achieving 88% accessibility and 96% priority voting for PWDs, marking a significant leap compared to Edo, where 60% of polling units had assistive devices and 60% of PWDs received priority voting.

The TAF Africa's pre-election advocacy campaigns, such as Able2Vote and strategic media partnerships, were instrumental in driving awareness for effective participation by PWDs.

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FIVE

**LESSONS
LEARNED:
REFLECTIONS**

LESSONS LEARNED: REFLECTIONS

Comparative trends show steady improvement since 2023, where priority voting for PWDs was observed at 83% of polling units in the Presidential election and 77% in the Gubernatorial



What Worked: The Bright Spots

Effective Training

Observer

- Observers demonstrated professionalism, empathy, and resilience, even in difficult terrain.

The PWD Election Hub

- A true innovation structured, analytical, transparent.
- It merged human stories and data in real time.

The TAF Disability Hub App

- The real-time reporting system transformed the quality, speed, and visibility of PWD-related incidents.

SLI Deployment Pilot

- Deaf voters finally saw themselves reflected in the electoral process.

Media Engagement

- The narrative shifted; inclusion became a mainstream topic.

Stakeholder Commitment

- INEC and security agencies showed unprecedented levels of responsiveness.



What Didn't Work: The Hard Truths

Accessibility Gaps Persisted

- Some polling units remained unreachable for wheelchair users and elderly voters.

Assistive Tool Shortages

- Despite improvements, many units lacked braille guides or magnifying glasses.

Data Gaps

- INEC's incomplete PWD data affected planning accuracy and deployment decisions.

Communication Barriers

- Deaf voters in units without interpreters still struggled.

Systemic Attitudes Are Changing, But Slowly

- Some officials still viewed PWD support as optional or “kindness,” not a legal obligation.

These truths are difficult, but necessary.

Drawing from all voices and data, the following areas must be prioritized:

1 Structural Accessibility

Build and retrofit polling units to comply with the 2018 Disability Act.

2 Better Assistive Tool Deployment

Ensure every polling unit with registered persons with disabilities has essential tools for all disability categories.

3 Strengthening Data Systems

INEC must integrate rigorous disability data mapping into voter registration.

INEC should integrate digital or mobile versions of Form EC40H to reduce administrative lapses and ensure consistent issuance and completion across all polling units.



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Component 5B

Support to Persons with Disabilities

4 Scale Sign Language Interpretation Nationwide

The Anambra pilot proved that communication is a right, not a luxury.

5 Continuous Training for Officials

One-off training is not enough. Accessibility must be embedded into the culture of election management.

INEC should institutionalize mandatory disability inclusion modules in its training curriculum for election day officials and train ad hoc on disability etiquette, effective communication, and appropriate assistance for various disability types.

6 Awareness and Voter Education

TAF Africa to scale up the Able2Vote and other awareness programmes with special focus on rural communities where awareness gaps remain.

7 Strengthen Multi-stakeholder Collaboration

PWD inclusion thrives when government, civil society, citizens, and the media work as one.

INEC to partner with transport unions, security agencies, and disability organizations to provide accessible transportation support for PWDs on election day with designated drop-off/pick-up points close to polling units.

INEC and security agencies to establish disability-friendly hotlines, WhatsApp portals, and helpdesks during and after elections to address issues in real time.

Include disability representatives as national INEC commissioner in the election planning committees.

Toward a Democracy That Sees Everyone



Democracy is often spoken of as a system: institutions, laws, structures, processes. But in reality, democracy is a living thing. It breathes through people: their stories, their struggles, their triumphs, and their determination to be seen and heard.

Democracy is often spoken of as a system: institutions, laws, structures, processes. But in reality, democracy is a living thing. It breathes through people: their stories, their struggles

Does my society recognize me?

Does the system acknowledge my rights?

Will my voice matter when it counts?

Across months of preparation, across LGAs and communities, across training halls and TV studios, across polling units and the buzzing PWD

Election Hub, TAF Africa worked to ensure that the answer to these questions was yes; or at least closer to yes than ever before.

This mission was not carried by one organization alone; it was a Journey of Many Hands. It was held together by a coalition of partners, institutions, and individuals who chose to imagine an Anambra election where no voter was invisible.

- INEC officials who showed up with openness and willingness to learn.
- Security agencies who embraced a new understanding of protection.
- Media professionals who committed to reframing narratives and amplifying marginalized voices.

- Observers who walked difficult terrain, sometimes with disabilities of their own, to ensure others could participate without fear.
- Sign language interpreters whose presence at polling units became a symbol of what true accessibility looks like.
- Voters with disabilities whose courage and dignity reminded everyone why this work matters.
- The PWD Election Hub team, who transformed data into impact.

Yet, the Work Is Not Finished

The election also exposed gaps that must not be ignored

- inaccessible polling units
- uneven distribution of assistive tools
- incomplete disability data
- communication barriers at some voting points
- attitudinal biases that persist within institutions

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**THE WAY
FORWARD:
PUSHING THE
FRONTIERS OF
INCLUSION**



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THE WAY FORWARD: PUSHING THE FRONTIERS OF INCLUSION

INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS



FORWARD

The election revealed both milestones and shortcomings. It showcased courage, innovation, and collaboration, but also exposed persistent structural barriers that still silence, delay, or obstruct the participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs).

This chapter charts the path ahead. It is a blueprint for the next phase of reform; one that demands

intentionality, policy, resourcing, mindset transformation, and long-term institutional commitment. And it is anchored on a simple belief:

When every citizen participates without fear, without barriers, and without compromise, democracy becomes complete.



A PWD Voter at Ongoing Voting on Election Day



1 Strengthening INEC's Commitment to Disability-Inclusive Elections

INEC's progress in Anambra - from accessibility audits to modified training for ad hoc staff, to partial use of assistive tools and the EC40H PWD data form signals a growing willingness to protect and promote inclusion. Yet, much more must be done to transform inclusion from an initiative into an institutional standard.

Recommendations for INEC

A. Institutionalize Comprehensive Disability Data Validation

Accurate disability-disaggregated voter data is the foundation

for planning.

- Update and verify PWD voter records during every Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) cycle.
- Integrate disability fields into national voter databases.
- Use validated data to guide deployment of assistive tools

Without reliable data, even the best inclusion plans risk failure.

B. Standardize the Deployment of Assistive Tools Nationwide

Anambra revealed gaps - braille ballot guides and magnifying glasses were unavailable in many polling units where they were needed.

INEC must:

- Ensure mandatory deployment of assistive tools to all units with registered PWDs.
- Introduce a logistic verification checklist before election day.
- Adopt a “no polling unit opens without assistive tools” rule in high-density disability wards.

C. Mandatory Disability-Inclusion Training for All Ad Hoc Staff

Not optional. Not partial.
Not selective.

Training must cover:

- Identification of various disabilities
- Use of assistive tools
- Administration of Form EC40H
- Priority voting procedure under Section 54
- Ethical support and communication guidelines

The training must be standardized, tested, and evaluated before deployment.

D. Institutionalize Sign Language Interpreter (SLI) Deployment

The Anambra pilot demonstrated its effectiveness. Now it must be national policy. SLIs should be:

- Trained in partnership with OPDs
- Deployed to polling units with high concentrations of deaf voters
- Integrated into INEC's Election Day communication chain

E. Enforce Compliance and Accountability

Where polling officials fail to use assistive tools, deny priority voting, or neglect accessibility protocols, the system must respond.

- Introduce administrative sanctions.
- Deploy supervisors to verify compliance in real time.
- Treat inclusion violations as electoral breaches, not minor lapses.

2



Strengthening the Role of Security Agencies

Security agencies are not merely protectors of the election; they are protectors of dignity. Their conduct directly shapes whether PWDs feel safe enough to vote.

Recommendations for Security Agencies

- Expand disability-awareness and sign

- Deploy disability desk officers at the LGA level on election day.
- Treat every allegation of manipulation or coercion involving PWDs as high-risk.
- Prevent vote buying, which disproportionately targets PWDs, who often face economic vulnerabilities.
- Assign officers to assist with the safe navigation of polling environments for voters with physical disabilities

Security must not only neutralize threats; it must enable participation.

3



Strengthening Civil Society and Disability Organizations

Civil society amplified disability rights in Anambra through voter education, observation, advocacy, training, and media engagement. But this must evolve into a sustained, year-round intervention.

Recommendations for Security Agencies

- Expand disability-focused voter education in rural communities.
- Strengthen monitoring of political parties and campaign activities.
- Provide pre-election legal clinics and rights awareness sessions for PWDs.

- Collaborate with INEC to validate PWD data.
- Lead nationwide advocacy for institutionalising sign language interpreter deployment.
- Train more PWDs as election observers and civic educators.

When civil society remains vigilant, democracy becomes accountable.

4



Responsibilities of the Media

The media shapes public perception. It shapes culture. It shapes the narrative of belonging.

Recommendations for Media Institutions

- Adopt inclusive language and disability

disability-sensitive reporting.

- Collaborate with OPDs to ensure accuracy.
- Spotlight inclusion gaps and commend institutional improvements.
- Report cases of voter manipulation, especially those targeting PWDs.
- Ensure accessible media formats - including captions, sign language interpretation, and audio-friendly reporting.

When the media tells the right stories, society listens differently and reforms faster.

5



Expectations from Government and Legislators

Political will is the engine of inclusion. Without it, reforms stall.

Recommendations for Government

- Fund full enforcement of the Disability Act 2018.
- Prioritise accessible infrastructure in schools, community halls, and other polling spaces.
- Institutionalize disability desks across ministries and state agencies.
- Encourage political appointment of qualified persons with disabilities.

- Make disability inclusion a mandatory requirement for state-level electoral logistics planning.

Inclusion must become a budget line, not a goodwill gesture.

6



Scaling TAF Africa's Innovations Nationwide

Anambra revealed that innovation is actionable, measurable, and replicable.

Key TAF Africa innovations that should be scaled nationally:

- **PWD Election Hub** - a real-time, public-facing space for data, coordination, and accountability.



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- **TAF Disability Hub Application** - combining observer reports, citizen submissions, and data visualisation.
- **Third Eye Feature** - empowering citizens to report PWD-related incidents throughout the electoral cycle.
- **Observer Model** - disability-focused observers trained specifically on inclusion indicators.
- **Sign Language Interpreter Deployment Blueprint** - a tested model for nationwide adoption.

**Inclusion as a Shared Responsibility.
Inclusivity will not advance by accident.**

It must be:

- **Funded**
- **Prioritized**
- **Measured**
- **Institutionalized**
- **Expanded**
- **Monitored**
- **Protected**
- **Sustained**



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Appendix I

DISTRIBUTION OF 25 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ACCORDING TO POLLING UNITS, LGAS, AND SENATORIAL DISTRICTS



#AnambraDecides2025



TAF AFRICA'S SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS (SLI) DEPLOYMENT

Anambra North	Anambra Central	Anambra South
Onitsha South	Awka South Idemili North Idemili South Njikoka Anaocha	Nnewi South Orumba South Orumba North



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Appendix II

PRE-ELECTION PRESS STATEMENT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE 2025 ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

As Anambra State prepares for its governorship election on Saturday, November 8, 2025, the participation of all eligible voters, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), remains a critical test of Nigeria's commitment to inclusive democracy. Elections offer not only a platform for citizens to choose their leaders but also an opportunity to measure the extent to which democratic processes are accessible to everyone, irrespective of physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities.

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), a total of 2,802,790 voters are registered to participate in the election, including 3,456 persons with disabilities. However, the absence of disaggregated data on PVC collection among persons with disabilities raises concern, as such data is essential for effective electoral planning and inclusive participation. Sixteen (16) political parties are fielding candidates in the election, yet none have nominated a person with a disability, reflecting the continued gap in political inclusion and representation.



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PRE-ELECTION PRESS STATEMENT ON THE PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE 2025 ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

The 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election presents a vital opportunity to assess how far Nigeria has progressed in guaranteeing equal electoral participation for citizens with disabilities. TAF Africa's observation mission aims to provide an evidence-based evaluation of INEC's compliance with the provisions of Section 54 (1 & 2) of the Electoral Act (2022), which mandates the use of assistive tools and inclusive measures for PWD voters.

The exercise will generate valuable data to highlight existing gaps and successes in accessibility, assistive provisions, and voter experience for persons with disabilities. Beyond data collection, this monitoring effort emphasizes TAF Africa's firm belief that inclusive elections are stronger, fairer, and more credible elections, because no democracy can truly thrive when over 30 million Nigerians with disabilities remain on the margins of political life.

TAF AFRICA'S OBSERVATION METHODOLOGY AND DEPLOYMENT PLAN

Under our Persons with Disabilities Election Hub (PWD Election Hub), TAF Africa has deployed a team of 150 trained observers across the three senatorial districts of Anambra State. The observers are strategically placed in polling units with the highest number of registered PWD



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Appendix II

voters. The deployment team consists of 134 stationary polling unit observers and 16 roving media observers..

Observers will monitor the availability of assistive tools such as:

- Braille Ballot Guides for blind voters,
- Magnifying Glasses for voters with albinism and,
- Form EC 30E PWD for deaf voters.

They will also observe the level of compliance with priority voting rights for persons with disabilities, accessibility of polling units, attitude of polling officials toward PWDs, communication experience of deaf voters, and the overall experience of voters with disabilities at the polls.

All observation efforts will be data-driven and technology-enabled. TAF Africa's upgraded TAF Disability Hub mobile application has been redesigned to enhance user interface (UI), user experience (UX), and functionality for improved performance, real-time reporting, and data accuracy. Through this app, observers will transmit verified information to the PWD Election Hub, where data will be aggregated, analysed, and displayed on a live Election Monitoring Dashboard for timely decision-making. The dashboard is available for use by the Public and can be accessed via <https://electionhub.org.ng/>.



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The app's prominent citizen reporting feature, The Third Eye, empowers every Nigerian to act as a defender of democracy by reporting, in real time, any incident that affects persons with disabilities, whether it involves accessibility challenges, intimidation, or denial of rights. The app is available for download on both the Play Store and App Store. an evidence-based evaluation of INEC's compliance with the provisions of Section 54 (1 & 2) of the Electoral Act (2022), which mandates the use of assistive tools and inclusive measures for PWD voters.

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR DEAF VOTERS

To address the persistent communication barriers faced by deaf voters, TAF Africa, in partnership with INEC, has trained and will deploy 25 sign language interpreters to polling units with the highest concentration of deaf voters across Anambra State. Their presence at these polling units will ensure that deaf voters can receive instructions, interact with polling officials, and cast their votes independently and confidently.

This initiative represents a major step forward in providing adaptive communications, thereby deepening electoral accessibility for the deaf community in Nigeria. The intervention is being piloted at the state level, and insights from its implementation will inform a



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Appendix II

post-election report that will provide INEC with practical guidance toward the national adoption of sign language interpretation as a standard feature of Nigeria's electoral process.

TAF Africa strongly appeals to all political actors, security agencies, and citizens of Anambra State to uphold peace, tolerance, and non-violence during the election, in line with the peace accord signed by the candidates. Violence and insecurity not only undermine the credibility of the electoral process but also disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, many of whom face additional mobility, sensory, and communication barriers during crises.

We urge communities, traditional institutions, political parties, and voters to prioritize peace and inclusivity. A calm and orderly election day will guarantee that every voter, especially those with disabilities, can safely and freely exercise their right to vote.

The participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes is a defining measure of democratic maturity and inclusiveness. Through the PWD Election Hub, TAF Africa continues to champion an inclusive democracy, one that guarantees persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully, freely, and with dignity in choosing their leaders.



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Appendix II

All TAF Africa's interventions for the 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election, including the PWD Election Hub, the Third Eye, and the deployment of sign language interpreters, are made possible with funding support from the European Union through its European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme.

Signed:

Dr. Amina Bala Zakari
Chair, PWD Election Hub
TAF AFRICA

Amb. Jake Epelle
CEO/Founder
TAF AFRICA



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Appendix III

POST-ELECTION PRESS STATEMENT BY TAF AFRICA ON THE PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs) IN THE 2025 ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

TAF Africa, with funding support from the European Union under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EUSDGN II) Programme, observed the 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election through the deployment of 150 trained citizens and roving media observers, as well as 25 trained sign language interpreters across the 21 Local Government Areas of the state. The observation was coordinated through the TAF Disability Hub Application, a central data-driven monitoring system designed to track accessibility, assistive tools, and voter experiences of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in real time.

This initiative reflects TAF Africa's firm commitment to advancing the political participation of PWDs and promoting inclusive democratic processes in Nigeria. The 2025 Anambra Governorship Election provided an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the



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Appendix III

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other stakeholders are upholding the rights of Persons with Disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others, in line with the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER DEPLOYMENT

As part of TAF Africa's accessibility intervention, 25 trained Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) were strategically deployed to polling units with significant numbers of deaf voters to bridge communication barriers and promote inclusive participation. Some of the polling units where SLIs were deployed include the Village Hall Polling Unit, Ward 1, Njikoka Local Government Area, and Central Primary School, Odoakpu, Ward II, Onitsha South Local Government Area.

The presence of SLIs in these polling units enabled several deaf voters to communicate more effectively with INEC officials and exercise their franchise independently. This pilot deployment demonstrated the practical value and impact of having professional interpreters at polling stations, setting a precedent for future elections and reinforcing the necessity of institutionalizing such measures by INEC.



Appendix III

KEY FIELD FINDINGS

According to INEC data, Awka South LGA, Igwebueze Primary School 1 & 3, Polling Units 001 and 014 (Awka Ward 2), were recorded as having registered voters with albinism. Consequently, INEC was expected to deploy magnifying glasses at these locations. However, our observation teams reported that blind voters also turned out to vote but could not do so independently due to the absence of braille ballot guides, and even the magnifying glasses expected for voters with albinism were unavailable.

While we commend the issuance of Form EC40H: PWD Voter Information and Statistics form across several polling units, there were instances of non-compliance as some INEC ad hoc staff were unaware of the form's purpose or existence.

In Awka I Ward, Ayom Na Okpala Square II PU, a voter with albinism struggled to vote due to the absence of a magnifying glass. Similarly, at Nise Ward I, Isiakpu Hall III PU, a deaf voter was observed being taken aside by a woman believed to be a party agent, who appeared to be convincing him on whom to vote for, raising concerns of voter manipulation and vote buying involving a person with a disability. A visually impaired woman at the same polling unit also received assistance from someone believed to be a party agent, undermining the secrecy and independence of her vote.



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Appendix III

In Nando Ward III, Anambra East LGA, and Mgbakwu Ward I, Awka North LGA, voters with albinism and visual impairment, respectively, were unable to vote independently due to the non-availability of magnifying glasses and braille ballot guides. In Nnewi North LGA, some PWDs struggled to locate their new polling units due to changes not effectively communicated.

Instances of vote trading were recorded in multiple LGAs. In Idemili North (Umuoji Ward, Ideoma Hall I PU), party agents were observed discreetly engaging voters, including PWDs, and offering ₦1,000 in exchange for votes. In Ogbaru LGA (Ogbaru Main Market, Okpoko Ward I), a female party agent was reportedly seen distributing ₦5,000 to voters on behalf of a political party (APGA). It is important to emphasize that vote buying disproportionately affects voters with disabilities, many of whom face socioeconomic vulnerabilities and are often targeted by party agents seeking to exploit their circumstances. Such practices not only undermine the dignity and autonomy of PWD voters but also erode the integrity of the electoral process itself.

Despite these irregularities, the overall election atmosphere remained peaceful, with minimal incidents of violence or intimidation.



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Appendix III

GENERAL OBSERVATION

Data transmitted from our observers via the TAF Disability Hub Application showed that INEC officials arrived on time at about 62% of the polling units observed. In comparison, voting commenced promptly in 67.6% of those locations. Security personnel were present in 35.2% of the polling units, contributing to a largely peaceful environment in 99.3% of the areas monitored. The provision of assistive devices was, however, significantly low at 32%, even though 89.4% of polling units were physically accessible to voters with disabilities. Priority voting was granted in 74.8% of cases, while 35.2% of polling stations had PWDs serving as INEC ad hoc staff. Encouragingly, 68.3% of the electorate demonstrated a positive attitude towards PWDs during the process. Nonetheless, 5.8% of PWD voters were unable to vote due to accessibility barriers, procedural lapses, or inadequate assistive support.

While the election was largely peaceful, with minimal cases of violence or disruption, the data indicate persistent structural and operational gaps in the inclusivity of the electoral process for persons with disabilities.



Appendix III

COMMENDABLE PRACTICES

TAF Africa acknowledges INEC's introduction and partial use of Form EC 40H: PWD Voter Information and Statistics, a step towards improving disability data collection during elections. However, pockets of non-compliance persisted, largely due to insufficient awareness among ad hoc staff.

The peaceful conduct of the election, the professional presence of security personnel, and the generally positive disposition of voters toward PWDs are commendable indicators of progress in Nigeria's democratic space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- **Strengthen Disability Data Validation:** INEC should periodically update and verify disability-disaggregated voter data to ensure accurate deployment of assistive tools and materials.
- **Improve Logistics and Deployment of Assistive Devices:** Ensure that magnifying glasses, braille ballot guides, and other assistive tools reach polling units where they are needed.



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- **Institutionalize Mandatory Training:** All ad hoc officials should receive compulsory training on disability inclusion, the administration of Form EC40H, and the proper handling of assistive tools.
- **Enforce Sanctions for Non-Compliance:** Supervisors and presiding officers who neglect inclusion protocols should be held accountable to strengthen internal compliance mechanisms.

To Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Media:

- Sustain advocacy and voter education targeting both PWDs and the general electorate on the importance of inclusive participation and accessible voting environments.
- Strengthen media monitoring and public accountability efforts to expose and deter voter manipulation or exploitation of PWDs.

To Political Parties:

- Mainstream disability inclusion in party structures and campaign processes, ensuring accessibility during rallies and equitable representation of PWDs as candidates, party agents, and mobilizers.

To Security Agencies:

- **Increase Presence and Responsiveness:** Strengthen security presence in and around polling units to deter voter inducement, especially where vulnerable groups like PWDs are targeted.

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- Protect the Integrity of the Process: Act promptly on reports of vote trading, intimidation, or exploitation of persons with disabilities to preserve electoral fairness.

Conclusion

TAF Africa commends INEC, security agencies, and other stakeholders for the largely peaceful conduct of the 2025 Anambra State Governorship Election. However, the continued exclusion of voters with disabilities due to inadequate assistive materials, weak training of officials, and cases of undue influence demands urgent and sustained attention.

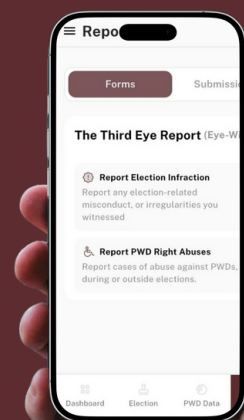
As an implementing partner under the EU-SDGN II Programme, TAF Africa maintains its commitment to promoting inclusive, credible, and accessible elections in Nigeria. Through the TAF Disability Hub, the organization will continue to provide data-driven insights to inform electoral reforms, especially for the adequate inclusion of voters with disabilities.

Signed:

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ANAMBRA 2025 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION REPORT: CAN DEMOCRACY BE COMPLETE WITHOUT INCLUSION?



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