



In the Month of May, TAF Africa explored the questions of shaping inclusion and democracy. This edition highlights ongoing efforts to advance disability inclusion across governance, civic engagement, political participation, and public discourse in Nigeria.

From community town halls and media engagements to electoral inclusion initiatives and policy conversations, the stories featured here reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that persons with disabilities are not only represented in principle but included in practice. Together, these updates show that meaningful inclusion requires sustained awareness, collaborative action, and systems that work for everyone.

Read the full newsletter for Disability Inclusion. Democratic Participation. Real Stories.

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## BEYOND THE LAW: WHY AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION MATTER



In Nigeria, laws exist to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities but for many persons with disabilities, the challenge of inclusion is not due to the absence of a law but the translation to everyday life. Access to public services, participation in community life, and the exercise of their rights without barriers are the more difficult issues.

This reality came into sharp focus during TAF Africa's Stakeholder Engagement and Town Hall Meeting in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, where persons with disabilities, community leaders, government representatives, and civil society actors gathered to discuss the implementation of the Delta State Disability Law. This intervention came under the Disability, Rights, Advocacy Project for Inclusive Development (D-RAPID) supported by the European Union.

Among the participants at the townhall was Mr. Obrogor, a wheelchair user who shared a challenge familiar to many persons with physical disabilities. Despite legal provisions promoting accessibility, he noted that several public buildings in



the area remain difficult or impossible for wheelchair users to access. His concern reflected a broader conversation during the town hall: that while policies and laws provide a framework for inclusion, meaningful change depends on implementation at the community level. Mrs. Dora, a participant with visual impairment, highlighted explained that many persons with disabilities miss out on government programmes and opportunities because information is often not provided in accessible formats. Her contribution underscored the importance of ensuring that communication is designed to reach everyone, regardless of disability.

These experiences reinforced the purpose of the town hall meeting. Beyond raising awareness of the Delta State Disability Law, the engagement created a platform for persons with disabilities to share their lived realities directly with stakeholders and contribute recommendations for improving disability inclusion. The meeting also secured commitments from traditional rulers and community leaders to support awareness creation and promote inclusive practices within their communities,

demonstrating that disability inclusion requires action from all levels of society.

TAF Africa continues to bridge the gap between policy and practice by creating spaces where persons with disabilities can be heard, barriers can be identified, and stakeholders can work collectively towards lasting solutions. Because true inclusion is achieved not only when rights are protected on paper, but when they are experienced in everyday life.

## MAINSTREAMING PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Political inclusion for persons with disabilities (PWDs) is not a favour; it is a right. It is not optional; it is essential for democracy. It is not an act of kindness; it is a constitutional obligation. However, this ideal is still far from the realities we live in. TAF Africa, through the Able2Run Electability campaign, is ensuring that society sees, acknowledges and supports persons with disability not only to participate as voters but to contest for elective offices across Nigeria.

The question is no longer whether persons with disabilities belong in political leadership. The question is how to increase their chances of getting elected and to hold appointive positions because despite years of advocacy, the numbers tell a sobering story. A recent TAF Africa research highlights that only four persons with disabilities have held elective positions nationwide, compared to over 200 available appointive roles. This disparity underscores the urgent need to move beyond tokenism and create pathways for meaningful political participation and leadership.



This is why TAF Africa with support from the European Union, under the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme, brought together media partners at a press conference to discuss the disparity in the number of persons with disabilities appointed to public office and their continued underrepresentation in elective positions. It was an opportunity to spotlight this all-important issue within public discourse, to present evidence of the representation gap and to rally the institutions capable of changing it.

In a democracy, representation is not achieved through silence; it requires sustained

public engagement, political commitment, and collective action. Persons with disabilities continue to vote, participate in civic life, and contribute to national development, yet response from society and governance regarding inclusive practices remain alarmingly low. The press conference sought to highlight the persistent challenge of exclusion in governance and to stress that true inclusion requires equitable access to political power, leadership opportunities, and decision-making processes.

TAF Africa continues to create a platform for media organisations, disability advocates, development partners, and the public to confront a critical reality and to build the momentum needed to transform political inclusion from an aspiration into a measurable reality.

## **MEDIA LEADERS JOINING HANDS TO STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE ELECTION COVERAGE IN EKITI**



For ages, the media has been responsible for pushing narratives and engraining how society sees or responds to issues. Elections are no different. And even more salient is the way persons with disabilities are represented. As Ekiti state prepares for its upcoming governorship election,

TAF Africa is taking an important step to make electoral coverage more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

We recognise that if editorial and reporting standards are to be inclusive, then there must be an understanding of the fundamental issues that propagate exclusion and agreement on the ways forward. This is the backdrop against which TAF Africa



with support from the European Union, under the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) Programme, brought together media executives, regulators, and leaders from the disability community for a reflection meeting focused on inclusive reporting. The idea pursued is simple but powerful: create a space where key players in the media can pause, reflect, and rethink how election stories are told, especially when it comes to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and women.

The meeting held in collaboration with partners like the International Press Centre (IPC), the Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO), and Nigeria Women Trust Fund (NWTF), explored what's working, what's not, and what needs to change as regards inclusive media practices. Participants engaged in honest conversations about gaps in representation, barriers to access, and how to apply existing inclusivity guidelines in everyday reporting.

The meeting sparked commitment from media executives committing to more inclusive editorial practices owing to the awareness gained. The heart of this effort

pursued a clear goal to ensure that everyone—regardless of ability or gender—has equal access to information and a fair chance to participate in the democratic process. By strengthening inclusive reporting, TAF Africa is helping to shape a media landscape that truly reflects and serves all citizens in Ekiti State.

## **ABLE2VOTE OUTREACH: STRENGTHENING DISABILITY INCLUSION AHEAD OF EKITI 2026**

Oye, Ikere, Ado North, Moba, Ado West, Ado Central. Six communities. Six local



government areas. One clear message: persons with disabilities are #Able2Vote. As part of preparations for the Ekiti 2026 Governorship Election, TAF Africa successfully concluded the Able2Vote Community Outreach across Ekiti State, engaging disability communities simultaneously across multiple locations. The outreach focused on strengthening awareness of electoral rights and deepening civic participation among persons with disabilities.

Across these engagements, TAF Africa worked directly with members of the disability community to reinforce the awareness of their rights as citizens and to

amplify their expectations of key electoral stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, the media, and political actors.



The outreach is part of broader efforts to ensure that electoral processes are not only participatory in principle but also accessible in practice for all citizens, regardless of disability. The Able2Vote Outreach reinforces a

simple but fundamental principle: democracy is strongest when it is accessible to all citizens. Through sustained community engagement and advocacy, TAF Africa continues to create spaces where citizens with disabilities can not only express their rights but also demand systems that respect and enable their participation.

An inclusive democracy is not an aspiration. It is a responsibility!

## **CITIZENS TOWNHALL: STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL COMMITMENTS AHEAD OF EKITI GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION**

Spaces like the Ekiti Decides Citizens Townhall create space to assess electoral preparedness and surface key gaps. As the Ekiti 2026 election approaches its final stages, it was imperative to bring together key electoral stakeholders and members of the public to advance dialogue on a credible, safe, transparent, and inclusive election. This forum was made possible by the Civil Society Network on Election Integrity, comprising The Kukah Centre, Yiaga Africa, Nigeria Women Trust Fund, International Press Centre, Centre for Media and Society, and TAF Africa.

The conversations surfaced a critical question that affects every voter: whether



the systems being put in place will allow all citizens, regardless of ability, to participate meaningfully and safely. The townhall which featured contributions from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Nigeria Police Force, and civil society actors, outlined ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening electoral integrity and ensuring a peaceful electoral process ahead of the Ekiti 2026 Governorship Election.

Stakeholders within the disability community, including the Chairman of the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) in Ekiti State, Mr Aina Sesan, raised critical concerns affecting electoral participation. Some concerns raised included the availability and effectiveness of sign language interpreters, security arrangements for visually impaired voters, and the need for priority voting and climate-sensitive arrangements for persons with albinism, who face heightened health risks when exposed to prolonged sunlight.

The townhall provided a structured platform for persons with disabilities to directly engage with electoral institutions on issues affecting their participation as citizens. It also allowed stakeholders to listen, respond, and reflect on the realities of implementing inclusive electoral processes at scale. TAF Africa ensured disability

inclusion was elevated within the broader electoral conversation.

## WHAT THE EKITI PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT MEANS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

Free, fair, and credible elections do not happen by chance. They are the result



of deliberate planning, adequate preparation, and the collective commitment of stakeholders to identify and address potential challenges before election day.

As Ekiti State prepares for the June 20 Governorship Election, members of the Election Observation Hub comprising the Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO), ElectHER, the International Press Centre (IPC), Nigeria Women Trust Fund (NWTF), Yiaga Africa, The Kukah Centre, and TAF Africa with support from the European Union through the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Programme launched the Ekiti State Off-Cycle Governorship Election Pre-Assessment Report.

The report offers an evidence-based review of the electoral environment and highlights key issues that could influence the credibility, inclusiveness, and peaceful conduct of the election. The report highlights that for an election to be credible, it must pass the test for transparency, inclusiveness, and peaceful democratic processes. This reinforces a message TAF Africa has consistently championed: that it is not just who wins an election that is important, but the ability for all citizens to be able to participate is the true measure for a successful election.

This report is more than a diagnostic exercise. It is an opportunity to bring critical electoral issues to public conversations and encourage timely action from institutions responsible for delivering a credible election. Areas requiring attention, include election security, vote buying, voter confidence, logistics preparedness, misinformation, and the inclusion of women, youths, and persons with disabilities.

As election day approaches, it is clear that this election will be measured not only by the absence of violence or the efficiency of logistics; but also, by the extent to which every eligible voter can participate without barriers.

Download the full report here: <https://eusdgn.org/ekiti-state-off-cycle-governorship-election-pre-assessment-report/>

## **A NEW PATHWAY FOR DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE POLITICS: TAF AFRICA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EU-DAI EXPERT TEAM ON ELECTORAL REFORM**

Mainstreaming disability requires the consistent effort of every stakeholder. In this



regard, TAF Africa recently hosted the EU-DAI Expert Team comprising Ralph-Peters, Flo Ganoux, and Okechukwu Ndeche, to engage on a pivotal development in Nigeria's political and electoral landscape: the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) requirement for political parties to submit an electronic voter

register.

This reform marks a shift towards a more data-driven political system, with significant implications for visibility and accountability within party structures. The policy holds immense implications; it addresses a long-standing gap on the absence of reliable information on how many persons with disabilities are active within political parties, and at what levels of participation. Access to this data is a crucial step toward ensuring that political parties can intentionally plan for, include, and support PWDs within their internal structures and candidate selection processes.

As TAF Africa—Disability Inclusion Champions, this means that we can engage in targeted advocacy for political appointments, push for structural party inclusion, and support PWD candidates vying for office. This strategic interaction with the EU-DAI Expert Team further strengthens our conviction that true democratic progress happens when inclusion is intentional, measurable, and structural.

Importantly, this reform moment comes at a time when Nigeria continues to grapple with persistent underrepresentation of persons with disabilities in political leadership. In this context, the availability of credible, disaggregated data is not just a technical improvement; it is a governance tool that can influence who is seen, who is supported, and ultimately, who is elected.



TAF Africa's MicAbility Podcast is just a click away!

Missed an episode?

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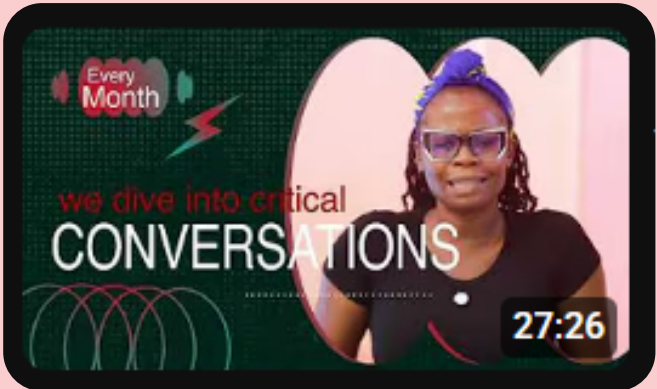
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Part 1: Love or Fetish? The Struggles...



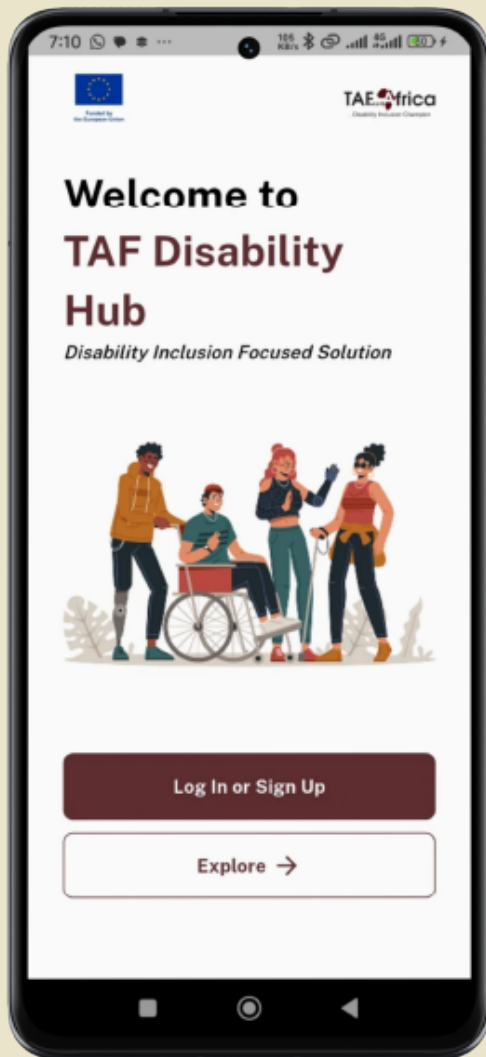
Can you marry a person with disability?

From highlighting disability rights, breaking down obstacles in education and employment inclusion, to sharing the inspirational tales of Nigerian changemakers, there is something for everyone—whether you are a student, professional, advocate, or simply curious about creating a more inclusive society.

Your view counts, your voice matters, and together we can amplify change!

Watch now and be part of the movement: [bit.ly/taf-micability](https://bit.ly/taf-micability)

## TAF Disability Hub App



Scan to Download the Disability Hub App to report violations against Persons with Disabilities, track polling unit opening times, monitor voter turnout, and more...



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