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TAF Africa
...Disability Inclusion Champion

ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT

Disability-Inclusive Elections in Ekiti



Monitoring the participation of persons with disabilities in
the 2026 Ekiti State Gubernatorial Off-Cycle Election

JUNE 2026

Implemented under the **European Union Support to Democratic Governance in
Nigeria (EU-SDGN)** Programme



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ELECTION DAY: 20 JUNE 2026 REPORT PREPARED: JUNE 2026

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations and acronyms recur throughout this report.

ACRONYM	MEANING
ASLIN	Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Nigeria
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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Long before voters arrived at polling units across Ekiti State on election day, TAF Africa had begun laying the groundwork for an inclusive electoral process that would ensure that persons with disabilities were not left behind. Recognizing that meaningful participation in elections requires more than election-day interventions, the organization implemented a comprehensive pre-election strategy aimed at addressing barriers to political participation, strengthening stakeholder engagement, enhancing voter awareness, and improving accessibility within the electoral environment. Through the Able2Vote Campaign under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Programme, TAF Africa worked to ensure that disability inclusion remained a central component of electoral planning and implementation in the lead-up to the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election.

The pre-election strategy focused on a combination of advocacy, capacity building, stakeholder engagement, public awareness, and evidence generation. TAF Africa engaged with electoral stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, civil society organizations, media practitioners, political actors, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), to promote compliance with disability-inclusive electoral standards. The organization also conducted accessibility assessments, voter education activities, media engagements, and consultations with persons with disabilities to better understand their concerns and expectations ahead of the election. These interventions helped identify potential barriers, encourage institutional responsiveness, and build confidence among voters with disabilities regarding their participation in the electoral process.

To further strengthen election preparedness, TAF Africa invested in the recruitment and training of election observers, the deployment of sign language interpreters, and the establishment of the PWD Election Hub to support real-time monitoring and reporting. These initiatives were complemented by the use of innovative digital tools, including the TAF Disability Hub Application, which facilitated data collection, incident reporting, and accessibility monitoring throughout the electoral cycle. Collectively, these pre-election interventions created a strong foundation for inclusive election observation and participation, ensuring that the voices, experiences, and rights of persons with disabilities were reflected in both the electoral process and the assessment of its outcomes.

150 POLLING UNITS MONITORED	150 OBSERVERS TRAINED	24 POLLING UNITS WITH SLI DEPLOYMENT
103 DEAF VOTERS SUPPORTED BY SLIS	25 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS DEPLOYED	64 PWDS SURVEYED POST-ELECTION

CHAPTER 1

Pre-Election Phase Interventions

1.1

The Able2Vote Campaign: Voter Education for the Disability Community

Across the towns and communities of Ekiti State, a familiar concern echoed among many Persons with Disabilities (PWDs): despite being active citizens with voices, aspirations, and voting rights, many continued to face barriers that limited their participation in democratic processes. From inaccessible polling units and inadequate voter information to social stigma and political exclusion, these challenges often discouraged meaningful civic engagement. Yet, beneath these obstacles existed a strong desire among PWDs to contribute to shaping the future of their communities and the nation through active political participation. Working closely with JONAPWD, the Ekiti State Disability Agency, and other stakeholders, the campaign set out not merely to share information but to inspire confidence, build knowledge, and create opportunities for inclusion. The initiative sought to remind participants that democracy is strongest when everyone, regardless of disability status, is able to participate fully and equally.

The Able2Vote Community Outreach Campaigns were implemented by TAF Africa under the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Phase III project across Ikere (Ikere LGA), Ilupeju (Oye LGA), Otun (Moba LGA), and Ado-Ekiti (Ado North, Ado West, and Ado Central) between 18 and 22 May 2026. The outreach focused on increasing awareness of electoral rights, civic responsibilities, disability rights laws, and opportunities for political participation while empowering PWDs to engage meaningfully in democratic activities.

The campaign adopted participatory and inclusive methodologies, including oral



presentations, interactive discussions, experience-sharing sessions, question-and-answer engagements, practical demonstrations, voting simulations, and role-playing exercises. To ensure accessibility and full participation, Yoruba interpretation, sign language interpretation, and other communication support services were provided. A total of 140 participants were reached across the six engagement locations, surpassing the target of 120 participants. Attendance comprised 67 males and 73 females from various disability clusters, including persons with physical disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, albinism, and speech impairments. The inclusive approach contributed significantly to active engagement and learning among participants.

The sessions featured opening remarks and goodwill messages from TAF Africa representatives, JONAPWD leadership, and the Chairman of the Ekiti State Disability Agency, who commended efforts toward advancing disability inclusion. Facilitators delivered presentations on the Able2Vote initiative, disability concepts under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), relevant



legal and electoral frameworks, and available accessibility support provided by INEC. Participants were sensitized on the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act 2018, electoral rights, priority voting provisions, and mechanisms for reporting discrimination. Practical voting simulations further enhanced participants' understanding of voting procedures, ballot handling, ballot secrecy, and ways to avoid invalid votes. Discussions also highlighted challenges such as inaccessible polling units, inadequate mobility support, communication barriers, transportation

difficulties, stigma, and political exclusion.



The outreach concluded successfully with participants expressing appreciation for the initiative and demonstrating increased confidence in their ability to vote, advocate for their rights, and seek leadership opportunities. Key lessons learned included the importance of continuous civic education, practical demonstrations, and accessibility support in promoting meaningful electoral participation. The campaign exceeded its target by reaching 250 PWDs across six LGAs, with an observed 90% increase in awareness of electoral rights and 100% awareness of PVC-related information. Follow-up actions include disability inclusion advocacy visits, engagement with INEC to address identified accessibility gaps, strengthening voter education efforts, encouraging eligible PWDs to contest elective positions, and promoting sustained collaboration among disability organizations, electoral stakeholders, and government institutions to advance inclusive democracy in Ekiti State.

1.2

Able2Vote Media reflection with media executives in Ekiti

On a warm morning in Ado-Ekiti, representatives from media organizations, electoral institutions, disability groups, civil society organizations, and government agencies gathered with a shared purpose—to reflect on a simple but important question: how can democracy truly be inclusive when the voices of persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in public discourse? For many participants, the meeting was more than a stakeholder engagement; it was an opportunity to confront longstanding barriers that have limited access to information, participation in governance, and visibility within the media landscape. The gathering created a space where experiences were shared openly, challenges were acknowledged honestly, and

solutions were collectively explored.



To advance this conversation, TAF Africa convened a Reflection Meeting with Media Executives, Regulatory Agencies, and Leaders of Persons with Disabilities in Ekiti State on 26 May 2026 at Delight Hotel, Ado-Ekiti. Organized under the EU-SDGN project, the meeting sought to strengthen partnerships between media organizations and disability stakeholders while promoting inclusive communication, responsible reporting, and greater awareness of disability rights. The engagement brought together representatives of JONAPWD, INEC, the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, the International Press Centre (IPC), civil society organizations, government institutions, disability advocates, and media practitioners. Through presentations, stakeholder reflections, interactive discussions, and collaborative problem-solving sessions, participants examined the role of the media in fostering democratic inclusion and equal participation.

The discussions highlighted the critical influence of the media in shaping public



attitudes and perceptions about disability. Speakers emphasized that inclusive reporting requires more than visibility; it requires knowledge, positive attitudes, and a conscious commitment to amplifying the voices of persons with disabilities. Presentations from the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund and IPC underscored the

importance of representation, leadership opportunities, and media collaboration in advancing democratic values. The Resident Electoral Commissioner of INEC further emphasized the need for collective action to address accessibility challenges within electoral processes and reaffirmed the commission's commitment to improving inclusion in future elections. Throughout the meeting, participants reflected on how media narratives can either challenge stereotypes or reinforce exclusion.

A major focus of the engagement was identifying practical barriers affecting both media inclusion and democratic participation. Participants raised concerns regarding inaccessible public facilities, inadequate access to electoral information and services, limited representation of persons with disabilities in mainstream media programming, and the continued use of inappropriate language in disability reporting. Dr. Akin Akingbulu of CEMESO stressed the importance of rights-based communication and encouraged journalists to adopt language that respects the dignity and agency of persons with disabilities. Findings from the Media Inclusion Index Assessment, presented by TAF Africa's monitoring and evaluation team, further revealed significant gaps in accessibility, institutional commitment, engagement, and participation across assessed organizations, reinforcing the need for sustained reforms.

By the close of the meeting, stakeholders had developed a shared understanding of the actions required to promote a more inclusive democratic environment. Participants committed to strengthening collaboration between media organizations and disability groups, advocating for improved implementation of disability laws and policies, enhancing accessibility within public institutions and electoral facilities, and creating dedicated platforms that amplify the experiences of persons with disabilities. The engagement reaffirmed that meaningful inclusion cannot be achieved through policy alone but requires continuous dialogue, institutional commitment, and collective action. The meeting concluded with renewed determination among stakeholders to work together toward a society where persons with disabilities are fully represented, heard, and empowered to participate in governance and public life.

1.3

Live Television Town Hall: Accountability in Real Time

As Ekiti State prepared for another electoral cycle, citizens increasingly demanded more than campaign promises—they wanted direct answers, transparency, and accountability from those seeking public office. Against this backdrop, the Live Television Town Hall on the Ekiti Election: Accountability in Real Time provided a



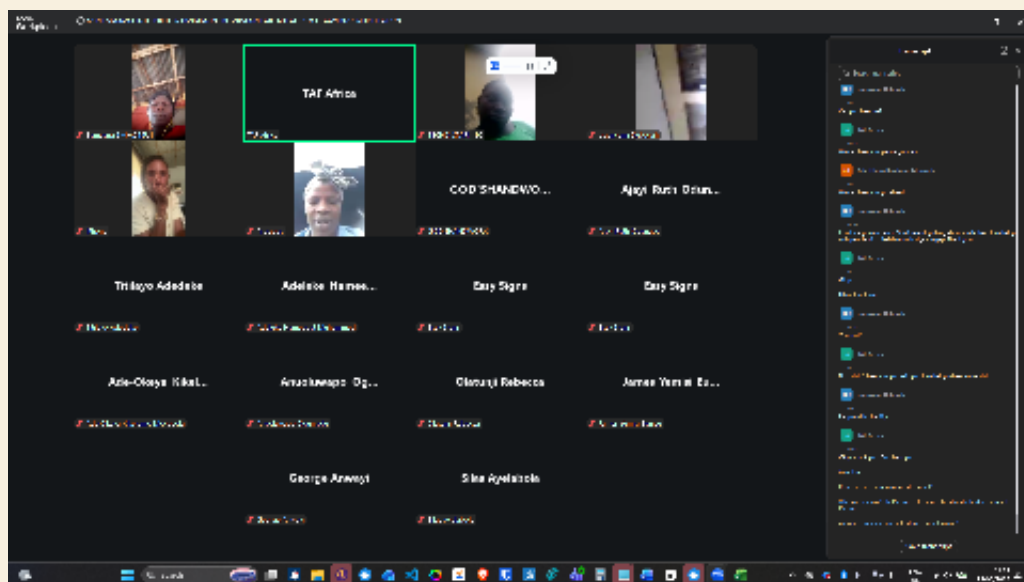
unique platform where candidates, stakeholders, and citizens engaged in open and constructive dialogue. Broadcast live to audiences across the state, the town hall created an opportunity for voters to hear directly from political actors on critical issues affecting governance, development, service delivery, and democratic accountability. The town hall brought together electoral stakeholders, civil society organizations, media practitioners, community leaders, youth representatives, women's groups, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to discuss key governance concerns ahead of the election. Participants raised questions on infrastructure, education, healthcare, economic development, security, and social inclusion, while candidates and political representatives responded to concerns and outlined their policy priorities. Special attention was given to issues of electoral integrity, inclusive governance, and the need to ensure that marginalized groups, including women and persons with disabilities, were adequately represented in decision-making processes. The live format encouraged transparency and enabled citizens to assess the commitments and preparedness of those seeking public office.

The discussions reinforced the importance of informed citizen participation and demonstrated the critical role of the media in strengthening democratic governance. By facilitating direct interaction between leaders and the electorate, the town hall enhanced public trust, promoted issue-based political engagement, and encouraged accountability in real time. Participants commended the initiative for creating a non-partisan platform for dialogue and agreed that such engagements should be sustained beyond election periods to foster responsive governance, citizen oversight, and continuous engagement between elected officials and the communities they served.

1.4

Improving on the Groundbreaking Initiative: Training and Deployment of Sign Language Interpreters in Electoral Processes

Building on the successes of the Anambra SLIs deployment, as part of efforts to promote inclusive electoral participation, 25 Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) were trained and deployed to polling units with a significant presence of persons with hearing impairments during the election. This initiative represented a major step toward removing communication barriers that often limit the effective participation



of deaf voters in electoral processes.

Prior to deployment, the interpreters participated in a one-day virtual training session designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills

required to support voters with hearing impairments. The training covered electoral procedures, voter assistance protocols, ethical considerations, communication standards, and the specific roles and responsibilities of sign language interpreters within the election environment.

Following the training, TAF Africa in collaboration with ASLIN and the Ekiti State Association of the Deaf identified polling units with registered deaf voters across selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ekiti State using the INEC data and the deaf association database. Twenty-five (25) trained Sign Language Interpreters were strategically deployed to selected polling units with registered deaf voters across 6 LGAs in Ekiti State. The deployment covered polling units in Ado, Ekiti West, Ikere, Ido/Osi, Ijero, and Oye LGAs. Out of the 25 deployed interpreters, 23 interpreters successfully worked with their assigned deaf voters and turned in their report. Their presence helped ensure that electoral information, voting procedures,

and voter education messages were effectively communicated, thereby enhancing accessibility and promoting independent participation among deaf voters.

Overall, 103 deaf voters received interpretation support across 24 polling units within the six participating LGAs. See the table below for detail:

DEAF VOTERS REACHED WITH SLI ACCORDING TO LGA DURING THE EKITI JUNE 20, 2026, GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION				
S/NO	LGA	NO OF POLLING UNITS	NO OF SLIs	NO OF DEAF VOTERS SUPPORTED
1	Ado Ekiti	15	14	47
2	Ekiti West	1	1	1
3	Ikere	2	2	5
4	Ido/Osi	1	1	2
5	Ijero	2	2	44
6	Oye	3	3	4
Total		24	23	103

The initiative demonstrated a strong commitment to electoral inclusion and equal access to democratic processes. Feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders indicated that the deployment of trained sign language interpreters contributed significantly to improving the voting experience of persons with hearing impairments and set an important precedent for future elections.

1.5

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

As dawn broke over Ekiti State on the mornings of 17 and 18 June 2026, a diverse group of citizens began arriving at the training venue with a shared sense of purpose. They were teachers, community advocates, youth leaders, disability rights champions, and civic-minded volunteers, all united by a commitment to safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process. In just a few days, they would be deployed



across polling units as election observers—the eyes and ears of democracy—tasked with documenting not only what happened during the election but also whether every eligible voter, including persons with disabilities, was given an equal opportunity to participate. Recognizing that effective observation requires more than goodwill, TAF Africa brought these observers together for an intensive two-day training designed to transform them into informed, objective, and technologically equipped monitors.

Through practical exercises, discussions, digital reporting demonstrations, and lessons on inclusion, accountability, and electoral integrity, participants gained the skills necessary to observe the election with professionalism and credibility. By the end of the training, they left not merely as observers, but as ambassadors of democratic inclusion, prepared to ensure that the voices, experiences, and rights of all citizens—especially the most marginalized—were visible throughout the electoral process.

To prepare these observers for the important task ahead, TAF Africa convened a comprehensive two-day training programme in Ekiti State on 17 and 18 June 2026. The training served as a cornerstone of the organization's election observation

strategy under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Programme, focusing on strengthening inclusive, credible, and evidence-based election observation. Designed to equip participants with the knowledge, practical skills, and technological tools required for effective election monitoring, the programme emphasized accessibility, inclusion, and the protection of the voting rights of marginalized groups, particularly persons with disabilities. While the initial plan was to train 150 observers in two batches of 75 participants each, attendance patterns reflected the enthusiasm and commitment of participants, with 48 observers attending on the first day and 112 on the second day. Collectively, the training reached all 160 registered observers, creating a strong network of prepared and informed monitors ready to support transparent, accountable, and inclusive electoral processes during the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election.

The training commenced with participant registration, opening prayers, and the national anthem, followed by a welcome session facilitated by George Anwayi, Assistant Programme Manager of TAF Africa. During the opening session, participants were introduced to the objectives of the workshop and the significance of their role in promoting electoral accountability and inclusion. The facilitator emphasized the importance of professionalism, neutrality, and integrity in election observation. Participants also introduced themselves and shared their previous experiences in election observation and civic engagement activities. The interactive session helped establish a collaborative learning environment and prepared participants for the technical sessions that followed.

A key session focused on providing participants with an overview of TAF Africa's Election Inclusion Strategy under the EU-SDGN Programme. Facilitated by Dr. Andrew Adaji, Programme Manager of TAF Africa, the presentation highlighted the organization's commitment to ensuring that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are not excluded from electoral processes. The session explored the barriers faced by voters with disabilities and the interventions implemented by TAF Africa to improve

accessibility, voter education, and participation. Participants were introduced to the disability-inclusive indicators that would guide their observation activities on election day. The discussion reinforced the need for observers to pay particular attention to accessibility measures at polling units and the experiences of marginalized groups during the electoral process.

Another major component of the training focused on understanding the role of election observers and the standards of conduct expected during election observation. Participants were guided through the principles of impartiality, objectivity, confidentiality, and professionalism. The session also covered security awareness and personal safety measures necessary for observers operating in diverse electoral environments. Observers were advised on how to manage potential risks, avoid confrontations, and maintain effective communication with relevant authorities during election day. Through practical examples and scenario-based discussions, participants gained a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and limitations as accredited election observers.

The training further introduced participants to the TAF Disability Hub Application, a digital platform developed to support election observation and real-time reporting. Facilitated by Kohol Iornav, TAF Africa's Information Technology Officer, the session provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the application's features and functionalities. Observers were taught how to document incidents, upload reports, submit eyewitness accounts, and capture relevant data using the platform. The facilitator conducted a live demonstration and guided participants



through practical exercises to ensure familiarity with the reporting process. The session significantly improved participants' confidence in utilizing technology for accurate and timely election observation.

A practical session on the use of the Election Observers' Checklist was facilitated by Dr. Andrew Adaji. Participants were introduced to the checklist as a critical tool



for collecting standardized and credible observation data. The session covered key indicators relating to polling unit accessibility, voter assistance, conduct of election officials, security presence, availability of election materials, and participation of persons with disabilities. Observers were guided on how to objectively record observations and avoid subjective interpretations. Practical exercises enabled participants to apply the checklist in simulated election scenarios, thereby strengthening their capacity for accurate reporting and evidence-based observation. To consolidate learning, participants engaged in group discussions and role-play exercises facilitated by Jennifer Dafwat, Senior Communication Officer at TAF Africa. The practical activities allowed participants to simulate common election-day situations and apply the knowledge acquired throughout the training. Scenarios included interactions with election officials, reporting electoral incidents, observing accessibility challenges, and engaging with voters with disabilities. The role-play sessions encouraged teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving while providing facilitators with an opportunity to clarify misconceptions and address participant concerns. Feedback from participants indicated that the practical sessions were among the most valuable components of the training.

The training concluded with a reflection session and closing remarks delivered by Dr. Andrew Adaji. Participants shared key lessons learned and expressed readiness to undertake their observation responsibilities during the governorship election. Facilitators emphasized the importance of producing objective, timely, and credible reports that would contribute to strengthening democratic governance and electoral inclusion in Ekiti State. The successful completion of the training enhanced the preparedness of observers and reinforced TAF Africa's commitment to promoting inclusive elections. By equipping observers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and technological tools, the training ensured that election-day observations would effectively serve as the eyes and ears of democracy while amplifying the voices and experiences of persons with disabilities within the electoral process.

CHAPTER 2

Election Day Activities - TAF Disability Hub

2.1

The PWD Election Hub



On election day, while voters across Ekiti State exercised their democratic rights at polling units, another important operation was quietly unfolding at the Afe

Babalola Civic Centre in Ado-Ekiti. The venue served as the venue for the EU-SDGN Election Hub man by EU-ESDGN Partners. Designed as a central coordination and monitoring centre, the Hub became the nerve centre for collecting, analyzing, and responding to information on the participation of persons with disabilities during the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election. From the early hours of accreditation until the close of polls, the Hub remained active, ensuring that disability inclusion remained visible throughout the electoral process.

The establishment of the Hub reflected TAF Africa's commitment to ensuring that election observation goes beyond counting votes to assessing whether every citizen has equal access to democratic participation. While traditional election observation often focuses on electoral procedures and outcomes, the PWD

Election Hub specifically monitored accessibility, inclusion, dignity, and the voting experiences of persons with disabilities. The initiative provided a dedicated platform for documenting barriers, identifying good practices, and generating real-time evidence to support advocacy for more inclusive elections. It also demonstrated how technology and coordinated observation can be leveraged to amplify the voices of marginalized groups.

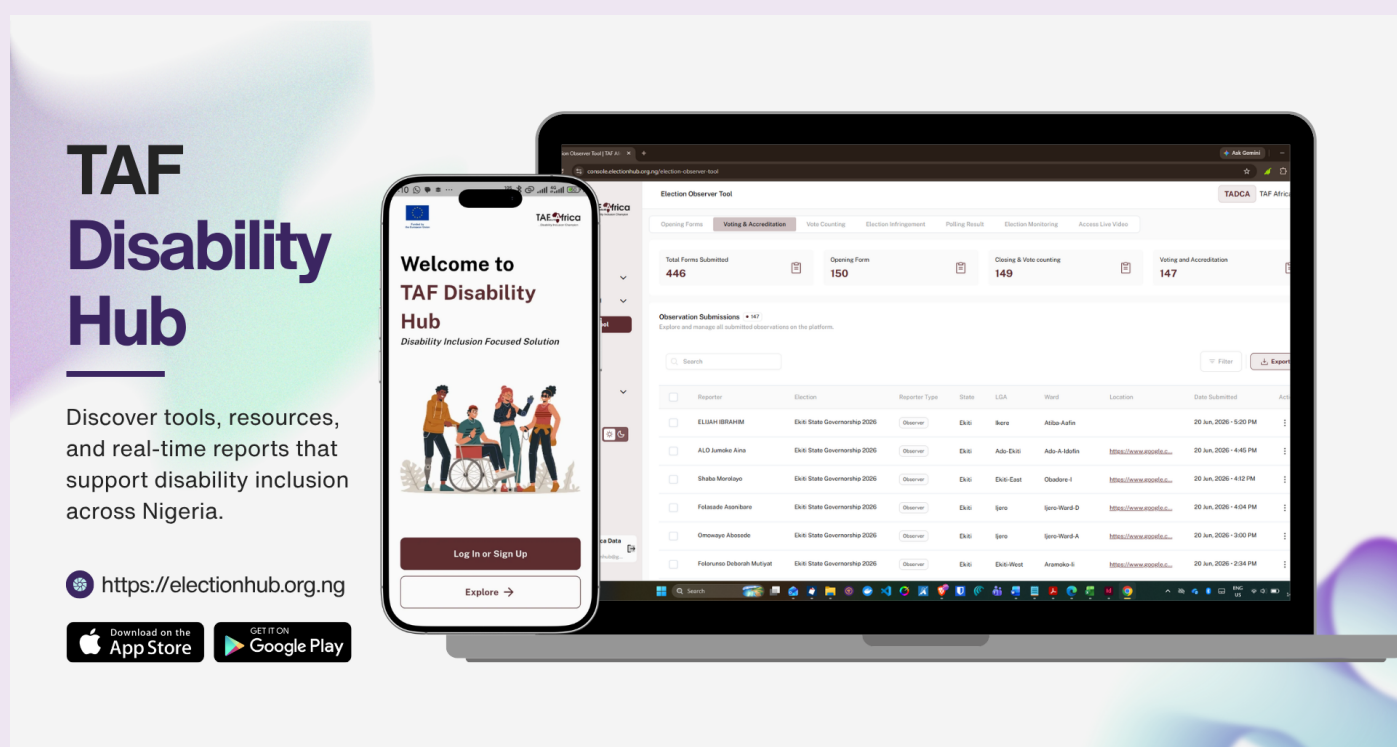
The Hub was staffed by a multidisciplinary team comprising TAF Africa programme staff, ICT personnel, trained election observers, disability inclusion experts, representatives of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and sign language interpreters. Working together, the team maintained continuous communication with observers deployed across the state. The diversity of expertise within the Hub ensured that incoming reports were properly interpreted, verified, and analyzed from both electoral and disability inclusion perspectives. The presence of sign language interpreters further strengthened communication



and ensured that persons with hearing impairments could actively engage with the monitoring process.

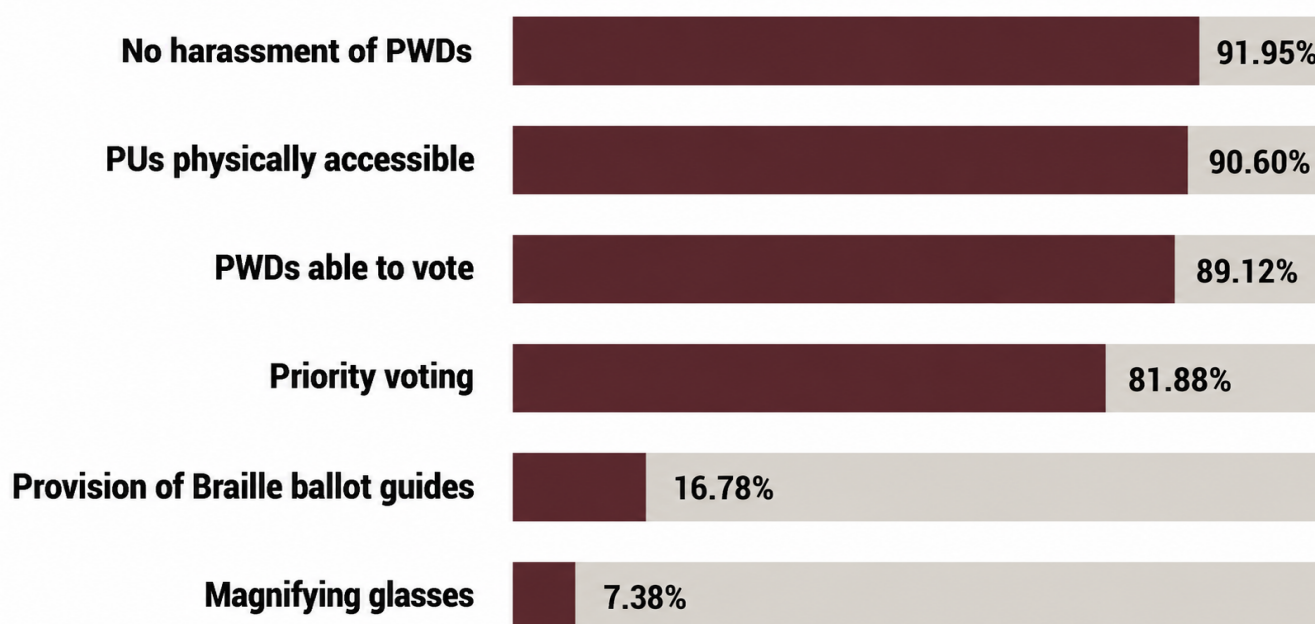
At the heart of the Hub's operations was the TAF Disability Hub Application, which enabled observers to submit reports directly from polling units across the state. Through the platform, observers uploaded real-time observations, incident reports, photographs, and eyewitness accounts relating to the participation of persons with disabilities. This digital approach allowed the Hub team to track developments as they occurred, identify emerging trends, and provide timely responses where necessary. The use of technology significantly improved the speed, accuracy, and reliability of election observation data collection and management.

A major responsibility of the Hub was to monitor accessibility across polling units and assess compliance with disability-inclusive electoral standards. Through reports received from the field, the Hub tracked indicators such as physical accessibility of polling units, availability of assistive devices, priority voting arrangements, voter assistance mechanisms, and the conduct of election officials toward persons with disabilities. These indicators provided valuable insights into the extent to which electoral stakeholders implemented inclusive election measures. The findings



generated by the Hub helped paint a comprehensive picture of the experiences of persons with disabilities throughout the election process.

The Hub also functioned as a situation room where reports from the field were reviewed and analyzed as they were received. Team members categorized observations, verified incidents, identified recurring challenges, and documented examples of good practice. This process enabled the Hub to provide evidence-based updates and maintain a clear overview of election-day developments from a disability inclusion perspective. The centralized structure enhanced coordination among observers and ensured consistency in data reporting and interpretation.



One of the most significant achievements recorded through the Hub was the successful monitoring of 150 polling units across Ekiti State. Data collected from the field revealed several positive developments regarding the participation of persons with disabilities. Notably, 91.95 percent of observed polling units recorded no incidents of harassment against persons with disabilities, while 90.60 percent were physically accessible. Furthermore, 89.12 percent of polling units recorded successful instances of persons with disabilities casting their votes, demonstrating encouraging progress toward inclusive electoral participation. The findings also showed that 81.88 percent of polling units implemented priority voting measures, helping to reduce waiting times and barriers for voters with disabilities.

Despite these achievements, the Hub also identified critical gaps requiring attention. While polling unit accessibility was generally high, voter turnout among persons with disabilities remained relatively low, with only 27.52 percent of observed polling units recording excellent PWD voter turnout. The findings further revealed inconsistencies in the quality of priority voting implementation and highlighted significant shortages of assistive devices for voters with visual impairments. Only 16.78 percent of polling units provided Braille ballot guides, while a mere 7.38 percent had magnifying glasses available. These gaps underscored the need for stronger institutional commitment to accessibility and inclusion in future elections.

27.50%

of polling units recorded excellent PWD voter turnout

Low turnout was the single most concerning indicator, signalling that systemic barriers still discourage many persons with disabilities from showing up on election day.

The evidence generated through the Hub provided a strong foundation for post-election advocacy and engagement with electoral stakeholders. By systematically documenting both successes and challenges, TAF Africa was able to develop targeted recommendations aimed at improving electoral accessibility. Key recommendations included increasing the provision of Braille ballot guides and magnifying glasses, strengthening implementation of priority voting protocols, improving representation of persons with disabilities among election officials, and expanding voter mobilization efforts targeting persons with disabilities. The Hub therefore served not only as a monitoring mechanism but also as a catalyst for policy dialogue and institutional reform.

As the election concluded and reports from across the state were consolidated, the PWD Election Hub stood as a powerful demonstration of how inclusive election observation can strengthen democratic governance. Beyond collecting data, the

Hub amplified the experiences of persons with disabilities, ensured that their voices were heard, and provided evidence that can drive meaningful improvements in future electoral processes. The success of the initiative reinforced TAF Africa's leadership in disability-inclusive election observation and highlighted the importance of dedicated monitoring mechanisms in advancing equal political participation. Through the Hub, the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election became not only a test of electoral administration but also an opportunity to measure the state's commitment to leaving no voter behind.

2.2

Technology, Collaboration, and Real-Time Data Collection

At the heart of the PWD Election Hub's success was the strategic integration of technology, collaboration, and real-time data management. Recognizing the importance of timely and evidence-based election observation, TAF Africa leveraged its innovative Disability Hub Application to coordinate field observations, collect data, and monitor the participation of persons with disabilities across Ekiti State. The digital platform served as the primary reporting tool for observers deployed to polling units, enabling them to submit observations, incident reports, photographs, and eyewitness accounts directly from the field. This technological approach significantly reduced delays associated with traditional paper-based reporting systems and ensured that election-day information was available to the Hub almost immediately after it was recorded.

The Disability Hub Application also strengthened collaboration between observers, Hub personnel, ICT officers, disability advocates, and programme staff. As reports were submitted, the Hub team at the Afe Babalola Civic Centre reviewed, verified, and analyzed incoming data in real time, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of developments across the state. The platform enabled seamless communication between field observers and the situation room, ensuring that accessibility concerns

affecting persons with disabilities could be documented and escalated where necessary. Through this coordinated approach, the Hub was able to maintain an accurate and up-to-date picture of election-day experiences for persons with disabilities.

Beyond its role in election observation, the Disability Hub Application demonstrated the transformative potential of technology in advancing inclusive democratic participation. The platform provided a centralized system for data collation, analysis, and evidence generation, enabling TAF Africa to produce credible findings and actionable recommendations. The successful deployment of the application during the Ekiti State Governorship Election highlighted the value of digital innovation in strengthening election observation and ensuring that the voices and experiences of persons with disabilities are systematically captured and reflected in electoral reform efforts. The application remains a significant milestone in TAF Africa's commitment to promoting accessible and inclusive elections across Nigeria.

2.3

Stories from the Field



While statistics and performance indicators provide important evidence of progress and challenges, the real story of electoral inclusion is best told through the experiences of persons with disabilities and the observations recorded at polling units across Ekiti State. Reports submitted through the TAF Disability Hub Application revealed

numerous examples of both encouraging practices and persistent barriers that shaped the voting experience of persons with disabilities during the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election.

At Eniniwa Compound, St. Peter Primary School in Ijero Local Government Area, observers witnessed a positive demonstration of electoral inclusion in action. Upon arrival at the polling unit, persons with disabilities were immediately recognized by election officials and accorded priority during accreditation and voting. Security personnel ensured orderly movement within the polling area, while other voters willingly gave way to those requiring assistance. The atmosphere was respectful and welcoming, allowing voters with disabilities to participate in the process with dignity and confidence. For many observers, the polling unit represented what an inclusive election environment should look like.

Similar scenes were recorded at Ado B Inisa Ward II, Unit 6, where polling officials proactively implemented priority voting procedures. Rather than waiting in long queues under the morning sun, persons with disabilities were invited to move forward and complete the voting process without unnecessary delays. Observers reported that election officials demonstrated a clear understanding of inclusive election guidelines and worked diligently to ensure that no voter was disadvantaged because of disability. The experience highlighted the positive impact of proper training and awareness among election personnel.

At the polling unit located in front of Ajitadidun Primary School, Chief Olora's Compound I, Ward Ado I (Dalimore), inclusion was not merely a policy but a visible practice. Observers noted that election officials publicly announced that persons with disabilities, older persons, pregnant women, and nursing mothers should be attended to first. This simple but deliberate action created awareness among voters and reduced potential resistance to priority voting arrangements. As a result, persons with disabilities were able to cast their votes efficiently and with minimal difficulty.

In another encouraging example, a visually impaired voter arrived at a polling unit accompanied by a family member who provided support throughout the voting process. Election officials promptly facilitated the process in accordance with electoral guidelines, ensuring that the voter was able to exercise his right to vote independently and confidentially. Observers described the interaction as respectful and empowering, demonstrating how simple accommodations can significantly enhance electoral participation for persons with disabilities.

Beyond individual polling units, observers consistently reported positive attitudes among voters toward persons with disabilities. In many locations, community members voluntarily assisted with movement, provided directions, and created space for wheelchair users and other voters requiring support. These acts of solidarity reflected a growing public awareness of disability rights and contributed to the finding that nearly 80 percent of observed polling units recorded positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Such experiences suggest that social inclusion is gradually becoming a stronger feature of electoral participation in Ekiti State.

However, not all stories from the field reflected the same level of inclusion. At Polling Unit 16 in Ado-Ekiti, observers reported the complete absence of assistive tools for persons with disabilities. While voting proceeded peacefully, voters with visual impairments and other accessibility needs were left without the resources necessary to facilitate independent participation. The situation underscored the gap between policy commitments and practical implementation, particularly concerning the provision of assistive devices.

Similar concerns were documented at Ilere Compound Polling Unit 003, Ado Ward C (Idolofin Area Code 1), where observers noted the absence of disability-inclusive materials and accessibility support mechanisms. Although election officials carried out their responsibilities, the lack of assistive resources created additional challenges for voters with disabilities. These observations reinforced the need for



stronger planning and resource allocation to ensure that accessibility measures are available at every polling unit.

Accessibility challenges were also observed at Ola-Oluwa Muslim Grammar School Ward II, Unit 013; AUD Primary School Unit 202; and Ijigbo Polling Unit 033 in Ado-Ekiti. Reports from these locations indicated that the physical environment presented barriers for persons with disabilities, limiting ease of movement and access to voting areas. Such findings highlight the reality that physical accessibility remains uneven across polling units despite overall improvements recorded during the election. For some voters, reaching the polling station was only the first challenge; navigating the environment once there proved equally difficult.

Collectively, these stories reveal a mixed but encouraging picture of disability inclusion during the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election. They illustrate how deliberate efforts by election officials, security personnel, community members, and electoral stakeholders can create an environment where persons with disabilities participate fully and with dignity. At the same time, they remind stakeholders that significant work remains to close persistent accessibility gaps. Through the voices of observers and the experiences recorded across polling units, the stories from the field provide a powerful human dimension to the data and reinforce the importance of continuing efforts to build elections that are truly inclusive and accessible to all.

CHAPTER 3

Data Speaks: What The Numbers Tell Us

Disability Hub

3.1

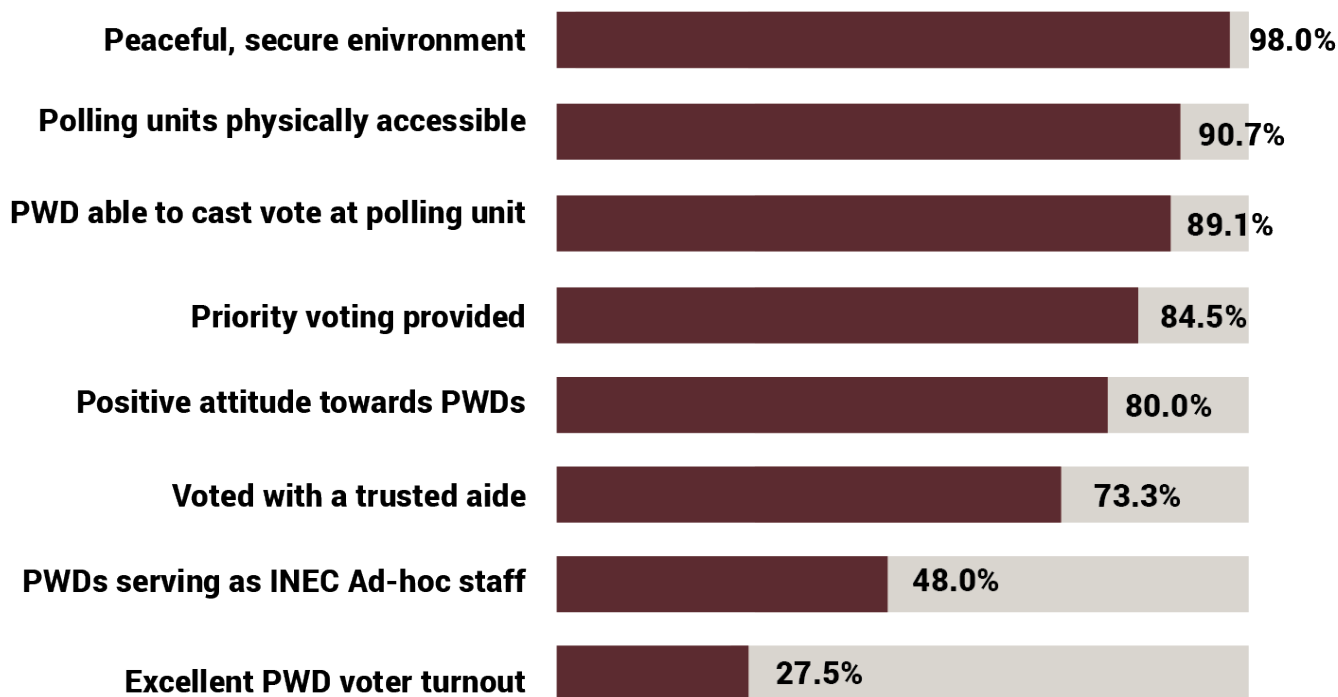
PWD Election Observation Data – Ekiti State Governorship Election 2026



The deployment of the TAF Disability Election Observation App strengthened the observation process by enabling trained observers to capture and transmit election data in real time

from polling units across the state. The digital platform facilitated the timely collection, aggregation, and analysis of disability-inclusive election data, providing stakeholders with credible evidence on the accessibility, inclusiveness, and quality of the electoral process.

The insight from the field observers presented in this report is drawn from data submitted through the application, offering valuable insights into key aspects of the election, including security, polling unit accessibility, priority voting, assistive devices, voter participation, and the experiences of persons with disabilities. This real-time, data-driven approach enhanced the accuracy of election observation and supported evidence-based advocacy for more inclusive electoral reforms. See below for further details.



3.1.1 Peaceful Environment

TAF field observers reported that the election was largely peaceful, with 98% indicating a calm and secure environment and only 2% noting security concerns, creating a conducive atmosphere for voter participation, including PWDs.

98.0%

of polling units were calm and peaceful

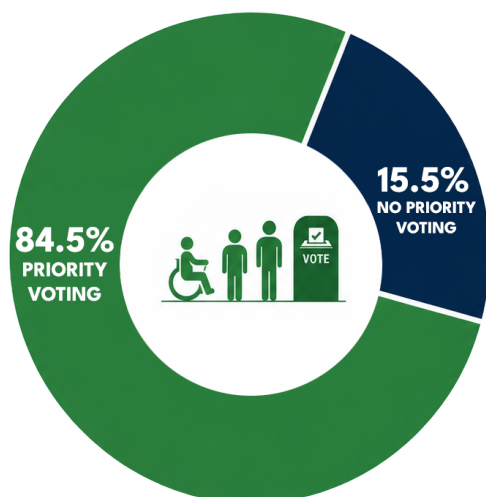
3.1.2 Physically Accessible Polling Units



Most polling units were accessible to PWDs, demonstrating strong efforts toward inclusive electoral participation. However, 9.3% of locations still presented accessibility challenges.

3.1.3

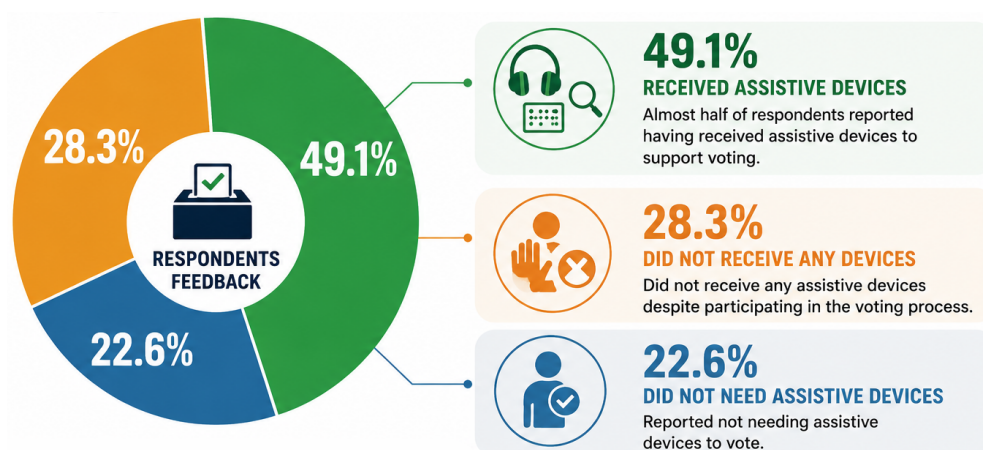
Priority Voting



A majority of PWDs received priority treatment during voting, reducing waiting times and facilitating participation. Nonetheless, nearly one in five did not benefit from priority voting arrangements as reported by the field observers.

3.1.4

Provision of Assistive Devices



Almost half of respondents (49.1%) reported having received assistive devices to support voting, while 28.3% did not receive any despite participating, and

22.6% reported not needing them. This indicates moderate provision of assistive devices but highlights remaining gaps in accessibility support.

3.1.5 Voting with Aides

Most PWDs who required support had access to voting with their trusted aides. However, 26.7% (more than a quarter) reported not receiving such assistance.

73.3%

of PWD voters votes with the support of their aides

3.1.6 PWD INEC Ad-hoc Staff

A significant 48% of observed polling units had PWDs serving as INEC ad-hoc staff, indicating moderate representation of PWDs within election administration.

48.0%

PWDs serving as INEC Ad-hoc staff

3.1.7 Electorate Positive Attitude Towards PWDs

Public attitudes towards PWD voters were generally positive, suggesting a supportive environment for inclusion. However, 20% reported less favourable attitudes, indicating

room for further awareness and sensitization.

80.0%

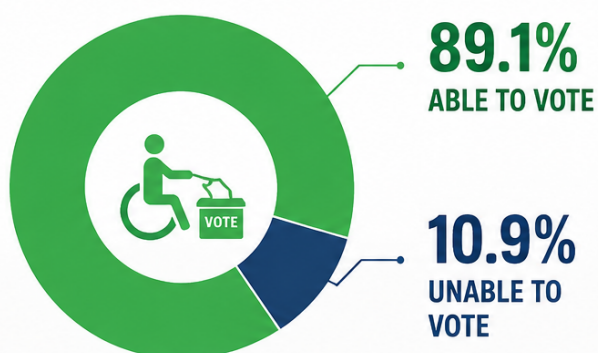
PWDs serving as INEC Ad-hoc staff

3.1.8

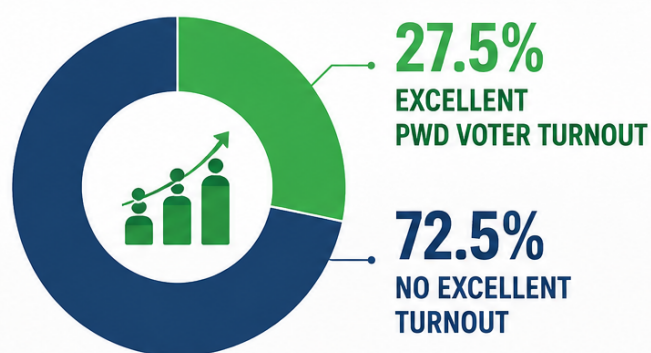
Voting



ABILITY TO VOTE



PWD VOTER TURNOUT



Most PWDs who turned out to vote (89.1%) were able to vote, while 10.9% encountered barriers that prevented participation. However, only 27.5% of observers rated PWD voter turnout as excellent, suggesting that overall participation remains below optimal levels despite ongoing Able2Vote voter education efforts by TAF Africa.

Reasons for non-participation included the incomplete voter registration (lack of Permanent Voter Card), vote-buying concerns, and transportation or distance-related challenges. Some respondents did not provide a specific reason for not voting, signalling voter apathy or limited interest in the electoral process.

3.2

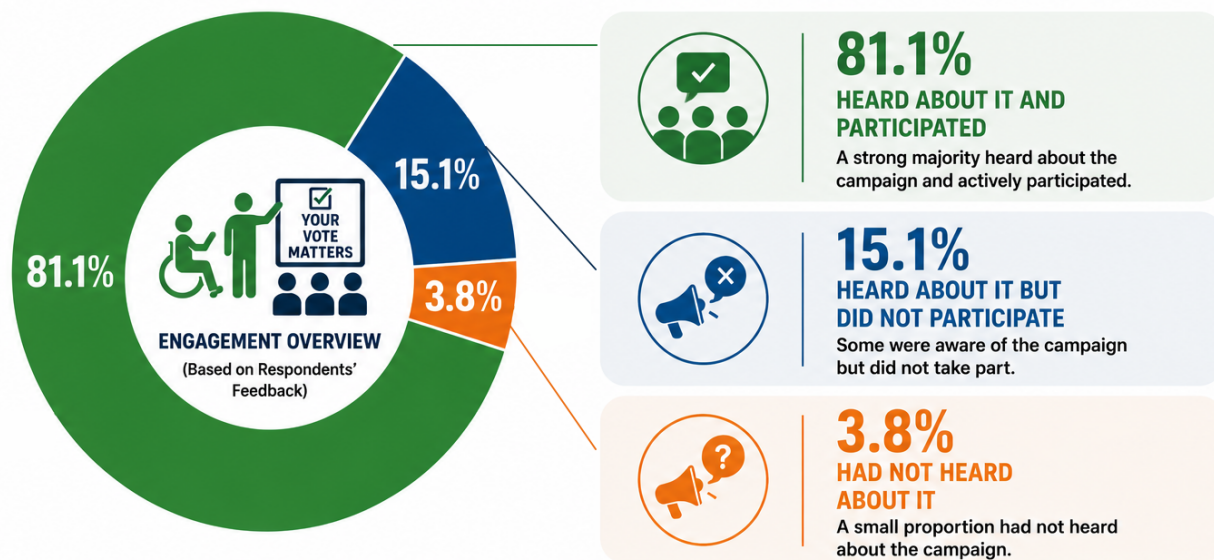
Outcome from the PWDs Post-Election Survey

To better understand the experiences of Persons with Disabilities during the 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election, TAF Africa conducted a post-election survey among PWD voters across the state. A total of 64 respondents participated in the survey, providing insights into the accessibility, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of electoral processes and voter education efforts.

The survey's findings corroborated the feedback provided by the PwD-focused field observers and further highlighted strong progress in electoral inclusion for PWDs, with 94.3% reporting accessible polling units, 83.0% receiving priority support, and 81.1% participating in the Able2Vote campaign. The campaign appears to have been highly effective, as 98.1% of respondents said it encouraged them to vote, while 84.9% expressed high satisfaction with TAF Africa's support.



Polling Units Accessibility, Priority Voting and Provision of Form EC40H

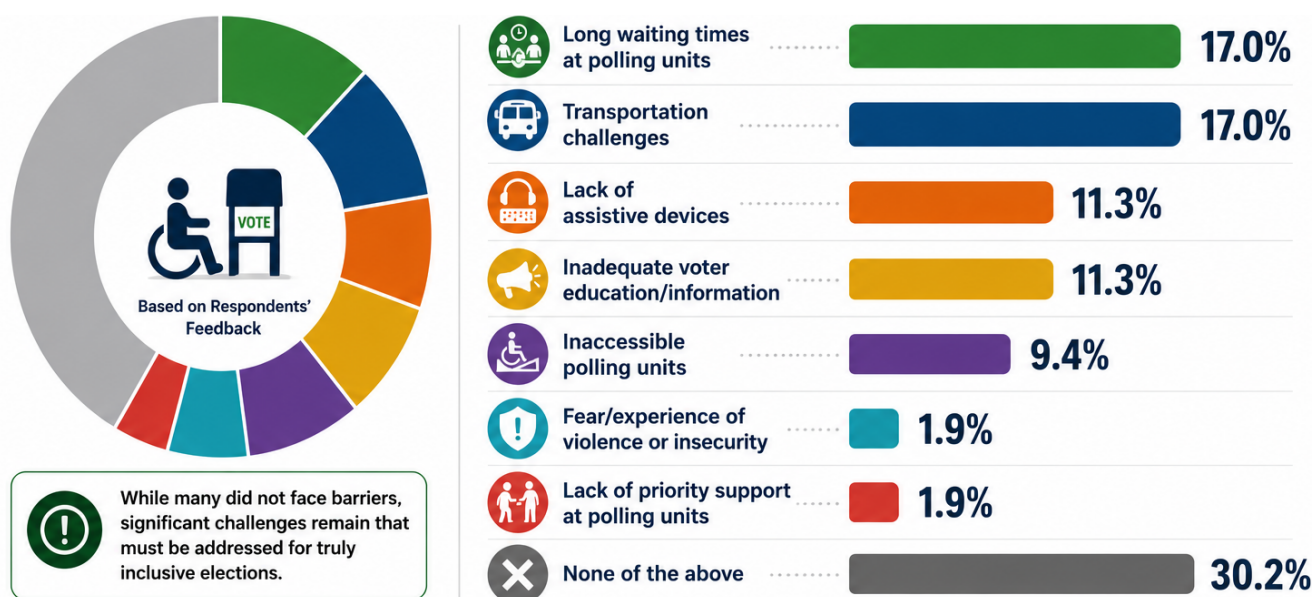


98.1%

Influence of the Able2Vote Campaign on PWD Voter Participation

Engagement with the Able2Vote Voter Education Campaign and Influence of the Able2Vote Campaign on Voter Participation

Despite these positive outcomes, some challenges remain. Over a third (37.7%) of respondents experienced difficulties while voting, and 50.9% did not receive Form EC40H. Key barriers included long waiting times (17.0%), transportation difficulties (17.0%), lack of assistive devices (11.3%), and inadequate voter information (11.3%), indicating areas requiring further attention to enhance electoral accessibility and participation.



Major Barriers to Electoral Participation

CHAPTER 4

Lessons Learned and Policy Recommendations

4.1

Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned include:

1. Disability inclusion must be institutionalized throughout the electoral cycle, not limited to election day.
2. Continuous, accessible civic and voter education is essential to improving political participation among PWDs.
3. Implementation gaps, not policy or legal framework gaps, remain the greatest barrier to inclusive elections.
4. Technology and real-time data systems strengthen evidence-based electoral reform.
5. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is critical to advancing inclusive democratic governance.
6. Physical accessibility alone does not guarantee higher voter turnout among PWDs.

4.2

Identified Gaps

Despite notable progress, key gaps remain:

- **Outdated and insufficiently disaggregated data** on persons with disabilities, limiting accurate identification of voters and disability categories.

- **Inconsistent provision of assistive devices** required under Section 54(2), affecting independent and accessible voting.
- **Physical inaccessibility of polling units**, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach communities.
- **Limited availability of sign language interpreters**, restricting effective participation for voters who are deaf or hard of hearing.

4.3

Policy Recommendations

i

Strengthen the provision and distribution of disability-inclusive election materials, including Form EC40H and assistive devices, across all polling units.

ii

Expand voter education and awareness campaigns for PWDs before elections, with emphasis on electoral rights, voting procedures, and available support services.

iii

Improve polling unit accessibility and consider measures to reduce travel distances for voters with disabilities.

iv

Ensure adequate deployment of trained election observers and disability inclusion monitors across all polling units.

v

Enhance collaboration between electoral stakeholders and disability-focused organizations to address barriers to voter registration and participation.

vi

Integrate broader socio-economic empowerment initiatives for PWDs alongside civic engagement programmes to promote inclusive participation in public life.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The 2026 Ekiti State Governorship Election demonstrated that inclusive elections are both achievable and essential to strengthening democratic governance. Through the Able2Vote Campaign and complementary interventions, TAF Africa advanced the participation and visibility of persons with disabilities, resulting in improved polling unit accessibility, greater implementation of priority voting, and increased confidence among PWDs to exercise their voting rights. The lessons from Ekiti affirm that elections are only truly credible when every eligible citizen can participate equally, independently, and with dignity. As we prepare for the Osun 2026 and 2027 general elections, the evidence, innovations, and partnerships documented in this report will continue to provide a practical roadmap for institutionalizing disability inclusion and ensuring that the commitment to “leave no voter behind” becomes a lasting feature of the country’s electoral system.



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ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT

Disability-Inclusive Elections in Ekiti State

Monitoring the participation of persons with disabilities in the 2026 Ekiti State Gubernatorial Off-Cycle Election



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