INSIDE TAF Africa

...Disability Inclusion Champion

Your Monthly Inclusion Digest

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September took TAF Africa's #Able2Vote campaign into communities across Delta, Abia, Nasarawa and Benue — not just to talk about the right to vote, but to listen to what it takes to exercise that right.

Across 12 communities and four IDP camps, persons with disabilities and internally displaced persons spoke about the barriers they face. Across our work this month, we moved conversations about inclusion beyond awareness and looked at the realities that shape people's everyday participation and the changes needed to make people's rights meaningful.

In Delta state, D-RAPID continued to turn disability rights into practice — bringing institutions together to sustain inclusion and distributing more than 45 assistive devices to PWDs.

This edition of Inclusion Digest captures the voices, experiences and partnerships

shaping TAF Africa's work to make inclusion not just a promise, but a lived reality. Because inclusion is not simply about opening the door.

It is about making sure everyone can walk through it.

HAVING A PVC IS NOT ENOUGH: PWDS IN DELTA AND ABIA SPEAK ON THE BARRIERS TO VOTING

For almost every participant who walked into TAF Africa's Able2Vote community outreach sessions across Delta and Abia States, the first step towards voting had already been taken. Approximately 99% of the 559 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) reached across 12 communities had Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs). But as the conversations unfolded, it became clear that having a PVC is only one part of being able to participate in an election.

Across communities in both states, participants shared experiences of inaccessible polling units, difficult transportation, inadequate assistive voting materials, limited sign language support and challenges with biometric accreditation. Others spoke about inconsistent implementation of priority voting and the limited understanding of disability issues among some electoral personnel. For many, the question was no longer simply, "Do I have a PVC?" It was, "Will I be able to use it?"

The Able2Vote community outreach, implemented under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN), took voter education beyond information-sharing. Across Delta

and Abia, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences and identify the barriers that continue to shape their participation. The discussions revealed a strong willingness to participate. Participants spoke about the importance of voting peacefully and independently, protecting their voter information, rejecting vote-buying, and holding institutions accountable for commitments to inclusive elections.

The outreach also revealed an appetite for something beyond participation at the ballot box. Some participants expressed interest in contributing more broadly to civic and political life, including decision-making and governance.

For TAF Africa, the work continues beyond voter education because the responsibility for inclusion cannot rest with voters alone.

An election cannot be considered accessible simply because persons with disabilities are allowed to vote in principle. If a polling unit cannot be reached, an assistive device is unavailable, communication support is missing or a reasonable accommodation is not provided, the right to vote becomes significantly harder to exercise.

MORE THAN A VOTE: PWDS IN NASARAWA ASK CANDIDATES TO LISTEN, INCLUDE AND DELIVER

During election season, candidates know where to find Persons with Disabilities. They come with campaign messages, promises, and, sometimes, gifts. They ask for votes and speak about inclusion. But what happens after the votes are counted? For Persons with Disabilities who participated in TAF Africa's #Able2Vote community outreaches across Nasarawa State, this is where the real conversation begins.

TAF Africa met with Persons with Disabilities in Lafia, Keffi, Obi, Karu and Doma communities of Nasarawa state where participants learnt about their civic and electoral rights, accessible voting procedures, INEC's assistive devices, misinformation and election safety, including protections under key laws and frameworks governing the rights of Persons with Disabilities.

While some participants were encountering these provisions for the first time, the conversations soon moved beyond what the law says to what people experience, sharing freely about what it means to exercise those rights in practice. They spoke about candidates who seek their votes during elections but disappear when it is time to respond to the issues affecting their communities. They pointed to the cost and limited availability of assistive devices required for them to participate in civic and democratic life, the distance to PVC collection centres and the persistent gap between rights guaranteed by law and rights experienced in everyday life.

One concern stood out: inclusion should not begin and end with the campaign season. Participants called on INEC and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to make electoral and civic information more accessible to PWDs. They also asked TAF Africa to continue taking their concerns to government institutions, electoral stakeholders and other decisionmakers.

Their demand was not simply to be remembered at the ballot box. It was to be recognised as citizens whose voices, needs and priorities matter before, during and after elections.

WHEN HOME IS TOO FAR AWAY TO VOTE: THE ELECTORAL REALITY FOR IDPS IN BENUE

Mercy knows she has the right to vote. Gabriel knows that democratic participation holds the key to whether he will see his ancestral home or not.

But knowing they have the right to vote is not the same as being able to exercise that right.

Mercy and Gabriel are two among the over 8,000 internally displaced persons living in the Mega IDP Camp in Makurdi, Benue State. Mercy registered to vote when TAF Africa brought electoral officials brought to the camp, but she is still waiting for her Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and can't afford transportation to go and collect it from the INEC office.

While Gabriel, who has his PVC, may have to travel away from the camp to reach his assigned polling unit. That is a risk giving the security situation in his ancestral home where his polling unit is. For someone living in displacement, that journey can present another barrier to participation.

These are two of many stories that emerged when TAF Africa engaged more than 1,200 internally displaced persons across four IDP camps in Benue State including Abagena, Mega, Daudu II and Ortese, as part of its voter sensitisation activities.

The resounding cry across four camps was unanimous – bring voting points closer to where displaced citizens now live.

Their concerns were not limited to polling units. Some camp residents spoke about difficulties with registration, while others raised concerns about obtaining their PVCs and accessing reliable information about where and how they would vote. Yet beneath the barriers was a strong desire to participate.

As Mercy put it: "I know that if I'm to vote, I have freedom to vote whichever I want to vote..."

That freedom matters.

Displacement may have separated these citizens from their homes, but it should not separate them from their democracy.

For internally displaced persons, meaningful electoral participation requires more than telling people that they have the right to vote. It requires systems that enable them to register, obtain their PVCs, access electoral information and reach a voting centre without facing unreasonable barriers.

Displacement should not mean disconnection from democracy.

BEYOND THE PROJECT: MAKING DISABILITY INCLUSION PART OF HOW INSTITUTIONS WORK

A project can introduce a new practice.

- It can provide support to a community.
- It can change an individual life.

But what happens when the project ends?

For TAF Africa, this question is central to the work of the Disability Rights Advocacy Project for Inclusive Development (D-RAPID) in Delta State. At its quarterly stakeholders' engagement meeting, representatives of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) came together to consider how the gains made through the project can be sustained and, importantly, become part of the way institutions work.

The conversation was bigger than a review of activities. It was about sustainability. Over the course of the two-day engagement, participating MDAs reflected on the progress made through D-RAPID and reaffirmed their commitment to embedding disability-inclusive practices within their institutional frameworks. Representatives of the European Union assessment team and CBM were also present, providing an opportunity to hear directly from project participants about the changes they have experienced.

Participants' feedback offered an important reminder that policies and institutional commitments matter because they ultimately shape people's everyday experiences. The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that these improvements do not remain tied to a project timeline. D-RAPID is supporting that transition by working with government institutions to strengthen disability-inclusive policy implementation and institutional practice across Delta State.

The commitment expressed by participating MDAs is an important step in that

direction.

TURNING DISABILITY RIGHTS INTO EVERYDAY REALITY

A right can exist in law and still feel out of reach in everyday life. For a Person with a Disability, the ability to move independently, communicate, access information or participate fully in society can sometimes depend on having the right assistive device. This is where disability rights move from legislation to lived experience.

TAF Africa in addressing practical barriers faced by PWDs and contributing to a broader effort to advance the implementation of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018 in Delta State has distributed more than 45 assistive devices to Persons with Disabilities across Delta State, with support from the European Union in Nigeria and CBM. This intervention was done through the Disability Rights Advocacy Project for Inclusive Development (D-RAPID).

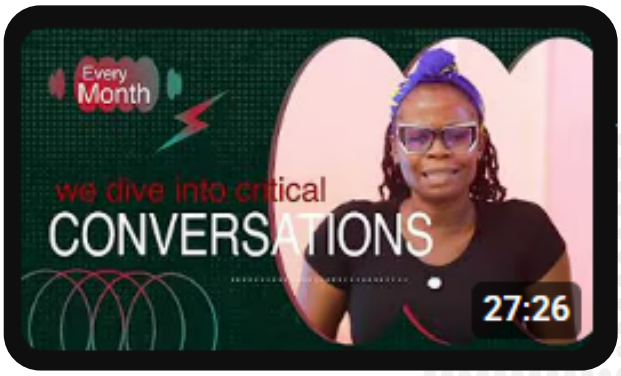
The significance of an assistive device goes beyond the device itself. It can mean greater independence. It can make participation possible. It can reduce a barrier that might otherwise limit someone's ability to work, move around, communicate, or engage with their community.

That is why D-RAPID combines practical support with advocacy for stronger systems.

TAF Africa MICDISABILITY PODCAST

Part 1: Access to Work Scheme ...

Part 2: Love or Fetish? The Struggles...



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

Can you marry a person with disability?

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

Missed an episode?

Binge on knowledge, humor, practical insights and more ...

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

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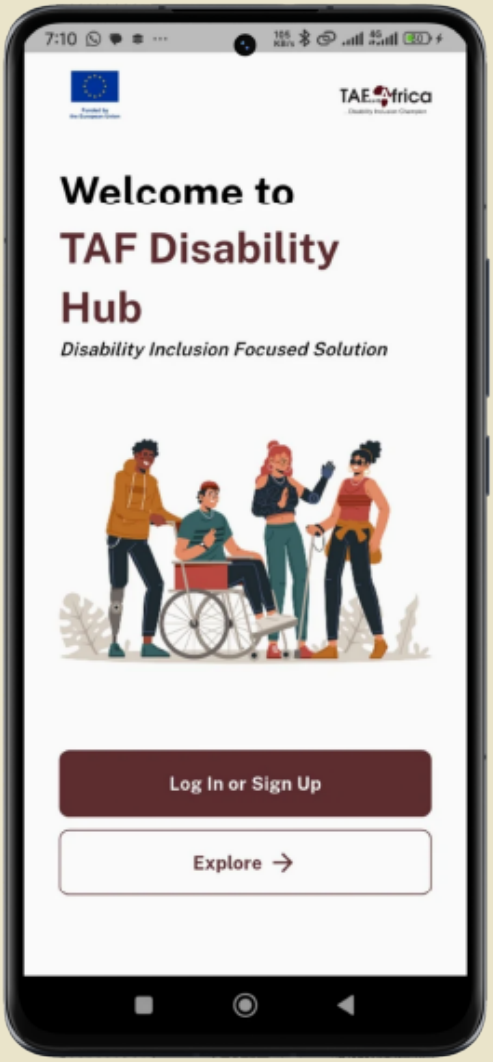
Disability Hub App



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

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