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2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS:

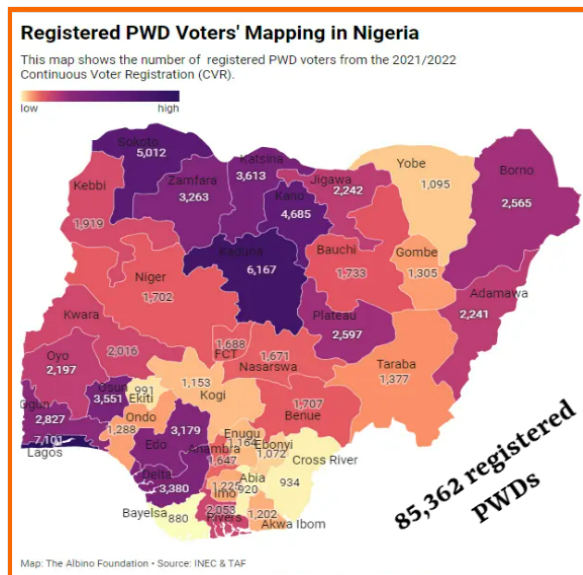
PREPAREDNESS REPORT ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

DATA & TECHNOLOGY | ASSISTIVE DEVICES | OBSERVATION | ELECTION HUB

Introduction

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are often categorized along with women and youths in the group of marginalized persons. The National Population Commission (NPC) estimates that at least nineteen (19) million Nigerians are persons with disabilities, out of which 85,362 are registered voters under the just concluded Continuous Voter Registration (CVR).

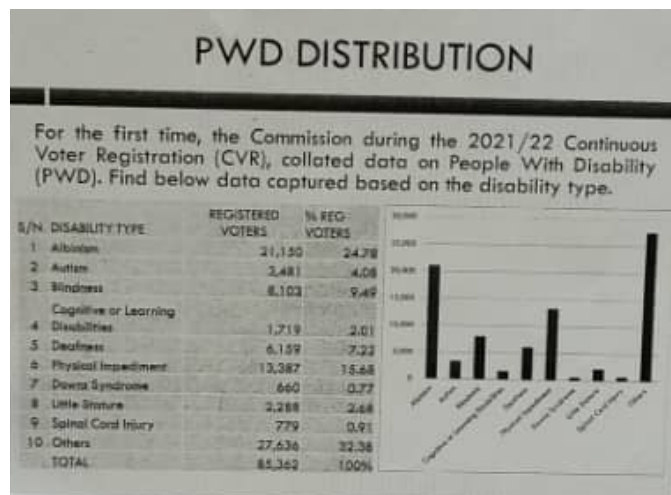
Various instruments advocating for the rights of PWDs and their active participation in political processes exist, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its Optional Protocol, the INEC Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Electoral Process, etc. Albeit all these, PWDs continue to experience systemic exclusion from mainstream governance and developmental processes, especially in the areas of political representation in elective and appointed positions, with limited efforts by political parties to provide a conducive environment for PWDs to engage in politics.



The political rights of persons with disabilities cover the right to vote in the elections freely and without hindrance and the right to run as candidates. Article 29 of the UNCRPD requires State parties to guarantee that persons with disabilities have political rights, the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, as well as promote an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate, without discrimination, in the conduct of public affairs and to encourage their participation in public affairs. But a review of the political history of Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999 highlights that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has conducted six¹ general elections, without adequate data or records of the participation of persons with disabilities. Consequently, the 2023 general elections will be the seventh. Nevertheless, this would be the first general elections with the active inclusion of persons with disabilities both as electorates and

¹ 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019

candidates in elections, with viable evidence of disaggregated data of PWDs according to their



locations and disability types, as well as detailed data of candidates with an indication of their disability status.

In consideration of the voting rights of every citizen of Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in collaboration with other organizations, has already initiated various steps towards encouraging the active participation of PWDs as citizens with equal rights. Such steps include the creation of Disability Desk Offices and the inclusion of specific provisions in the Electoral Act of 2022,

article 54, 1 and 2 on the participation of PWDs in the electoral process, as well as the accreditation of PWDs as election observers. The Commission's engagement with the disability community led to the introduction of assistive and inclusive devices such as the Braille ballot guide, magnifying glasses, and posters for the deaf, provided for in Article 54 of the 2022 Electoral Act. As a matter of fact, Nigeria became the first country in Africa where PWDs in their own right observed elections beginning with the Edo and Ondo Governorship elections in 2016.

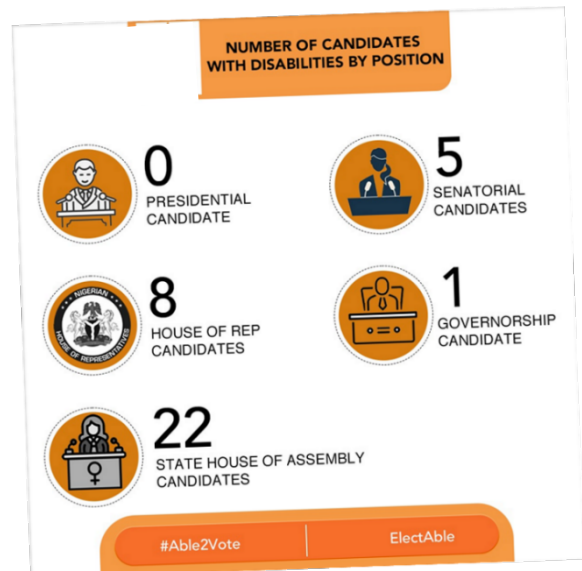
Nevertheless, the 2023 General Elections would be the first to be conducted under the repealed and reenacted electoral act 2022, tried and tested in the 2020 Ekiti and Osun governorship elections. Additionally, this would be the first time INEC, with support from other organizations, has gathered disaggregated data on disability. For instance, there is available data on the percentages of new registrants with albinism, blindness, hearing challenges, spinal cord injuries, down syndrome, little stature, etc. Thus, the expectations on the inclusivity component in the 2023 general elections are very high. However, many registered PWD voters are yet to collect their voters' cards, casting doubt on the preparedness of INEC to conduct an inclusive and credible elections. The increase in the number of candidates with disabilities and the hope of many other PWDs emerging in appointive offices point to the fact that the outcome the polls would have far-reaching implications for the PWDs beyond 2023.

Overview of TAFAFRICA's Preparedness

The Albino Foundation has observed INEC processes, before, during and after major elections since the last 2019 general elections, and the Foundation has continued to make substantial contributions to improving the electoral systems for a more effective and active participation of PWDs. Ahead of the 2023 General Elections, to ensure the increased participation of PWDs, the Foundation adopted a progressive process from of preparations for the elections, ranging from advocacy to sensitization/awareness creation to capacity building and intellectual empowerment. The advocacy component commenced with advocacy visits to relevant stakeholders for in-depth discussions and exchanges on collaboration and technical support towards enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in the political processes. The sensitization phase was implemented at zonal levels under the ABLE2VOTE Voter Education Campaigns. With the aim of reducing voter apathy and increasing the active participation of PWDs in electoral processes, at least 5000 PWDs and IDPs (in-person and virtual) across the nation were sensitized on their voting rights and the need to participate actively in elections.

Beyond creating awareness amongst PWD voters, TAFAfrica also organized a capacity building session for PWD candidates, which presented opportunities for experience sharing and valuable insights and lessons on leadership and mentorship, political engagement and preparedness, campaign/crowd funding and fundraising, coordination and coherence in messaging and managing the electorates – candidates’ relations, amongst others. The candidates were also presented a platform for increased visibility and acceptance through a live Townhall Meeting hosted on a national TV.

Presently, we are adopting varied sensitization approaches in collaboration with African International Television (AIT) as follows: daily 1 minute advertorial / educational promos on the inclusion of PWDs in the electoral process, daily 2 minutes ABLE2VOTE Guideline micro series on the PWDs participation in the elections and INEC provisions, and a once-a-week appearance on the flagship programme on current affairs to speak in detail on issues around disability. All scheduled to run from Jan 20th up to March 11th. Additionally, there would also be a situation room live broadcast, a live intervention in TAFAfrica’s Election Hub on February 24th, 25th and 26th respectively.



A three-winged sensitization campaign on the media

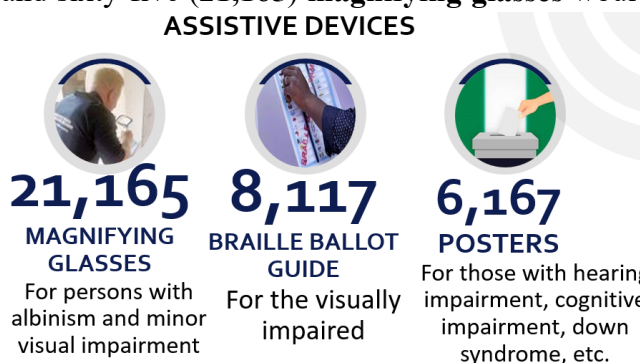
Voters’ Disability Data and Provisions of Assistive Devices

An analysis of the available data from the 2021/2022 CVR by INEC identifies varied disabilities and the number of polling units where they are situated as follows:

| | Disability Type | No. of Persons | No. of polling units |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Albinism | 21,150 | 16,071 |
| 2 | Autism | 3,481 | 1,810 |
| 3 | Visual Impairment | 8,103 | 5,957 |
| 4 | Cognitive/Learning Disabilities | 1,719 | 1,206 |
| 5 | Hard in hearing | 6,159 | 5,085 |
| 6 | Down syndrome | 660 | 606 |
| 7 | Little stature | 2,288 | 1,497 |
| 8 | Physical Impediment | 13,387 | 9,463 |
| 9 | Spinal cord injury | 779 | 750 |
| 10 | Others | 27,636 | 13,220 |
| | Total | 85,362 | 55,665 PUs |

while disabilities have been disaggregated according to varied types in the data, in the 2023 elections, assistive devices would only be provided for limited types, as a result of financial constraints. The few groups that would benefit from special devices are persons with albinism and minor visual impairment, persons with visual impairment and persons with hearing impairment.

Consequently, twenty-one thousand, one hundred and sixty-five **(21,165) magnifying glasses** would be provided nationwide at all polling units for persons with albinism and minor visual impairment, six thousand, one hundred and sixty-seven **(6,167) posters** would be produced for those with hearing impairment nationwide and eight thousand, one hundred and eleven **(8,117) braille ballot guide** would be produced for the visually impaired nationwide by INEC.



Election Observation - Deployment of Observers

The 2023 national and subnational elections have been fixed on February 25 and March 11, 2023 respectively. For the first time in the history of election observations, TAFAFRICA will be monitoring according to the presence of PWDs at identified Polling Units. In the general elections, TAFAFRICA's methodology and deployment will review compliance:

1. Provisions and effective use of assistive devices and electronic technologies
 - a. The availability of braille ballot guides, magnifying glasses, posters
 - b. The effectiveness in the usage of the BVAS and these devices
2. Physical accessibility
 - a. The accessibility of polling units to PWDs
 - b. The accessibility of poll booths to users of wheelchair/clutches
3. Participation of PWDs
 - a. As voters – application of lessons from the sensitizations on the electoral process
 - b. As candidates - knowledge and application of the electoral rules
 - c. As party agents - knowledge and application of the electoral rules
 - d. As poll officials (INEC Adhoc) - knowledge and application of the electoral rules
4. Electoral crisis likely to impede on the elections and how it affects PWDs
5. Priority voting and attitude towards PWDs
 - a. By the general public
 - b. By INEC officials
 - c. By security agents
 - d. By other PWDs
6. Election results transmission and collation
 - a. Quality of collation and management of results
 - b. Review of results, where necessary

The above thematic foci have formed the basis for the sensitization activities. These will also be fundamental in the training of observers, election reports, election hub app analysis, as well as media briefings and releases.

Concerning the deployment of observers, TAFAFRICA has identified nonpartisan civil society coalition/network across the country, that work on elections and/or governance issues. Consequently,

nonpartisan citizens, including PWDs will be mobilized in all the 36 States of the Federation and the FCT:

- to observe the elections and engage in the election process;
- identify and expose irregularities;
- provide an accurate measure of the quality of the participation of PWDs in the elections;
- increase the confidence of PWDs in the process and outcomes; and
- provide recommendations for improvement in next elections.

This is aimed at supporting the laudable efforts of the Commission towards promoting the participation of PWDs, fostering national growth and development to encourage their active participation as citizens with equal rights, and promote governmental accountability within and well beyond the election cycle.

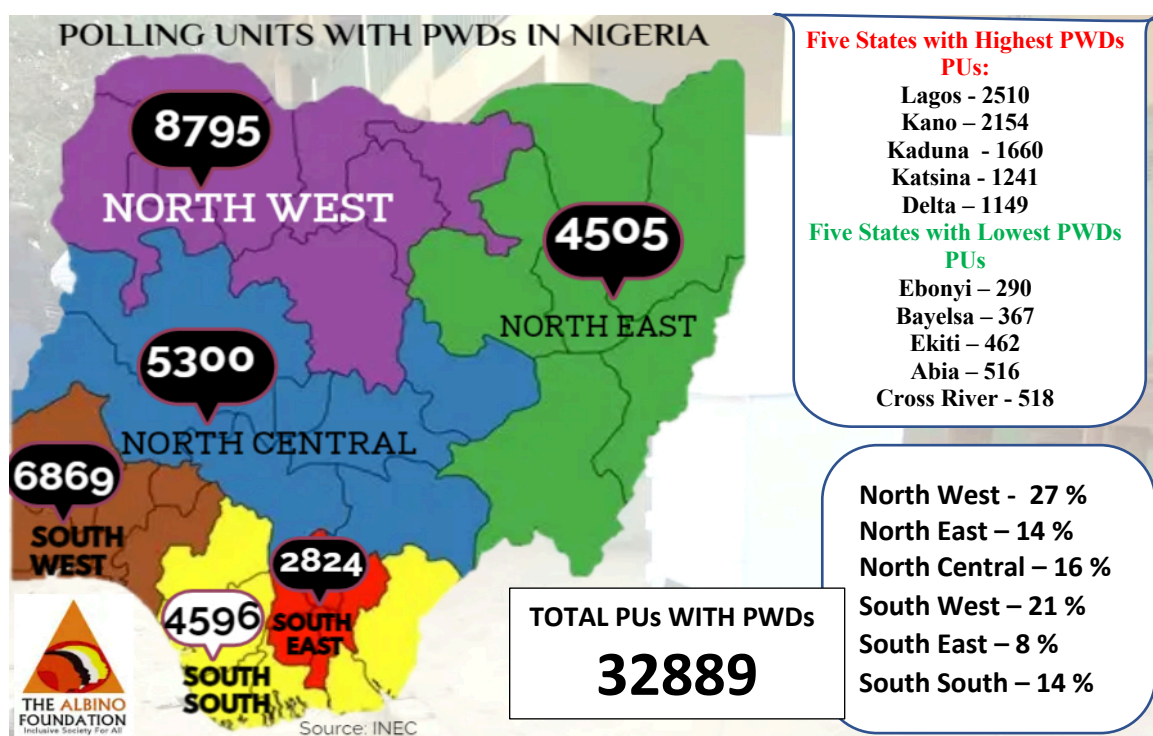
Deployment Methodology

TAFAFRICA will adopt systematic sampling technique, using the current disaggregated data on PWDs in the state for the deployment of observers for the 2023 general elections. Deployment per state will be determined by the number of polling units (PUs) in the states and the number of PWDs within the PUs.

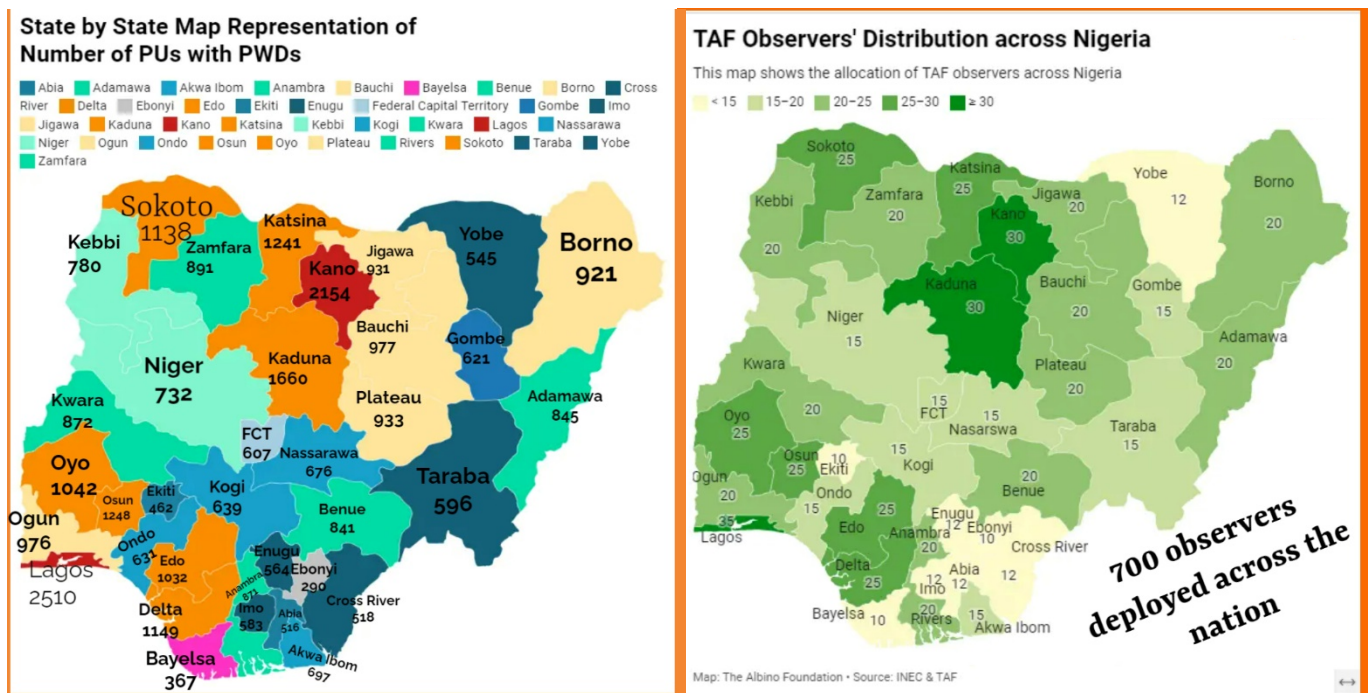
Thus, TAFAFRICA will mobilize 700 observers across the 36 States and the FCT to observe the elections of February 25th using a random, representative sample of polling station to give a highly accurate assessment of election procedures, in consideration of:

- The number of registered PWDS in the state
- Number of wards and Polling Units
- Security Concerns

With emphasis on states with the highest number of PWDs, these factors are critical elements in ascertaining the active participation of PWDS in the elections.



Following the disaggregated data on persons with disabilities and their polling units, there are currently a total of 32,889 PUs with PWDs in Nigeria. Below is the state-by-state map representation and TAF Africa's observers' distribution:



As the breakdown shows: emphasis will be placed on states with the highest number of PUs and PWDs within the PUs across the nation - Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Osun, Katsina, Delta, Sokoto, Oyo and Edo.

Proposed deployment:

| S/N | States | Total No. of PUs | Total No. of Observers |
|---|---------|------------------|------------------------|
| 3 states with 1,500 and above PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 1 | LAGOS | 2510 | 35 |
| 2 | KANO | 2154 | 35 |
| 3 | KADUNA | 1660 | 30 |
| 6 states with 1,000 – 1,500 PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 4 | OSUN | 1248 | 25 |
| 5 | KATSINA | 1241 | 25 |
| 6 | DELTA | 1149 | 25 |
| 7 | SOKOTO | 1138 | 25 |
| 8 | OYO | 1042 | 25 |
| 9 | EDO | 1032 | 25 |
| 12 states with 750 – 1,000 PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 10 | BAUCHI | 977 | 20 |
| 11 | OGUN | 976 | 20 |
| 12 | PLATEAU | 933 | 20 |
| 13 | JIGAWA | 931 | 20 |
| 14 | BORNO | 921 | 20 |
| 15 | ZAMFARA | 891 | 20 |
| 16 | KWARA | 872 | 20 |
| 17 | ANAMBRA | 871 | 20 |
| 18 | ADAMAWA | 845 | 20 |

| | | | |
|---|-------------|-------|------------|
| 19 | BENUE | 841 | 20 |
| 20 | RIVERS | 833 | 20 |
| 21 | KEBBI | 780 | 20 |
| 8 states with 590 – 750 PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 22 | NIGER | 732 | 15 |
| 23 | AKWA IBOM | 697 | 15 |
| 24 | NASSARAWA | 676 | 15 |
| 25 | ONDO | 631 | 15 |
| 26 | GOMBE | 621 | 15 |
| 27 | KOGI | 639 | 15 |
| 28 | FCT | 607 | 15 |
| 29 | TARABA | 596 | 15 |
| 5 states with 500 – 590 PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 30 | IMO | 583 | 12 |
| 31 | ENUGU | 564 | 12 |
| 32 | YOBE | 545 | 12 |
| 33 | ABIA | 516 | 12 |
| 34 | CROSS RIVER | 518 | 12 |
| 3 states with 500 and below PUs with PWDs across the nation | | | |
| 35 | EKITI | 462 | 10 |
| 36 | BAYELSA | 367 | 10 |
| 37 | EBONYI | 290 | 10 |
| | | 32889 | 700 |

DEVELOPMENT & DEPLOYMENT OF TAFAFRICA'S ELECTION HUB APP & TOOLS

It is undeniable the role technology plays when it comes to election observation, from improved transparency and accuracy in vote counting, to improved voter registration, accreditation and eligibility. Other crucial roles may include secure transmission of results, real-time information public confidence and data analysis for better decision making, improved voter access, enhanced confidence in election results, among others.

In ensuring an inclusive 2023 general elections in Nigeria, TAF Africa adopted a three-pronged technological approach which includes;

- ❖ The development of a PWD Dashboard.
- ❖ The development of a user-friendly Election Hub App.
- ❖ The development of an election monitoring dashboard.

WHAT IS THE PWD DASHBOARD?

The PWD dashboard is a user-friendly platform which provides data on all registered voters with disabilities across polling units nationwide, disaggregated by type of disability. The PWD dashboard will also provide data on all PWDs candidates who are contesting at different levels nationwide.

The dashboard will provide a platform where key stakeholders such as EMBs, CSOs, among others can provide speedy intervention for PWDs to enhance their participation within the electoral process. These interventions may include; the efficient distribution of assistive devices to polling units with PWDs, the distribution of election observers to polling units, and resource mobilization for PWDs candidates.

Information on this PWD dashboard will be searchable and filterable, and the filters will include, Zone, State, LGA, Ward, Polling Unit, Disability. The Dashboard will also have an Application Programming Interface (API) functionality which will allow key stakeholders such as INEC to interface with the platform.

The Dashboard can be accessed from electionhub.org.ng.

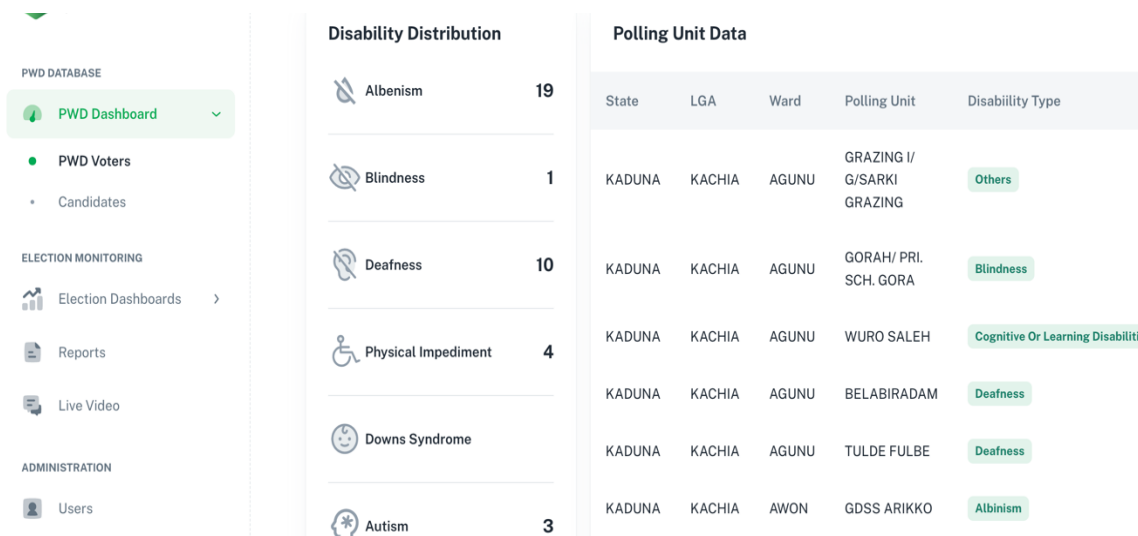


Figure 1 Home page of the dashboard



Figure 2 Dashboard showing eligible voters with disabilities in Kaduna.

Figure 3 Dashboard showing PWD distribution across polling units in Kaduna



WHAT IS THE ELECTION -HUB APP?



Figure 4 Login page for the Election-Hub App

The Election Hub App is a cross-platform mobile application with data collection capabilities which will be used by election observers to report real time information from the field on election day. The election hub app will aim at ensuring that data related to PWDs participation will be captured effectively on the election day.

The features of the App will include;

- ❖ **Digital forms;** for collating data from the field which can be transmitted in real time.
- ❖ **Real-time video and live video footage reports;** permits live video feeds to be transmitted in real-time from the field.
- ❖ **Geolocation;** information sent from the field will be transmitted with the geo-coordinates of the exact location it was captured.
- ❖ **Offline Mode and Local Storage;** the mobile platform will provide offline capabilities for locations with poor internet connectivity, where information can be stored temporarily and once internet is restored, the data will be transmitted to the server.
- ❖ **Support for Images, Videos, advanced form fields and Multiple forms;** the platform will allow data capture and upload in multiple form fields including images, video and audio fields.
- ❖ **Cross-platform;** the App will be iOS and android compatible.

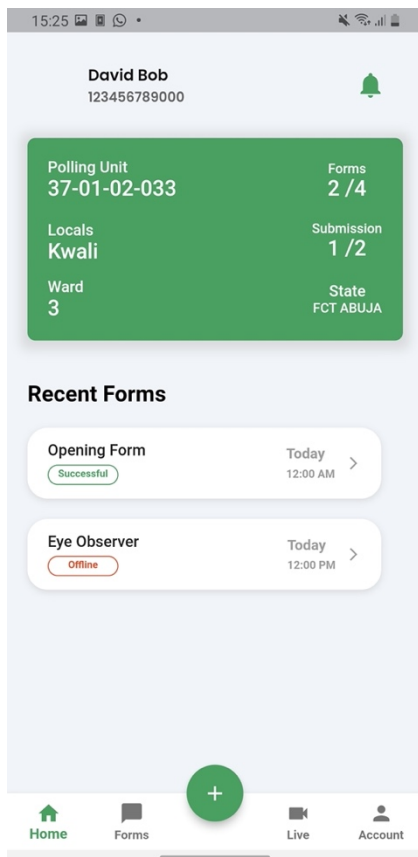


Figure 5 The election observer home page

Figure 6 Voter and Accreditation Form

WHAT IS THE ELECTION MONITORING DASHBOARD?

The election monitoring dashboard is an administrative dashboard with reporting and data analytics capabilities, which will display real-time data collected from the election hub app.

The features of the dashboard will include;

- ❖ **Realtime Reporting;** the dashboard generates instant reports in real-time as the election observers send in their reports through the election hub app.
- ❖ **Dashboard Highlights;** the dashboard provides key information highlights in real-time that summarizes the reports transmitted from the election observers.
- ❖ **Analytics and data Management;** the dashboard produces summary reports with graphs and tables.
- ❖ **Map View & Data Demographics:** The dashboard presents disaggregated data in reports and maps based on various demographics such as gender, location, etc.
- ❖ **Data Export:** Data export functionality is enabled for all data collected during the election period and the data can be exported in Excel, PDF and CSV formats.
- ❖ **Application Programming Interface (API):** The dashboard provides an API that will enable authorised third-party software or organizations to programmatically access data submitted by election observers.
- ❖ **Administration:** The dashboard will be used to administer the users of the mobile application, and restrict access where needed.

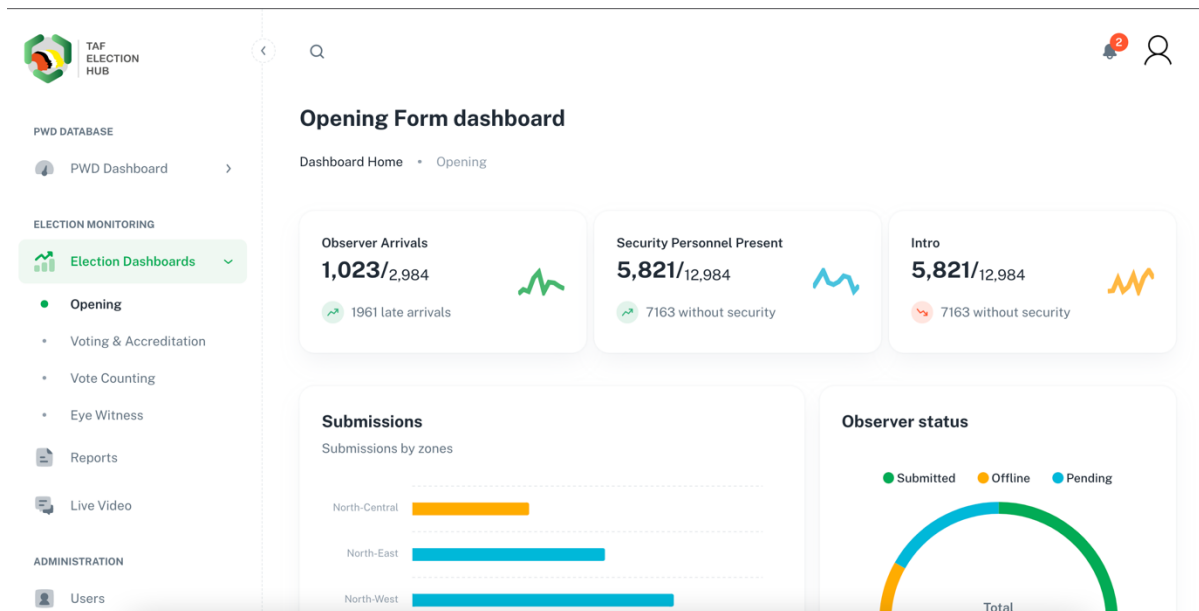


Figure 7 Election Dashboard Landing Page – showing key highlights from the opening form.

| Time | Observer name | State | Lga | Ward | Polling Unit | |
|------------|---------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 12/2/2022 | HASSAN ABUBAKAR | ZAMFARA | ZURMI | ZURMI | KADAMUTSA IV/M.P.S | ⋮ |
| 11/6/2022 | ABDULLAHI AHMAD | KANO | TSAFE | CHEDIYA | BAMAMU / GIDAN BEDI | ⋮ |
| 21/12/2022 | KARIM LAMIDO II | BORNO | TSAFE | YANKUZO | UNG. DODO/KOFAR ISAH | ⋮ |
| 1/1/2023 | JOHN AKUROSEOKIKA GABRIEL | YOLA | TALATA MAFARA | SHIYAR GALADIMA | DAN RINI III/SHIYAR BASA BAKIN BOREHOLE | ⋮ |
| 3/1/2022 | YAKUBU NAZIR ABDULHAKEEM | SOKOTO | ANKA | BAGEGA | BAGEGA I/KANWURI | ⋮ |

[View All](#)

Figure 8 Election Monitoring Dashboard showing a collation of the opening form data transmitted from the observers

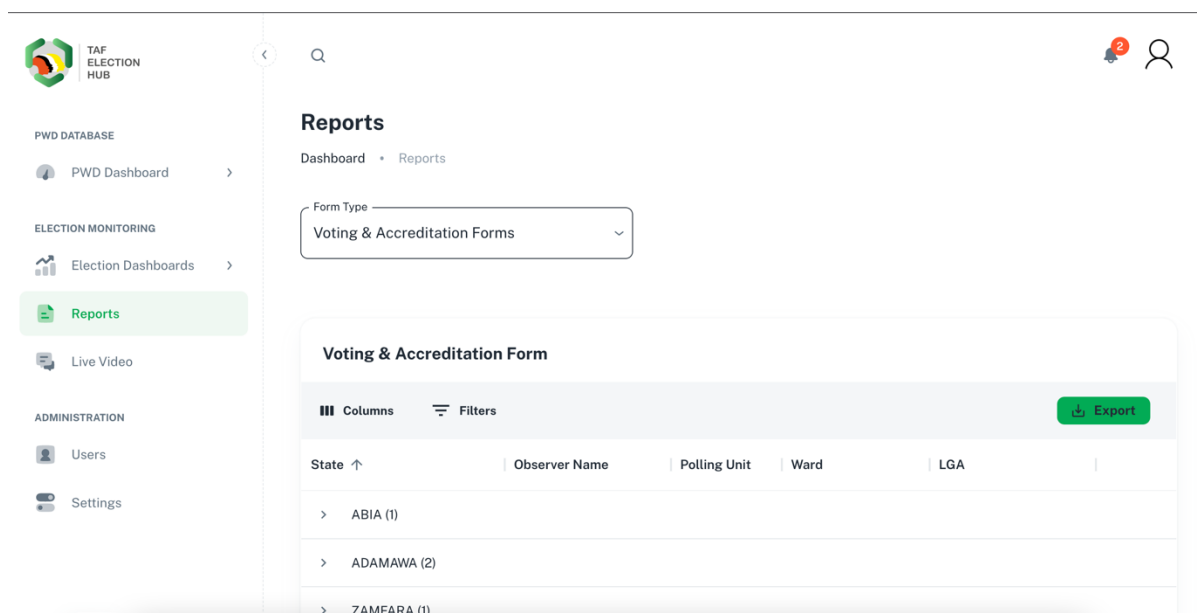


Figure 9 Reports Page for the dashboard showing the collation of data across all reporting states

ESTABLISHMENT OF TAF AFRICA'S PWD ELECTION HUB

To track the inclusion of PWDs in the electoral process, TAF Africa will establish a PWD Election Hub as a response to inadequate PWD-focused platforms on election observation, and this will be the first of its kind in Nigeria. The PWDs Election Hub will serve as a data hive for Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) Situation Rooms and the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) to find useful and real-time data on PWDs access to voting locations, participation, provision of assistive devices, priority voting, among others.

The TAF Africa election hub app and tools will be used to provide real-time information for the hub on the participation of PWDs and the hub will be set-up for the 2023 general elections and subsequent off-cycle elections during the period of the project intervention.

The election hub will run from the 23rd to the 26th of February, 2023 at Transcorp Hilton, FCT. Key activities within the hub will include;

- ❖ **Pre-Election Press conference;** to be held on the 23rd of February, 2023.
- ❖ **Election Day Press Conference;** to be held at noon on the 25th of February, 2023.
- ❖ **Post-Election Press Conference;** to be held on the 27th of February, 2023.

Key personnels who will participate in the HUB include;

- ❖ **Data Clerks:** for managing the data collected from the observers during the election period.
- ❖ **Social media team:** for promoting visibility on the hub activities on TAF Africa's social media handles during the election period.
- ❖ **HUB Manager:** direct and manage activities of the hub during the election period.
- ❖ **Media:** to promote visibility in the traditional media of the hub activities during the election period.
- ❖ **Guests:** the hub will receive key guests from the EU delegation, other embassies' delegations, CSOs, EMBs, among others.
- ❖ **Data Analysts:** Responsible for analysing the election reports collected from the field during the election period.
- ❖ **Facilitators:** Will engage the media during press conferences on the reports generated.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, making elections inclusive for persons with disabilities (PWDs) is crucial for promoting equal participation and representation in the democratic process. By ensuring accessibility, providing assistive devices, granting priority voting for PWDs and raising awareness about the rights of PWDs, the electoral process can become more inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs and perspectives of all citizens. Failing to make elections inclusive for PWDs not only undermines the principles of democracy but also perpetuates systemic barriers and discrimination. Thus, it is important to prioritize and implement measures that make elections accessible and inclusive for PWDs for the 2023 general elections and other future elections conducted in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the emerging trends ahead of the 2023 general elections, TAF Africa makes the following recommendations:

1. INEC should ensure that the polling units that have registered PWDs are physically accessible and equipped with assistive devices such as magnifying glasses for persons with albinism, braille ballot guide for visually impaired persons, and posters for the deaf. Also, INEC should ensure that the voting booths are easily accessed by wheel chair and crutches' users.
2. There is need for OPDs, CSOs and other key relevant stakeholders to sensitize PWDs on their rights to vote and to be voted for, including accommodations available to them within the electoral process.
3. There is need for political parties to ensure an inclusive candidate selection process by nominating candidates with disabilities to ensure representation at all levels of government.
4. There is need for more collaboration and engagement with OPDs to identify barriers to PWDs participation in the electoral process and to provide a platform where solutions can be implemented.
5. There is need to continuously monitor the progress of the inclusiveness of the electoral process to ensure improvements are regularly made as when needed.