



Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

**Basic Voter Information, Civic Education,
and Sensitization Manual for Persons with
Disabilities in Special Schools.**

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National Pledge

I pledge to Nigeria my country
To be faithful, loyal, and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity, and uphold her
honor and glory
So help me God.

About Inclusive Friend Association (IFA):



IFA is a Person with Disability (PWD) woman-led non-profit and non-governmental organization that employs data to address the inclusion and participation challenges of over 30 million PWDs in Nigeria through advocacy, training, and research.

IFA focal areas of work are Democracy, Good governance, and Gender. Located in Abuja, IFA is an innovative and consistent leader within the Disability community as well as in the democracy and governance space with a wide network of allies, stakeholders, and various PWD groups nationally which are instrumental to the success of its programs.

IFA through its Access Nigeria campaign conducted Africa's first, second, and third accessibility audits of polling units by PWDs in Edo, Ondo, and Kogi states in Nigeria, and made independent voting for Blind voters possible through the design of the braille ballot guide.

Understanding Access Nigeria Campaign:

Over the years, the community of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have been disenfranchised from the electoral process due to inaccessible systems and processes. The need for complete inclusion of PWDs in political and governance processes birthed the Access Nigeria campaign. The campaign, through data driven advocacy, seeks to provide long lasting and efficient solutions to the exclusion of PWDs from the electoral and election processes in Nigeria.

The goal of Access Nigeria : Disability Votes Matter Campaign is to improve the participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria's political and electoral processes.

The campaign seeks to achieve this through evidence-based advocacy to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), National Assembly, and other relevant public institutions.

The other strategies for achieving the goal of this campaign include PWD targeted voter education and Get Out the Vote campaigns. (GOTV) campaigns mobilize PWDs to vote during elections and participate in the electoral processes.

The Access Nigeria; Disability Votes Matter campaign used to be known as the Leave No One Behind: Disability Votes Count campaign until it was rebranded in 2017.

Short term objectives:

1. To make polling units and ballot boxes more accessible for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) during elections.
2. To facilitate improvements in the distribution and reach of civic and voter education messages to citizens with different forms of disabilities.
3. To ensure the use of sign language interpreters in all civic and voter education messages and activities.
4. To improve the capacity of election officials to assist PWDs to vote on Election Day.
5. To ensure the use of Braille Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials for civic and voter education at all levels.

Medium Term Objectives:

- I. Advocating for the introduction of Braille ballots and accessible voting cubicles (booths) for PWDs by 2019.
- II. Working to create more cohesion within the civil society movement in Nigeria in the advocacy for the political rights of PWD.
- III. Contributing to the enactment of meaningful national disability rights legislation.
- IV. Working with relevant stakeholders to change narratives and stereotypes about PWDs.

IFA's Innovations and contribution to Inclusive Electoral Process

- I. Braille Ballot Guide (BBG) section 54 (2) of the Electoral Act 2022.
- II. Election Day Written Instruction (form 30E PWD)
- III. Disaggregated Continuous Voter Registration Form
- IV. Redesigned form EC 40H section 9 (1) (b) of the Electoral Act 2022.

IFA's Collaborative Contributions to Inclusive Electoral Process

- I. The Commission shall take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with disabilities, special needs and vulnerable persons are assisted at the polling place by the provision of suitable means of communication, such as Braille, large embossed print, electronic devices, sign language interpretation, or offsite voting in appropriate cases. *Section 54 (2) of the Electoral Act 2022.*
- II. PWDs, visibly pregnant women and the aged, shall be granted priority access to voting at the Polling Units, Voting Point Settlements and Voting Points

Understanding Elections:

Every society is structured in a manner that avails a process of leadership in a hierarchy. However, the process for selecting or determining who occupies this leadership position varies from the country or existing system of such location.

Some have a monarchy system where a government or rule of sovereignty is invested in one person, a head of state called a monarch, who holds the position until death or abdication. Some other system is hereditary. A process where a set of families rotates the position in a particular order.

In Nigeria, we operate a democratic system of government.

Democracy is defined as a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.

Since the return to democracy in 1999, Nigeria had practiced an uninterrupted democracy where citizens choose leaders of their choice through the process of a vote. An election is an act and a process where a set of actions are taken by citizens of a country in order to make an informed decision on who is saddled with the responsibilities of governing or handling the affairs of the nation.

Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Elections are used to elect officials to the legislature, the executive and for regional and local governments.

This process is also used in many other private and business organizations, from clubs to voluntary associations and corporations. ***An election is a process for which the independent opinions of individuals form a collective decision of a larger group.*** Hence in choosing these leaders, it requires processes, and a set of actions are required to fulfill this process of decision.

Phases of Election:

In Nigeria, an election is divided into three (3) phases namely the Pre-election phase, Election Day (during), and the Post-election phase. Each of these phases has various activities spread across the stages. The vote casting stage (Election Day) is often more discussed, engaging and treated with importance by many. No doubt, this stage is a very vital step of the election nonetheless; it is the second phase of the election.

However, every phase of the election is very critical to the successful outcome of the electoral process.

Pre-Election Phase: This stage is often neglected by many however; it is a phase that comprises activities that empower election monitoring bodies (EMBs) to carry out activities that enable citizens to participate on Election Day.

A number of relevant election stakeholders also carry out various responsibilities as it is accorded to them constitutionally.

INEC

- (1) Continuous Voter Registration (CVR is an exercise meant for the registration of citizens who turned 18 years of age or have not had the opportunity to register in the previous exercises).
- (2) Timetable for the election process
- (3) Election guidelines
- (4) Voter education & Sensitization
- (5) Monitor party primaries
- (6) Recruit and train ad-hoc staff
- (7) The signing of the peace accord pact
- (8) Update political parties and other stakeholders on the activities of the commission
- (9) Procure election materials
- (10) Deploy election materials

CITIZENS

- (1) Participate in the CVR, especially those who just turned 18 or who have never registered.
- (2) Register and participate in the activities of political parties of interest

POLITICAL PARTIES

- (1) Mobilize for new members
- (2) Conduct party primaries
- (3) Submit names of party candidates to INEC
- (4) Conduct campaigns' and rallies
- (5) Hold press conferences' where necessary
- (6) Recruit and train party agents
- (7) Participate in media appearances
- (8) Participate in political party debates
- (9) Attend INEC, CSO, and Security meetings when invited
- (10) The signing of the peace accord
- (11) Carry out consultations

SECURITY/POLICE

- (1) Provide security throughout the pre-election phase
- (2) Update the general public on the preparation and plans of the police
- (3) Provide early warning signals to citizens in case of any danger
- (4) Identify danger flash points areas and provide mitigation plans
- (5) Deploy a rapid response team in any areas where there are incidence due to pre-election activities
- (6) Provide quick response numbers to citizens in case of any danger.

Election Day:

The second phase of election is Election Day. This is the day when the vote is cast through a secret ballot. There are also responsibilities from various election stakeholders.

1. **INEC:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to among other things organize elections for various political offices in the country. The functions of INEC as contained in Section 15, Part 1 of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) and Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended). The umpire body of the electoral process is saddled with the responsibility of conducting a free, fair, credible, and inclusive election. INEC ensures that election materials (human & materials) are deployed to the various Polling Units (PUs) at the right time and conduct the affairs of the election.
2. **Eligible Voters:** All eligible voters are required to cast their vote through a secret ballot for the candidate of their choice. This is done at their registered PUs.
3. **Security Agencies:** The security agencies under the leadership of the police are expected to provide and guarantee the security of life and property of all voters, INEC staff, and materials and ensure that the process is safe for all to participate.
4. **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** All accredited CSOs serve as independent citizen observers for the process. This observer group can be domestic i.e. organizations and individuals within the country and international may include but is not limited to foreigners and expatriates from USAID, NDI, US Embassy, FCDO etc.
5. **Media:** The media keep citizens informed on the conduct of the election, providing reports on citizens' participation and the outcome of the election.
6. **Political Party:** Political parties are critical stakeholders. They provide candidates who will contest for the various positions, encourage their supporters to vote and ensure that their supporters are calm and behave themselves in an orderly manner irrespective of the winner of the election.

Post-Election Phase:

These are activities that follow the announcement of the winner by INEC. Aside from some statutory requirements such as, swearing into office, and press briefing by both the winning party and others who do not emerge as winners, some aggrieved party faithful may want to perpetrate violent activities.

However, any party who is not satisfied with the result announced is required to go to the court to seek redress which forms a post-election phase activity.

Understanding Election Day Procedure: Understanding the election day procedures, assist the PWD in voting without any form of difficulty.

One very important consideration for every PWDs is that personal safety must be a priority above participation.

INEC election officials are expected to be at their PUs on or before **8am** to enable the set-up of the PU in good time. According to the INEC's guidelines, the election commences by **8:30 am**.

- a. **Who will I see?** Every PU will have at least four (4) INEC officials. There will be presence of security agencies including police, NSCDC e.t.c, party agents, domestic and international observers, media and voters.
- b. **What will I see?** Voting Cubicle, the ballot box, pen, markers, different types of forms, Ballot Papers, Magnifying Glass, Braille Ballot Guide, Form EC 40H, Form PWD30E, BIVAS, tables, chairs, COVID-19 related materials (sanitizers, infrared thermometer, cotton wool, methylated spirit) etc.

Election Day Assistive Materials:

As a PWD, what items should I look out for? INEC will deploy assistive materials on Election Day therefore PWDs must request these materials especially as it relates to their cluster of disability.

- 1) **Form EC 30PWD E:** This is the election day written instruction, a step by step guide on how to vote.
- 2) **Braille Ballot Guide (BBG):** This is used by blind voters to enable them to cast their votes independently as long as the voter can read braille.
- 3) **Magnifying Glass:** This is used by persons with albinism or the aged with low vision.
- 4) **Form EC 40H:** This form is used to capture data of PWDs in a desegregated format.
- 5) **Priority Vote:** PWDs are entitled to a priority vote. What this means is that when you arrive at the polling unit, you are expected to be attended to without joining the regular queue; however, you are expected to join the priority queue formed for PWDs, pregnant women and aged.



BRAILLE BALLOT GUIDE (BBG)



Basic Voter Information/How To Vote

Introduction:

This is designed to help you understand the voting procedures during an election. Remember that you are qualified to vote if you are a registered voter and your name appears on the register of voters at your polling unit.

Opening of the Polling Units:

On each Election Day, polling stations will open for accreditation and voting from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. However, voters on the queue before the close of the poll at 2:30 pm will be accredited and allowed to vote.

Voting Procedure:

Prior to the commencement of polls, the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer (VP) shall ensure that the contents of the Voter Code of Conduct (VCC) are read out loudly to voters and that the VCC Poster is pasted at the Polling Unit.

Voting at the polling unit will be as follows:

Accreditation: Accreditation is a process of ascertaining that the PVC presented belongs to the person presenting it, and that the PVC corresponds with those in the register of voters in that particular Polling Unit.

Voting: Voting shall be in accordance with the Continuous Accreditation and Voting System (CAVS) procedures.

Step 1: A voter arrives at the polling unit and sees four (4) INEC officials (1 Presiding Officer, (PO) and 3 Assistant Presiding Officers (APO)).

Step 2: An INEC official will confirm if the voter is at the right polling unit by checking the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) presented by the voter and confirm that the PVC presented belongs to them. The INEC official controls the queue at the polling unit by separating the queue for PWDs from other voters to give priority voting system.

Step 3: An INEC official handles the BVAS. The BVAS will be used to capture the fingerprint of the card bearer (i.e. the voter). The voter will be requested to place his or her finger on the finger print scanner of the BVAS to authenticate the voter. If the voter fails to be authenticated using his finger print, then the photo option will be used for facial authentication.

Step 4: An INEC official will ask for your PVC and confirm you are listed in the voters register. Your name will be ticked and your finger will be inked.

Step 5: The Presiding officer will stamp, sign and endorse your ballot paper. You will be given the ballot paper rolled with the printed side inwards and directed to the voting cubicle.

Step 6: You will be asked to stain your finger with the ink given and mark the box for your preferred candidate/party. Roll the ballot paper in the manner you were given and flatten it.

Step 7: Leave the voting cubicle and drop the ballot paper in the ballot box in full view of people at the Polling Unit.

Step 8: Leave the Polling Unit or wait if you so choose, in an orderly and peaceful manner, to watch the process up to the declaration of the result.

N.B: The result of each Polling Unit shall be pasted at the unit for everyone to see. The Presiding Officer shall allow a voter who is blind, or is otherwise unable to distinguish symbols, or who suffers from any other physical disability, to be accompanied into the Polling Unit and be assisted to vote by a person chosen by him/her, other than a poll agent.

Also, a visually impaired voter will be given the Braille Ballot Guide (BBG) to enable the voter cast their ballot independently.

A magnifying glass will be made available to voter who is a person with albinism.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Your right as a voter:

On each Election Day, you have the right to:

- (1) Access the polling unit.
- (2) Receive information on the voting procedures from the poll officials
- (3) Vote in secret.

Responsibility of the Voter:

- (1) Obey all lawful instructions from the INEC and Security Officials on election duty.
- (2) Leave the polling unit or wait if you so choose in an orderly and peaceful manner.
- (3) Encourage other voters to do likewise

Voter Mobilization

What is Voter Mobilization: Put simply, voter mobilization is the process of getting citizens to vote.

Why Voter Mobilization: Election results in recent times has depicts high voter-apathy. The low level participation of citizens has not given value for money considering the volume of resources deployed during election.

Mode of Voter Mobilization:

- (1) Prioritize personal interactions
- (2) Use your online platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp etc,)
- (3) Be none partisan while encouraging others
- (4) Avoid argument during mobilization
- (5) Avoid sentiments, naming of candidates of political party during mobilization
- (6) Work with established groups if you can
- (7) Engage family and religious groups

Inclusive elections:

Inclusive election is an election that is accessible with absence of barrier to all clusters of disability. It is also an where electoral assistive materials are procured by INEC, deployed and put to use by polling officials (Adhoc staff) to PWDs on Election Day

Conclusion:

In recent times, the Access Nigeria Campaign and other Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have achieved notable successes that have guaranteed accessibility for PWDs in Nigeria's electoral system. It is not to the desired level yet but the stage achieved requires that PWDs participate in the electoral process. This will help provide information on existing gaps for areas of improvement.



The Access Nigeria: Disability Votes Matter campaign
is implemented by the Inclusive Friends Association (IFA).

IFA is a PWD-led non-profit and non-governmental organization that works to promote the rights of Nigerians with disabilities.

IFA is implementing the Access Nigeria: Disability Votes Matter campaign with technical and financial support from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).



HOW TO VOTE



Step-By-Step Voting Process

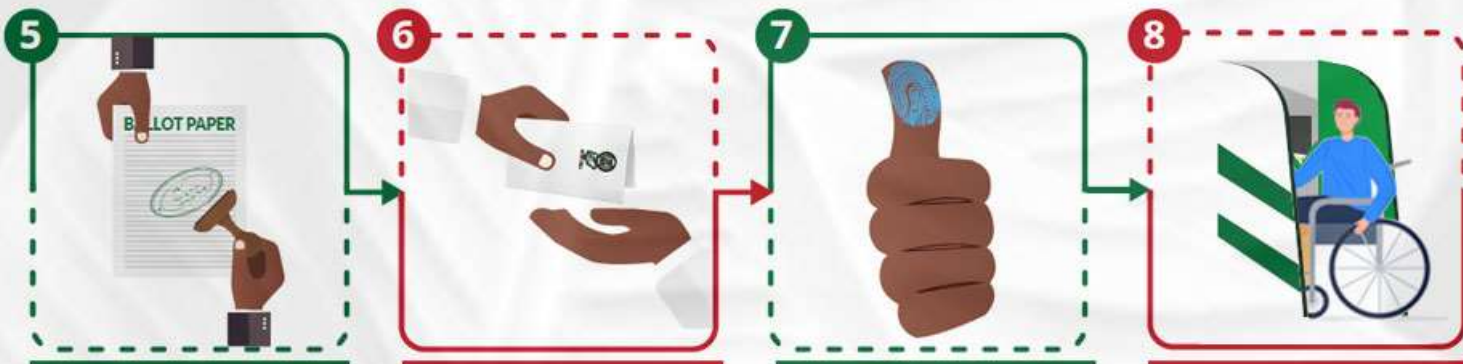


Go to your polling Unit
On or before 8AM
(Polls open by 8AM,
election starts 8:30AM)

Once you get to your polling
unit proceed to the poll official
(APO 1) to check your name in
the voters register (*all PWDS
will have priority voting*)

Present your **PVC** to the
poll official for
accreditation using **BVAS**

Get authenticated by the
poll official with BVAS
using your fingerprint
or facial



Once accredited, you will
be issued a ballot paper
and/or ballot paper and a
BRaille BALLOT GUIDE

Ensure that your name is
written in **FORM EC40H**
before going to the
voting cubicle

NB: Magnifying glass is
available for persons
with albinism or low vision.

Go to the voting cubicle
to vote for any candidate/
party of your choice in secret.



Leave the voting cubicle and
drop the ballot paper in the
ballot box in full view of people
at the polling unit.

**leave the polling unit or wait
at a distance** if you so choose,
in an orderly and peaceful
manner, to watch the process
up to the declaration of the
result.



Additional PWD Information

- INEC's guidelines provide that voters with disabilities are allowed to vote **FIRST** before others on election day.
- Voters that are blind or have physical disabilities can be assisted to vote by a person of their choice
- Blind or visually impaired voters are to be provided assistive tactile facilities or Braille Ballots or a Braille Ballot guide
- Every voter with a disability should ensure that they are captured on INEC's form EC40H before leaving the polling unit