

ELECTORAL INCLUSIONS IN NIGERIA: THE JOURNEY SO FAR



**2023 GENERAL
ELECTIONS**

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INCLUSIVE FRIENDS ASSOCIATION (IFA)



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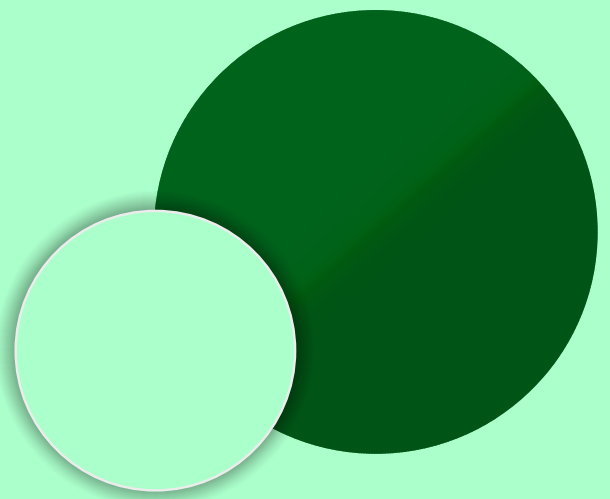
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LIST OF Acronyms and Terms

- 01 **BG** - Braille (Ballot) Guide
- 02 **CDC** - Central Data Center
- 03 **CWDs** - Children with Disabilities
- 04 **CRPD** - Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities
- 05 **FCDO** - Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- 06 **GOTV** - Get Out the Vote
- 07 **GWDs** - Girls with Disabilities
- 08 **IFA** - Inclusive Friends Association
- 09 **IFES** - International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- 10 **INEC** - Independent National Electoral Commission
- 11 **KDI** - Kimpact Development Initiative
- 12 **NDI** - National Democratic Institute
- 13 **OPD** - Organization of Persons with Disabilities
- 14 **PU**s - Polling Units
- 15 **PWDs** - Persons with Disabilities
- 16 **UN** - United Nations
- 17 **UNDP** - United Nations Development Programme
- 18 **USAID** - United States Agency for International Development

IFA at a Glance

Inclusive Friends Association (IFA) is a Person with Disability (PWD) and woman-led non-profit and non-governmental organization that employs data to address the inclusion and participation challenges of Nigeria's over 30 million PWDs. IFA does this through advocacy, training, and research. IFA's focal areas of work are Humanitarian Peace & Conflict, Economic Empowerment, Democracy and Good Governance, and Gender and Education (HEDGE). IFA is an innovative and consistent leader within the disability community as well as in the democracy and governance space. IFA has a wide network of allies and stakeholders, which are instrumental to the success of its programs. IFA conducted Africa's first, second, third, and fourth accessibility audits of polling units by PWDs in Edo, Ondo, Kogi, and Anambra states in Nigeria. Its consistent evidence-based advocacy made independent voting for voters with visual impairment possible through the design of the braille ballot guides. IFA has documented the experiences and political participation of PWD politicians in the 2019 general elections and the 2023 general elections.



IFA, through its Music for Toilet campaign, provided 4 solar-powered boreholes that are currently serving over 8,000 people in Zawan, Gindiri and Bassa communities in Plateau state. The campaign also provided 20 accessible toilet facilities in School for the Blind Gindiri to promote the enrolment of Children with Disabilities (CWDs) and restore the dignity of Girls with Disabilities (GWDs) during their menstrual cycles.

Our gender program has seen the publication “What Violence Means to Us: Women with Disabilities Speak”. This report has inspired various programs including IFA's project on promoting an inclusive budget for sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls with disabilities. IFA has provided and supported women with disabilities in Plateau state through an economic empowerment program to enable them gain financial independence and eliminate the occurrence of gender based violence in their lives.

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IFA's focal areas of work are Humanitarian Peace & Conflict, Economic Empowerment, Democracy and Good Governance, and Gender and Education (HEDGE)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THEMATIC AREAS

Inclusive Friends Association (IFA) wishes to acknowledge the efforts of the Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) for the unwavering support and partnership. We dedicate the success of this observation exercise to KDI.

We are indebted to all the PWDs that volunteered as observers during the 2023 general elections. Their commitment and perseverance can only be rewarded with the implementation of the recommendations we have made in this report. IFA is most grateful to INEC for its open-door policy and commitment to improving the accessibility of elections for PWDs. We are particularly grateful to INEC Chairman, Prof Mahmood Yakubu, for facilitating our accreditation to observe the deployment/usage of PWD voter assistive materials and the implementation of PWD targeted reforms in the 2022 Electoral Act as amended.

We also wish to extend our profound gratitude to the National Commissioner, Prof. Kunle Ajayi, and the Director, Gender and Inclusivity, Dorothy Bello Lakunya for working closely with IFA and other Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and assuring us of INEC's readiness to implement the provisions of the 2022 Electoral Act.

We thank the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for their technical support during our stakeholder engagements and GOTV outreaches.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need for increased participation of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in the political life of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. This is the import of Section 30 of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018. The 2023 general election is the first national election since the enactment of the amended Electoral Act 2022. For PWDs, it promised to be watershed and historic since it would be the first time stakeholders would observe the implementation of Section 54 of the Electoral Act, which mandates the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to provide assistive devices for PWDs voters.

Consequently, the “INEC Framework on Access and Participation of PWDs in the Electoral Process”

seeks to “Build on the hopes of Nigerians for a truly inclusive, equitable, free, and fair electoral process.” The Inclusive Friends Association (IFA)'s Central Data Center (CDC) was set up to measure the commitment of INEC to deliver on its Framework. The #VoteAbility Election Observation is undertaken to increase access, inclusion, deployment, and use of assistive materials for PWDs' effective participation in the political and electoral processes.

The CDC, which opened on February 24 and closed on February 26, 2023, monitored the extent of disability inclusion in the 2023 presidential and National Assembly elections. Suffice it to say that with 250 PWD observers across 21 states of the federation, the IFA CDC witnessed one of the largest deployment of

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PWD election observers in the 2023 Presidential and National Assembly Election. This is historic as it's the first national observer mission that wholly comprised PWDs. From this representative sample of 250 polling units, our PWD observers returned valuable data, which forms the crux of this report.

Due to the existing credibility of the organization, the Center received local and international dignitaries and observers, including the Commonwealth (Election) Observer Group to Nigeria, led by the former President of South Africa, His Excellency Thabo Mbeki. This is not the first time IFA has deployed PWDs to observe elections. IFA pioneered election observer missions comprising only PWDs in

relatively large numbers in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2016 and 2021, IFA trained, deployed, and empowered about 1,232 PWD election observers in nine (9) off-cycle elections, making it the largest in Nigeria using the sample-based election observation methodology.

In the main, IFA observed that, notwithstanding the great strides made by INEC in respect of PWDs' participation in the electoral processes, such as disaggregated data on PWDs for the first time in our electoral history, inaccessibility to the electoral process generally remains a hindrance militating against the full participation of PWDs in the elections. IFA observed that 22% of PUs were stationed around corridors and steps. 12% had uneven surfaces and sand piles that make PWD accessibility difficult and impossible in some instances. IFA observers reported that 71% of PUs observed had no ramp or handrails for use by PWDs.

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IFA further observed that voting cubicles were not suitable and accessible to PWDs on wheelchairs, roller skates and persons of short stature in 65% of the PUs observed. Similarly in 60% and 76% of the polling units observed, there were no braille ballot guides for voters with blindness and magnifying glasses for voters with albinism or low vision respectively.

IFA observed that there is an increase and more robust improvement in PWD political participation. This is because, beyond participating as electorates, PWDs were seen to serve as party agents. The observation mission of IFA saw the engagement of PWDs by INEC to serve as ad hoc staff. This satisfies the IFA's demand while also meeting the requirements of Section 30 of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act (2018). Yet, adequate access to the electoral processes remains a challenge.

In the main, the IFA-led Vote-Ability campaign calls on INEC to ensure that overpopulated PUs are decongested for ease of implementing priority voting for PWDs in subsequent elections. This process is important as citizens in overpopulated PUs submerge PWDs and their rights. INEC should collaborate with other government agencies and public/private institutions (which usually serve as polling units) to ensure the provision of ramps and handrails and other assistive measures outside and inside the polling units so that PWDs can cast their vote without any barriers.

INTRODUCTION

The 2023 General Elections are historic as the first general election since the signing of the Electoral Act, 2022 (as amended). IFA, through the Vote-Ability Campaign, deployed 250 PWDs election observers across 21 states and the 6 geopolitical zones of the federation with the objective to measure the deployment and usage of PWD assistive materials, the accessibility of polling units to PWDs, and the internal layout of polling units, among others. This is to understand the extent of INEC's compliance with Section 54 of the Electoral Act, 2022 (as Amended), and Section 30 of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018.

This accessibility audit represents the largest polling unit audit conducted by PWD observers in our electoral history. IFA carefully selected, trained, and accredited PWD observers who documented the physical accessibility of polling units for PWD voters, access to Election Day materials, and the participation of PWDs in Election Day processes. Utilizing PWDs as observers means the audit was conducted through a disability lens, which provides credibility for the data collected.

METHODOLOGY

IFA adopted a purposive sampling technique and deployed 250 PWD stationary observers to randomly selected polling units in Abia, Anambra, Adamawa, Akwa-Ibom, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Ekiti, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Ondo, Osun, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Sokoto, Taraba, Plateau, and the FCT, as part of the states where the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) will be deploying PWD electoral materials. The trained PWD observers observed the effective deployment and utilization of the PWD assistive materials in the presidential and National Assembly elections, as well as the polling unit setup and physical accessibility.

SAMPLING OF POLLING UNITS

Determining where observers will be stationed on election day is crucial because deploying monitors to every voting place is practically impossible. Estimates are produced through the use of statistics by observing an election in a representative random sample of an electoral constituency. These projections are based on what really occurred in that particular constituency, In states where INEC reported deploying PWD assistive equipment for the elections. IFA drew representative random samples of all the polling locations to determine where to witness the general elections of 2023. A sample of 250 voting units was taken from 21 states, including the FCT. These were the locations where IFA observers were stationed for the presidential and National Assembly elections in 2023.

OBSERVER RECRUITMENT

Every election observation process must be successful in attracting observers of the correct caliber. In order to do this, IFA created a template and set of criteria for recruiting observers for the general elections in 2023. After that, the IFA employed its state focal persons to act as coordinators, recruiting observers in accordance with predetermined criteria and overseeing the election observation activities in their respective states. According to one of the criteria for observer recruitment, PWDs made up all 250 teams of observers. It was intentional to select PWDs as polling unit observers to guarantee that accessibility and deployment of assistive materials were carefully assessed through the lenses of PWDs.

OBSERVERS WERE RECRUITED USING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- ✔ Prospective observer must be a person with disabilities.
- ✔ Prospective observer's interest and experience in election-related activities.
- ✔ Prospective observer's status as a registered voter.
- ✔ Prospective observers' availability for all observation activities i.e. training, simulation exercises, and Election Day deployment.
- ✔ Prospective observers' ability to withstand the pressure of election observation.
- ✔ Prospective observers' ability to read and write.
- ✔ Prospective observers' residence in pre-assigned Local Government Areas (LGAs).
- ✔ Non-partisanship.
- ✔ Gender parity

POLLING UNIT CHECKLIST

The goal of election observation is to gather information on all or specific aspects of the electoral process. Without a useful tool, observers struggle to decide what to see, how to notice it, and how to report it. IFA created a 29-question Election Day checklist to guarantee efficient polling unit audits in the 2023 general election. PWD observers gathered information about the arrival of polling officials, the accessibility of polling places for PWDs, the deployment and use of PWDs assistive devices, and the participation of PWDs in the elections using this checklist. Before recording their observations and sending them to the data center, observers utilized printed copies of a checklist to mark off what they had seen at the stipulated time to report.

OBSERVERS TRAINING

During the election, reporting was done electronically using a modified Google form. By checking choices that corresponded to what they saw at their pre-designated polling places, observers were expected to indicate their responses. After completing their ticks on the electronic form, observers were required to hit the 'send' button in order to submit their feedback to the data center. Google Forms is a web-based survey administration software that allows users to create and edit surveys online while collaborating with other users in real-time, and it also provides real-time analysis of reports from Fields. The collected information can be automatically entered into a spreadsheet for further analysis.

Ahead of the 2023 general elections, IFA observers were trained on how to observe, document, and report their findings at separate trainings in the two states. Using a comprehensive training manual, observers were trained on the goal and objectives of the project, accessibility, and citizen election observation. The training, however, focused more on the methodology for the polling unit audits, Election Day deployment plans, using the audit checklist, and reporting findings via Google Forms electronically.

To ensure effective observation and reporting, sufficient attention was given to the context of the questions on the checklist. As part of the hands-on training of observers, every observer engaged in the practice of e-reporting to the data center during this training all through the week of the election.

CENTRAL DATA CENTER

A Central Data Center (CDC) was set up in Abuja in the week of the 2023 general election. The CDC was set up to collect, analyze, and share real-time information on the accessibility, inclusion, deployment, and use of the PWD assistive materials at the designated polling units by INEC.

Equipped with computers, internet access, and infographics, the CDC was set up to monitor observer deployment, observation, and reporting. The CDC had six (6) data clerks, with each of them monitoring observer deployments in the geopolitical zone via the audit database. The data clerks put calls across to the observers on the field to prompt delayed responses and incomplete profiles, and confirm the authenticity of a report sent. They were also on standby throughout Election Day to provide clarifications to observers whenever this was needed.

ELECTION DAY DEPLOYMENT

IFA deployed 250 PWD observers to 250 sampled polling units where INEC will deploy PWD assistive materials for the 2023 general elections. The observers for these elections were strictly guided by the Election Day deployment plan developed by IFA. In line with this plan, our observers arrived at their pre-assigned polling units between 7:30 and 8:00 am. In observing at the polling unit, our PWD observers responded to all of the questions on their Election Day E-checklist. They provided information on the arrival of polling officials, the inclusion of PWDs as polling officials, the internal polling unit layout, Election Day procedures, and electoral materials.

The observation exercise spanned through the period of the election, while the data clerks monitored reporting in the database and contacted observers consistently to retrieve incomplete or missing reports.

The quality of observer reporting in the 21 states was at a 92 percent response rate. The staff and leadership of IFA also roved on Election Day, made a short video of the accessibility barriers observed, and addressed the logistics challenges reported by observers on the field. After the elections, IFA analyzed the reports sent in by observers, drafted statements, and presented the same to election stakeholders and the public at post-election press conferences.

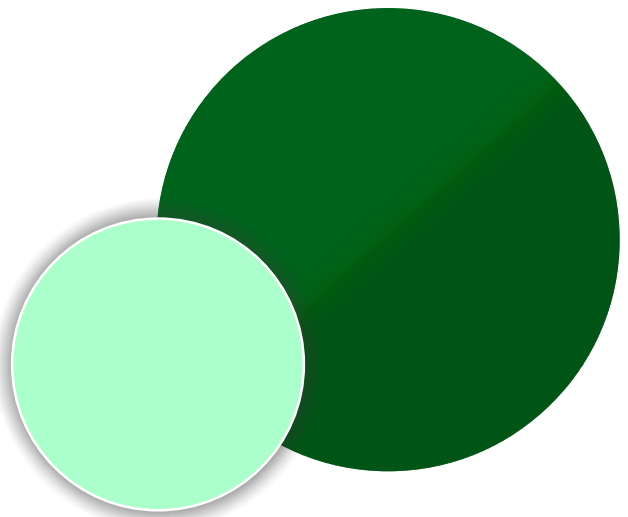
ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH TO ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS

In order to increase the participation of PWDs in the 2023 general elections, IFA initiated the #VoteAbility PWD CVR drive to mobilize and register PWDs in the CVR exercise by INEC and also in the collection of Permanent Voters' Card (PVC). This was made possible with support from INEC, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) through YIAGA Africa.

We devolved to include fun and drama arts in our advocacy (votertainment). With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), we initiated the Disability Votes Counts campaign in Northwest Nigeria to mobilize and provide a comprehensive and sound voter education for citizens, most especially, citizens with disabilities through a Community Radio Drama tagged: “Tasuniyar Zabe”. Which was a PWD voter education radio drama series wrapped with composite voter education information designed to mobilize eligible citizens to vote in the February/March 2023 general elections.

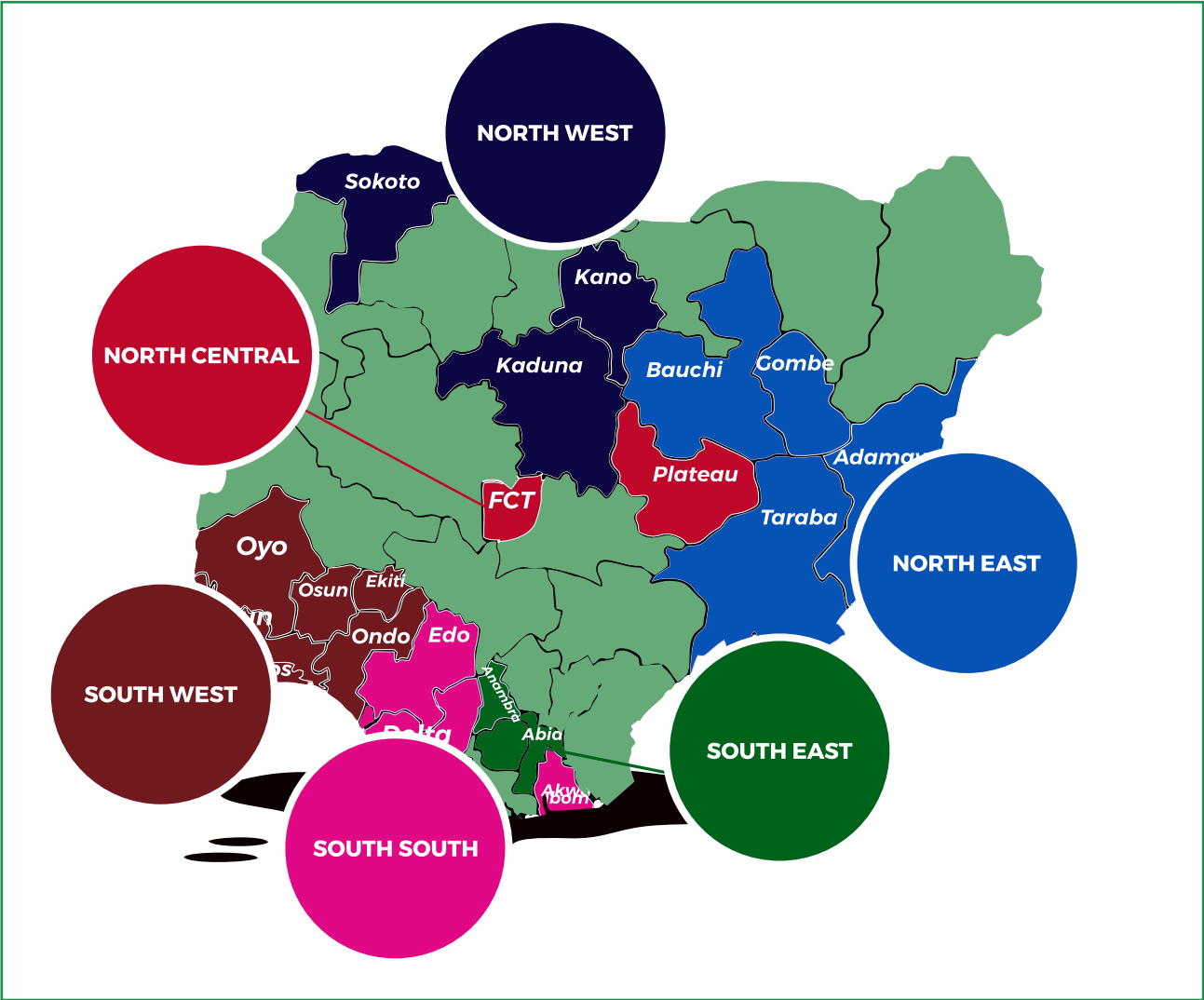
In the drive to increase the participation of PWDs in the coming elections, we held a critical stakeholder meeting with Leaders of the disability communities and relevant stakeholders in Delta and Sokoto States to strategize a result-driven mobilization strategy for PWDs. We also held a Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) radio jingle and voter education outreach to selected special schools to acquaint eligible students with the electoral processes and the tenets of democracy. This is with Support from the USAID, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

IFA DEPLOYMENT Plan



INCLUSIVE FRIENDS ASSOCIATION (IFA) DEPLOYMENT PLAN BY GEO-POLITICAL ZONES FOR THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTION. (PRESIDENTIAL, SENATE, AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE)

Figure 6: IFA DEPLOYMENT PLAN





IFA CORE VALUES (PIILATS)



PASSION

LEARNING



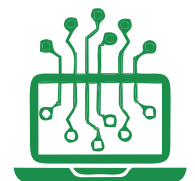
INCLUSION

**ACCOUNT
ABILITY**



INNOVATION

**TECH
DRIVEN**



SUSTAINABILITY

OUR FINDINGS

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The report draws findings as of 5 p.m. on February 26, 2023, with complete Persons with Disabilities (PWD) observer reports received from 229 of the 250 sampled polling units referenced for PWDs election assistive materials deployment by INEC, representing 92% of polling units.

THEMATIC AREAS

The Arrival of Polling Officials:



IFA observed INEC officials' late arrival at sampled polling units. The report showed that only 46.8% arrived at about 7:30a.m, at their polling units while 55.2% arrived later than 8:30a.m. Consequently, the late arrival of poll officials hindered the opportunity for an early opening of polls and delayed the commencement of accreditation and voting.

7:30
A.M

46.8%

8:30
A.M

55.2%

Accreditation and Voting



IFA observers reported 49% of the sampled polling units began accreditation and voting between 9:00a.m. and 12:00p.m. While 26% began between 8:31a.m. and 9a.m., only 25% of the sampled polling units commenced accreditation and voting between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

9AM
12PM

49%

8:31AM
9:00AM

26%

8:00AM
8:30AM

25%

PWD Inclusion as Ad-hoc Staff



In about 66% of the polling units observed, there were at least 4 polling officials, of which about 26% were PWDs. In about 42% of the sampled polling units observed, there were at most 2 female officials.



4

66% PU



2

42% PU

Security Presence

At 76% of the polling units (PUs), the IFA Vote-Ability observers saw the presence of security personnel, who were deployed to protect citizens and voting materials.



76% PU

THEMATIC AREAS

Internal Layout of PUS

On the internal layout of PUs, IFA observed that 22% of PUs were stationed around corridors and steps. 12% have uneven surfaces and sand piles that make PWD accessibility difficult and impossible in some instances. IFA observers reported that 71% of PUs observed had no ramp or handrails for use by PWDs.



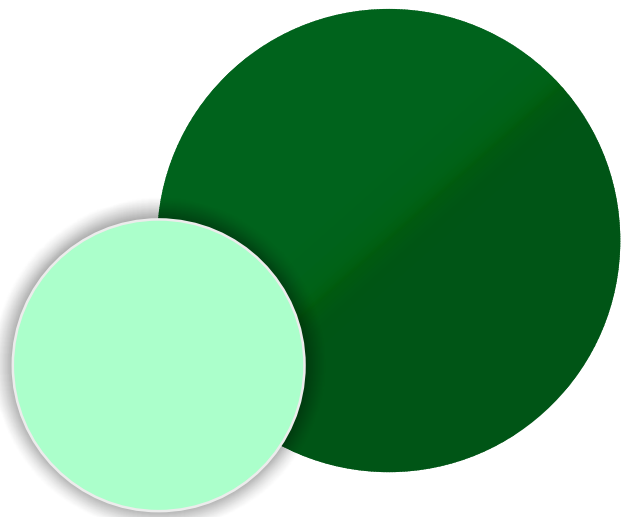
22% 

12% 

71% 



POLLING UNIT MATERIALS



- ➔ IFA observers reported that 65% of PUs had suitable voting cubicles for PWDs on wheelchairs.
- ➔ IFA observers reported that 74% of PUs positioning and situating of the ballot box was accessible for PWDs on wheelchairs.
- ➔ 60% of PUs reported had no braille ballot guide for blind voters even though blind voters were allowed to cast their votes with the assistance of their aides.
- ➔ In 76% of PUs observed, IFA observers reported the non-deployment of magnifying glasses for voters with albinism and low vision.
- ➔ IFA observed that 61% of PUs had the INEC form EC30E election guide posters for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Figure 1: Polling Units Materials

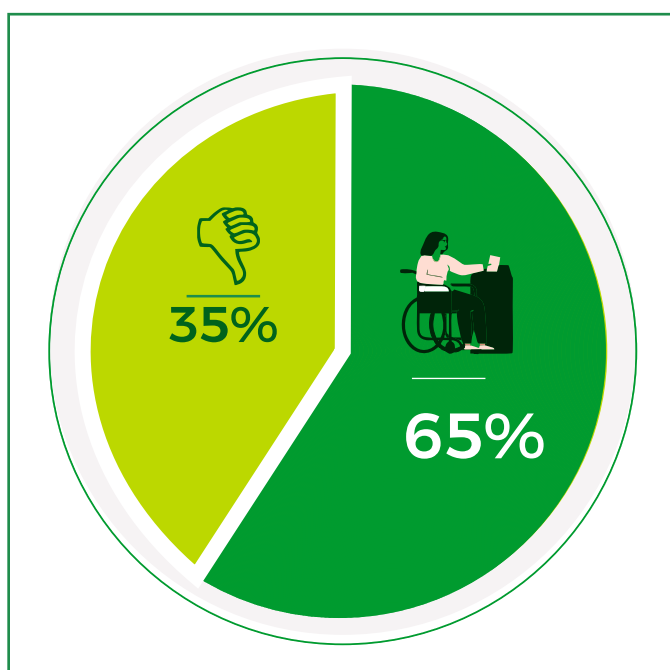
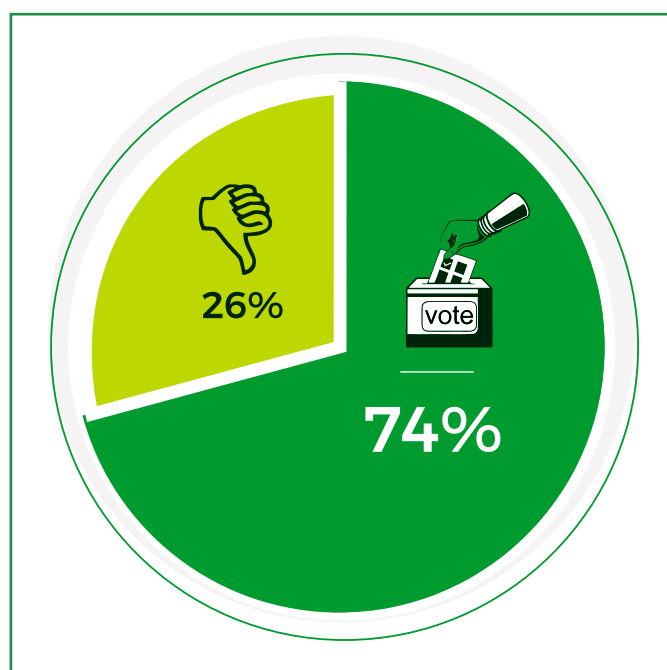


Figure 2: Polling Units Materials



POLLING UNIT MATERIALS

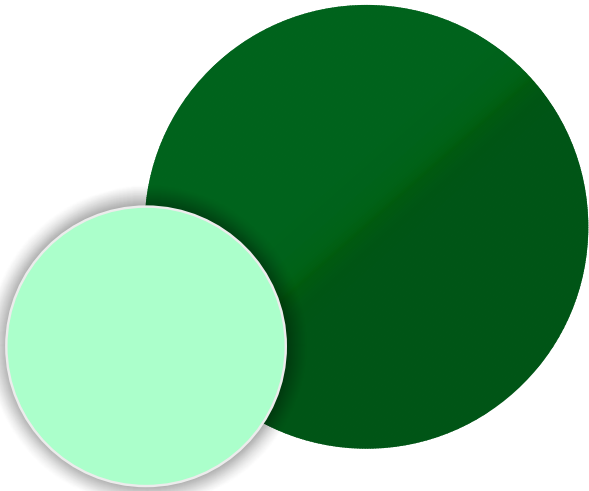


Figure 3: Polling Units Materials

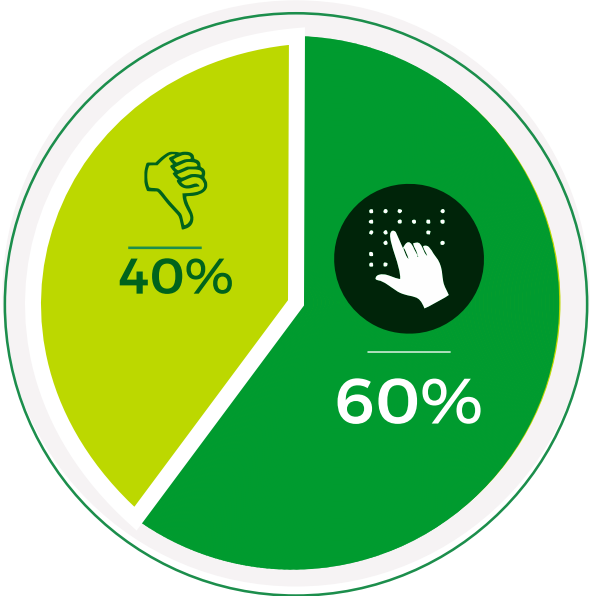


Figure 4: Polling Units Materials

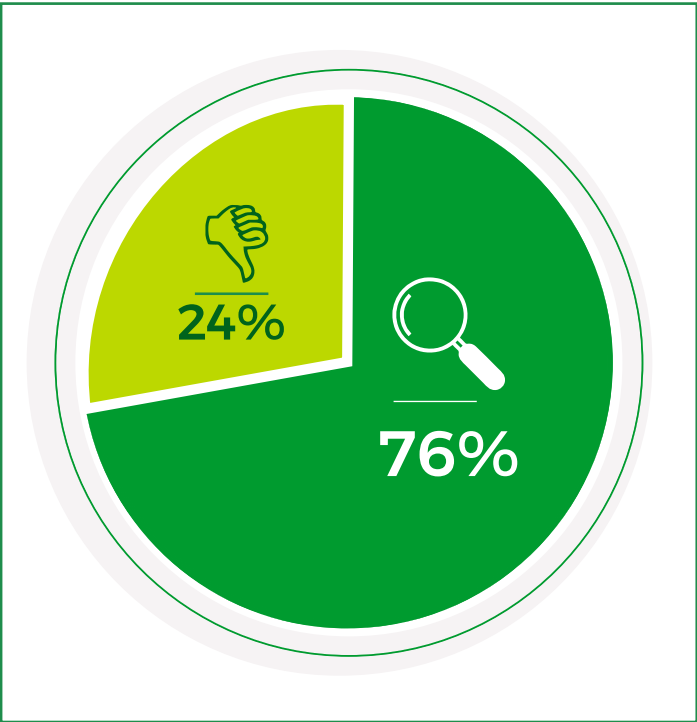
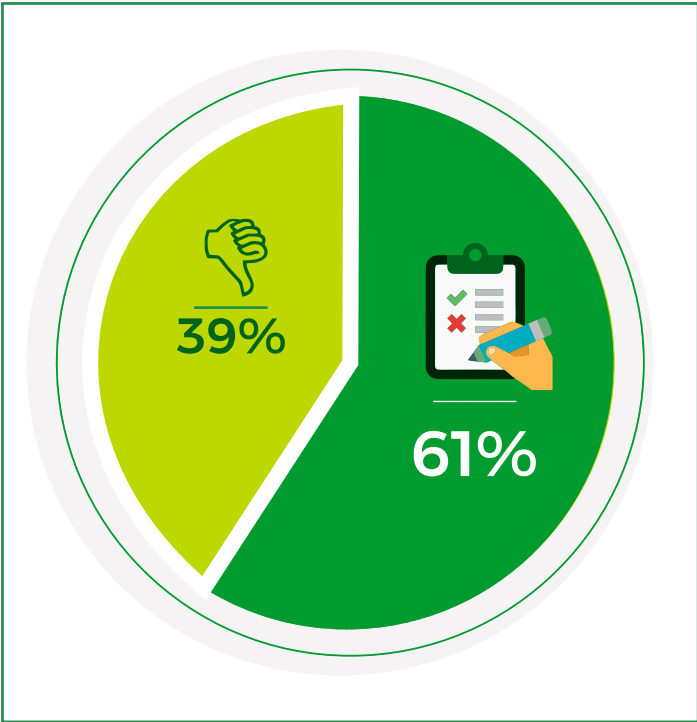
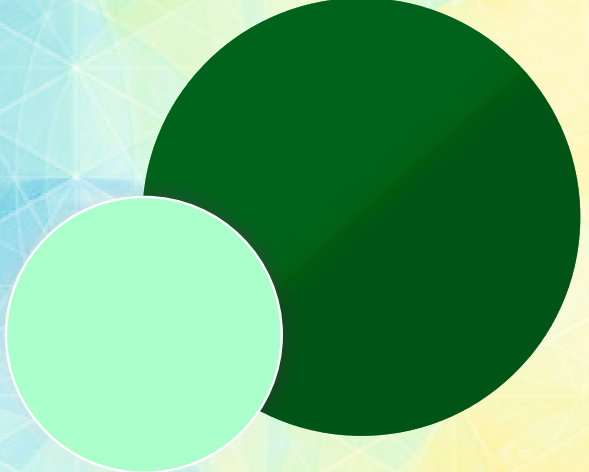


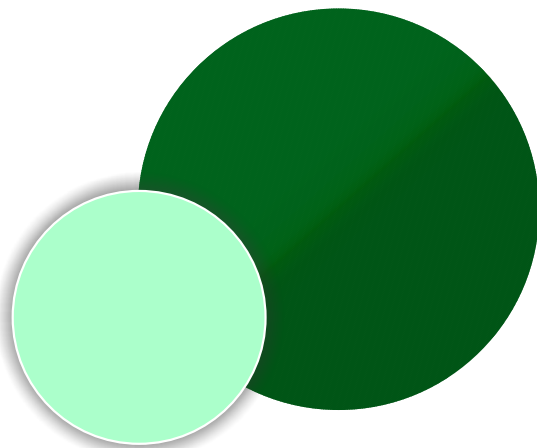
Figure 5: Polling Units Materials



Election Day Procedure

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- IFA observed that in 54% of the polling units observed, the Polling Presiding Officers (POs) recorded PWD voters on INEC Form EC40H, while in 21% of the polling units they failed to do so.
 - In 14% of the sampled polling units observed, there was non-deployment of Form EC40H by INEC, and in 11% PUs observed, no PWDs were present for the polls.
 - IFA observers reported that 64% of PUs observed priority voting by PWDs upon their arrival at the sampled PUs.
 - In 78% of PUs observed, IFA observers reported that ballot boxes were accessible for PWDs to independently cast their votes. This is because the ballot boxes were brought down for persons with disabilities by the Polling officials.
 - IFA observed that in 46% of the PUs observed, INEC officials assisted PWDs to cast ballots, while in 39% of the PUs, they did not do so. In 13% of the PUs, no PWDs were present.
 - IFA Observed that security officials assist PWDs to cast ballots at 37% of the polling units observed.
 - In 57% of the PUs observed, PWD assistants/nominees assisted them to cast ballots, while in 30% of the PUs PWD voters did not come with any assistants.
 - IFA observers reported that in 58% of PUs observed, blind voters did not use the braille ballot guide for voting. This is because there was no deployment of the BG in most PUs.
 - IFA observers reported that at 61% of PUs observed, Persons with albinism and low vision did not use the magnifying glasses. This is because there was no deployment of the magnifying glasses at most PUs.
 - At 68% of PUs observed, the IFA Vote-Ability observers reported that polling Officials capture details of PWD voters in a disaggregated format.

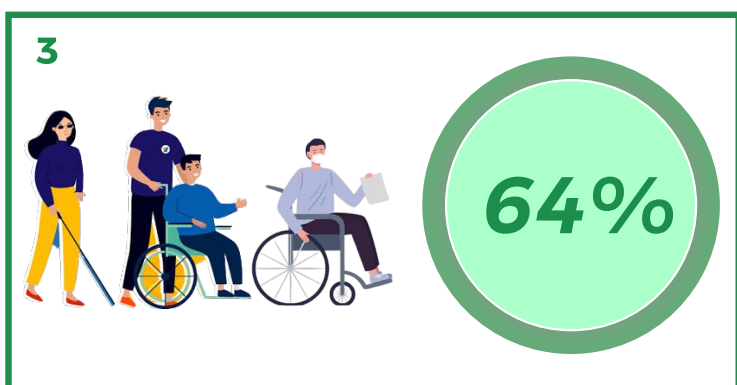
Election Day Procedures



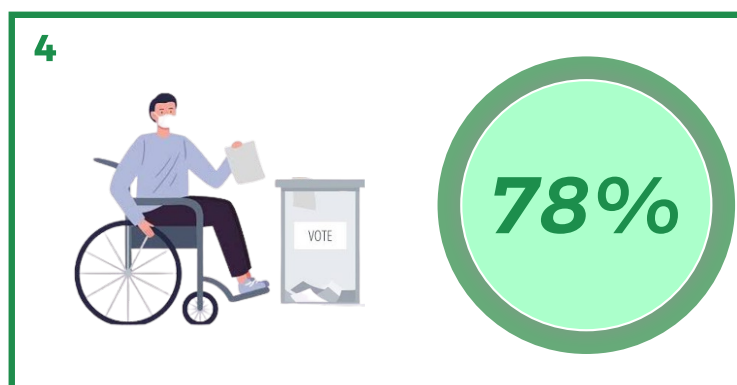
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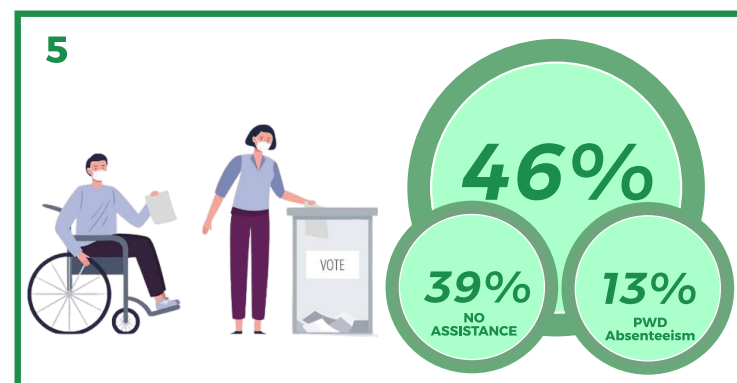
In 14% of the sampled polling units observed, there was non-deployment of Form EC40H by INEC and in 11 PUs observed, no PWDs were present for the polls.



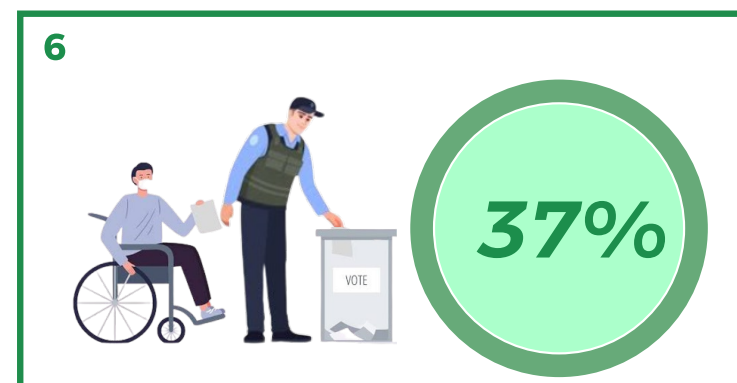
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Other Salient Issues:

➡ IFA observed that there is an increase and more robust improvement in PWD political participation. This is because, beyond participating as electorates, PWDs were seen to serve as party agents.

➡ The observation mission of IFA saw the engagement of PWDs by INEC to serve as ad hoc staff. This satisfies the IFA's demand while also meeting the requirements of Section 30 of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Act (2018).



Recommendations

Based on our findings, the IFA-led Vote-Ability Campaign makes the following recommendations to ensure voters with disabilities can continue to participate in Nigeria's political and electoral processes:



Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- The IFA-led Vote-Ability campaign calls on INEC to ensure that overpopulated PUs are decongested for ease of implementing priority voting for PWDs in subsequent Elections. This process is important as citizens in overpopulated PUs submerge PWDs and their rights.
- INEC should work closely with IFA and other organizations of Persons with Disability (OPDs) to develop a strategy document for disseminating assistive materials in all elections.
- INEC should collaborate with other government agencies to ensure the provision of ramps and handrails outside and inside the polling units so that PWDs can cast their vote without any barriers.
- INEC should ensure timely and effective deployment of PWDs assistive materials such as; the Braille ballot guide, Form EC30E PWD, and magnifying glass for all national and state elections.
- INEC should strengthen the training of regular and ad hoc staff to effectively administer assistive Election Day materials and accommodations for voters with disabilities.
- INEC should ensure that voting cubicles are designed to enable voters with disabilities to cast their ballots confidentially as well as ensure ballot boxes are placed in areas that allow voters with disabilities to vote independently.
- INEC should continue to engage and consult with the disability community, including IFA, to identify areas to be improved upon for more inclusive electoral processes.
- INEC, the Police, and other security agencies under the platform of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) should develop and implement a clear plan for the protection of PWDs during elections in consultation with the disability community.



The Executives at the Federal and State Levels

- The IFA-led Vote-Ability Campaign calls on the federal and state governments to work with various agencies and the private sector to ensure that public buildings are built and renovated for future elections to accommodate PWDs in their daily life in accordance with the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018.
- The Executive should declare a state of emergency on all electoral offenders and ensure full prosecution as a deterrent to other citizens.
- The executive, at all levels, should strengthen existing building codes and enforce them to guarantee accessibility for PWDs during and beyond elections.

Recommendations



National and State Assemblies

- The National Assembly should ensure that the executive implements specific sections of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disability Act 2018 through effective legislative oversight.
- The National Assembly should also perform its oversight functions of INEC to ensure that all measures for accessibility are implemented in line with the Discrimination Against Persons with Disability Act 2018.



Security Agencies

- The IFA-led Vote-Ability Campaign calls on the police and other security agencies to develop a special protocol to protect voters and observers with disabilities during elections. We also call on the police and other security agencies to ensure that whenever these protocols are developed, their personnel are well trained to implement these provisions.



The Nigerian Media

- The media should make deliberate efforts to conduct voter education that complements the efforts of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in promoting the participation of PWDs in Nigeria's electoral and political processes
- Media executives should consider disability inclusion in its broadcast and news production to promote inclusive practices in Nigeria including the consistent utilization of sign language interpretation.



Election Focused Civil Society Organizations

- The IFA VoteAbility Campaign commends all organizations working toward safer, more inclusive free and fair elections in Nigeria. The campaign calls on these organizations to continue to engage with the disability community to ensure their efforts are inclusive and provide opportunities for PWDs to contribute to their work either as advisors to ensure a disability lens on their work or including PWDs as participants in activities.

CONCLUSION

Persons with disabilities want to participate in the electoral and political processes of Nigeria, as indicated by their participation as both voters and observers during the general election. However, accessibility challenges, stigmas, and stereotypes continue to persist and undermine PWDs' abilities to participate in electoral and political activities.

While INEC has taken great strides to improve its priority voting policy and implement voting accommodations, poll officials consistently fail to understand the significance of inclusion or take actions that promote the participation of all groups.

IFA commends INEC for its commitment and engagement on these topics. Nevertheless, we call on all stakeholders, especially INEC to adequately implement extant laws, regulations, and frameworks and the above recommendations to further improve PWDs participation in electoral processes.

Grace Jerry

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