

Changing attitudes and building inclusion through media in Nigeria

Project timeline: November 2019 – September 2021

Project budget: £910,000

Capturing the power of collaboration: BBC Media Action, twelve local radio stations in six Nigerian states.

People with disabilities often face enormous barriers when they try to get an education, earn a living or access healthcare because of negative stereotypes about to their needs and abilities. Evidence from primary research consistently shows that people with disabilities experience poorer health outcomes, limited access to essential services, and exposure to stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory practices¹. **Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures is working to change negative attitudes and behaviours around disability in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and promote equal rights, opportunities and inclusion.**



The situation in Nigeria

In Nigeria, people with disabilities are often discriminated against, with many exclusionary practices either embedded in or sustained by societal norms and practices and incorrect beliefs about disability². Our research has highlighted low awareness of different disabilities - a survey in 2021³ found just 10% of respondents knew of autism and only 20% were aware of psychosocial disabilities such as depression. Nigeria's media typically

covers disability via a 'charity' lens, perpetuating discrimination and until recently, Nigeria's legislation did not cover the rights of people with disabilities. Promisingly, Nigeria's recent Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 prohibits discrimination based on disability. **However, in practice there remains much to be done to improve inclusion and tackle negative stereotyping and discrimination.**

How we helped

To address these challenges, we brought together a consortium of experts to produce and broadcast a disability-inclusive radio drama and social media content, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), international non-governmental organisations and research institutes. Six states were targeted across Nigeria including Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi, Lagos and Federal Capital Territory.

Radio remains the most dominant media platform in Nigeria. A BBC Media Action survey found 64% of respondents said they listen to the radio at least once a week. Given this, BBC Media Action's long-running radio drama, Story Story, which has a listenership of 20 million people in Africa, was an ideal vehicle to address discrimination against people with disabilities, alongside training local radio stations to develop and broadcast their own inclusive content.

Through locally led pillars of action, we:

- Produced and broadcast a weekly radio drama to tackle disability discrimination in Nigeria** BBC Media Action in Nigeria produced three new series of radio drama Story Story. Formative research at project inception sourced insights on targeted audiences' behaviour towards people with disabilities and common barriers to inclusion. This informed the creation of characters and scripts to lead audiences towards having more supportive attitudes towards people with disabilities and their rights. A talent pool of artists with disabilities had key roles as script writers and actors during content production. Fifty-two episodes of

“When I listened to Ejike who was able to drive, that was ‘Wow!’, because ordinarily I wouldn’t have imagined it.”

Listener, female, living with albinism, on character Ejike, a taxi driver with a physical disability.



“What impresses me about Story Story is the scripting. Being able to put together this thing, in very plain terms, so that every kind of person listening to it will understand and get the message clear.”

E-Daniels, Story Story actor

Listen to [Story Story here](#)

the show were broadcast across one year during 2020 - 2021 via local radio partners and on BBC World Service Nigeria ([listen online](#)).

- Created social media content and public service announcements** to further support dissemination of the show, as well as key messages and a social media talk show **#TinzNot2#**. Nigeria has 31.6 million social media users⁴ and content related to disability inclusion was posted across all BBC Media Action Naija and Arewa platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Four public service announcements were developed and broadcast by 170 local radio partners.
- Built capacity of local media practitioners** through training almost 70 media professionals at 12 local partner radio stations to improve their own disability inclusive radio programming and address discrimination, stereotyping and bias in their content.

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Project impact



Story Story was broadcast on 225 radio stations in six states across Nigeria, reaching approximately 3.9 million adults, including over 750,000 people with disabilities. The show was also broadcast on BBC Africa, reaching an estimated 2.1 million people outside Nigeria and the #TinzNot2# talk show on social media reached approximately 120,000 people.



Story Story had a clear impact on listeners' knowledge of disability rights and attitudes towards people with disabilities with the evaluation highlighting behaviour changes: 25% of listeners said they had done something differently after listening to the programme - from being kinder towards people with disabilities to stopping discriminatory behaviour.

Discovering what works

The project enhanced the evidence base on effective media and communication approaches to challenge negative stereotyping faced by people with disabilities in Nigeria through **formative research** and a **mixed-methods evaluation**. Our findings suggest that radio drama can contribute to tackling disability-related discrimination and support inclusion at scale. Lessons learned have since informed a new project on sexual health and reproductive rights and the UK aid Lafiya programme.

Breaking barriers for people with disabilities

Disability inclusion is critical for reaching the Global Goals and we have produced the evidence on what works in a range of different areas. We now need the allocation of resources for tackling negative stereotyping to turn evidence into action.

To find out more visit

inclusivefutures.org/stigma-discrimination or contact Claire Walsh at cwalsh@sightsavers.org.

Endnotes

- 1 World Health Organization (2011) World Report on Disability 2011. Geneva: World Health Organization; as referenced in Sightsavers (2021) Disability-related stigma and discrimination in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia: a systematic literature review. Haywards Heath, UK: Sightsavers.
- 2 Eleweke C, Ebenso J. (2016) Barriers to Accessing Services by People with Disabilities in Nigeria: Insights from a Qualitative Study. Journal of Educational and Social Research; 6 (2)
- 3 BBC Media Action (2021) Examining awareness of disability in Nigeria. Available online at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/mediaactioninsight/entries/737a016a-5205-42c5-9f5f-fca2878c65ee>
- 4 We Are Social (2023) Special Report - Digital 2023: Nigeria. Available online at: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-nigeria>