



# Inclusive Family Planning in Northern Nigeria

**Project timeline:** January 2022 - December 2025

**Project budget:** £2.9 million

**Capturing the power of collaboration:** Sightsavers, BBC Media Action, Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD) and Network of Women with Disabilities (NWD).

**Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights everyone is entitled to.** Yet people with disabilities are often denied these rights and face discrimination when trying to access sexual health services - their sexuality may be treated as a taboo subject, or they may be desexualised. Women and girls with disabilities - almost one-fifth of the world's population of women - face further intersectional discrimination due to their gender<sup>1</sup>, disability and age. **Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures is working to make health systems accessible in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** so people with disabilities can get access to the health care they need, when and where they need it.



## The situation in Nigeria

It is estimated that up to 15% of Nigeria's population, at least 25 million people, have a disability<sup>2</sup>. Evidence suggests that women and girls with disabilities in Nigeria face multiple forms of discrimination in accessing health services, including family planning<sup>3</sup> - from negative stereotyping by health workers to infrastructural barriers within health facilities. Further to this, women with disabilities are at increased risk of forced sterilisation or abortion and

more likely to experience sexual violence than women without disabilities. Significantly, Nigeria's Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 mandated National Commission for Persons with Disabilities to improve access to healthcare<sup>4</sup>. **However, there remains much to be done to widen access to health services for people with disabilities.**

# How we are helping

To address these challenges, we have brought together a consortium of experts to improve access to and use of family planning services for women with disabilities in northern Nigeria, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), international non-governmental organisations and research institutes.

Targeting five states - Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and Yobe - **our social behaviour change programme is delivering innovative mass media broadcasts and collaborating with health facilities to reach the widest possible audience.** Radio remains the most dominant media platform in Nigeria and this project builds on the success of a previous Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures project to achieve

- **At community level** we are raising awareness and improving knowledge of the rights of people with disabilities to access family planning services through broadcast of three new series of the popular BBC Media Action radio drama Madubi. Storylines are being designed to challenge negative stereotyping and help build community support for inclusive family planning and modern contraceptive use. The show is using character profiles developed during the project's formative research and feature actors with and without disabilities. Madubi is being broadcast in partnership with local radio stations and on the BBC World Service in Africa, with 52 weekly episodes anticipated to reach 1.9 million people in northern Nigeria. We are also training local radio stations to produce content promoting access to family planning and sexual health and reproductive rights for people with disabilities.
- **At system strengthening level** we want to see health providers deliver inclusive, accessible sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to people with disabilities. Focusing on Kaduna state, we aim to train



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During the project's inception, a three-day co-creation workshop took place engaging a wide range of community partners. The team reviewed findings from the project's formative research on barriers faced by people with disabilities and drafted social and behaviour change approaches targeting different audiences, which are informing project activities.

3,000 health professionals at primary healthcare facilities, in partnership with local health authorities and OPDs. We are also in the process of conducting accessibility audits of 40 primary health care facilities and develop action plans for sustainable modifications. Using a disability inclusive scorecard, we are bringing together people with disabilities, service providers and local administration to address inclusion issues.

- **At governance and policy level** we want to see commitments to scale up inclusive health in Nigeria and, thanks to our partner OPDs who have received training in advocacy, effective advocacy plans are being rolled out. We are engaging state and local government area health bodies on the project steering committee to further guide project implementation. We are also supporting the UK aid funded Lafiya project in Nigeria to mainstream disability inclusion in their sexual and reproductive health programming and are working together to advocate for disability inclusion within Nigeria's healthcare financing.

## Project impact to date



The project has supported 1,097 women with disabilities aged 15-49 to access sexual and reproductive health and rights services across 24 project health facilities.



The project's digital social behaviour change campaign spearheaded by 55 influencers reached a total of 1,043,680 people over a period of 16 weeks on Facebook, X (Twitter), Tiktok, Instagram and LinkedIn. These influencers were deployed in Kaduna state to lead the campaign and facilitate offline discussions to promote reproductive health and empower people with disabilities to make informed family choices.



The collaboration between IFPLAN and LAFIYA has positively influenced LAFIYA's activities and partners. Like for example, this collaboration influenced Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and Kaduna State Contributory Authority (KADCHMA) to enrol 10,000 vulnerable pregnant women and children under five into KADCHMA's healthcare financing scheme.



IFPLAN worked with the [Lafiya programme](#) to influence the Kaduna state government to integrate inclusive data into the national health information management system. And it is leveraging its partnership with a World Bank immunisation and malaria programme to influence over 240 health facilities to make accessibility improvements.

## Discovering what works

The project is producing learning products that add to the global evidence base on disability inclusion through briefings, blogs and dissemination events. [Experience from IFPLAN](#) contributed towards the [key messages](#) that was shared at the International Conference on Family Planning in 2023. Whilst social behaviour change [formative research](#) has helped informed disability inclusive storylines for Madubi.

Our research partner [PENDA](#) will be undertaking a randomised control trial to evaluate the effectiveness of the project at scale. Find out more about the project at our 'let's talk about sex' [webpage](#).

# 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 disability inclusion in health to turn evidence into action.

## To find out more visit

[inclusivefutures.org/sexual-and-reproductive-health](https://inclusivefutures.org/sexual-and-reproductive-health) or contact Claire Walsh at [cwalsh@sightsavers.org](mailto:cwalsh@sightsavers.org)

## Endnotes

- 1 Women Enabled International, Fact Sheet: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities. Available online at: <https://womenenabled.org/reports/wei-fact-sheet-srhr/>
- 2 ONAPWD (2017), as referenced by Inclusive Futures / Institute of Development Studies (2020), Nigeria Situational Analysis - Version II - June 2020, p. 15
- 3 Arulogun O. S. Titiloye M. A. Afolabi N. B. Oyewole O. E., & Nwaorgu O. G. B (2013). 'Experiences of girls with hearing impairment in accessing reproductive health care services in Ibadan, Nigeria'. African Journal of Reproductive Health, 17, 85 – 93. doi: 10.4314/ajrh.v17i1. as referenced by Fraser, E. and Corby, N. (2019), Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Report - Family Planning for Women and Girls with Disabilities, p.8. Available online at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818118/query-2-family-planning.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818118/query-2-family-planning.pdf)
- 4 Ewang A. 2019, Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/25/nigeria-passes-disability-rights-law>, as referenced by Inclusive Futures / Institute of Development Studies (2020), Nigeria Situational Analysis - Version II - June 2020, p.15