



NETWORK FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF PEOPLE WITH VISIBLE DISABILITIES



RESILIENT NET

*Impact Of Fuel Subsidy Removal
On Persons With Disabilities (PWDS)
In Edo State, Nigeria.*

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PROJECT LAUNCHING AND INAUGURATION OF EDO DISABILITY FORUM (EDF)



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The successful implementation of the **Resilient Net** project would not have been possible without the support, collaboration, and contributions of several individuals, organizations, and institutions. We therefore wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all those who played a vital role in ensuring the success of this project, aimed at improving the socio-economic well-being of **Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)** in Edo State, Nigeria.

We are immensely grateful to the **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** for their unwavering support throughout the project. Their commitment to advancing inclusive governance and promoting the rights of marginalized groups, particularly PWDs, has been invaluable.

Our sincere thanks also go to the **Edo State Government** for their collaboration and responsiveness during the project. We appreciate the engagement and commitments from key government officials, including **Osarodion Ogie, Esq.**, the **Secretary to Edo State Government (SSG)**, **Mrs. Christabel Omoh-Ekwu**, **Honourable Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues**, **Hon. Patrick Uanseru**, **Honourable Commissioner for Business, Trade and Cooperatives**, the permanent secretaries, **Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning**, and the **Ministry of Health**.

We acknowledge the support provided by the **Edo State Transport Authority (ESTA)**, particularly the Managing Director, for her commitment to improving transportation services for PWDs in the state.

We would also like to thank the members and leadership of the **Edo Disability Forum (EDF)**, who played a pivotal role in advocating for the inclusion of PWDs in state policies. We especially recognise **Ann Ojugo**, Chairperson of the **Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD)**, **Edo State Chapter**, **Kingsley Eromosele**, Chairperson of the **Edo State Association of the Deaf**, and **Ibrahim Momoh**, Executive Director, **Albino and Disability Advocacy centre**, **Lucky Imafidon**, Chairperson of the **Nigeria Association of the Blind (NAB)**, **Edo State Chapter**, for their dedication and active involvement in the advocacy process.

Lastly, we extend our gratitude to the media organizations that helped amplify the voices of PWDs through their platforms. Special thanks to **ITV Radio 92.3**,

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To all the PWDs and their families, as well as the numerous **Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)** who participated in the research, focus group discussions, and advocacy engagements, we thank you for your contributions. Your voices were at the heart of this project, and your input shaped its outcomes.

Together, we have made significant strides in promoting inclusivity and advocating for the rights of PWDs in Edo State, and we look forward to continuing this journey towards a more equitable society.

Thank you all.

Melody Omosah Esq.,

Executive Director, NAPVID.





The EDF led by Melody Omosah Esq, The Executive Director NAPVID presenting an Advocacy brief & findings on impact of fuel subsidy removal On Persons With Disabilities (PWDS) In Edo State, Nigeria to OSARODION OGIE Esq; during an Advocacy visit to his Office



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **ResilientNet** project, funded by the **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** and implemented by the **Network for the Advancement of People with Visible Disabilities (NAPVID)**, was carried out over a six-month period, from **November 2023 to April 2024**. The project was launched in response to the negative socio-economic impact of the Nigerian government's fuel subsidy removal on **Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)** in Edo State. The primary goal of the project was to advocate for the inclusion of PWDs in state-level economic policies, secure targeted economic palliatives, and promote the establishment of the **Edo State Disability Commission** to enforce the **Edo State Disability Law**.

Key project activities included the completion of a **comprehensive research study** assessing the socio-economic, healthcare, and social impacts of the subsidy removal on PWDs. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, including administering **60 structured questionnaires** to 20 household in each of the three senatorial districts in the State, **three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** across the three senatorial districts and **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with government stakeholders. These findings shaped the project's advocacy strategies and provided the basis for evidence-based recommendations.

The project also focused on **capacity building**, organizing a **2-day advocacy workshop** that trained members of the **Edo Disability Forum (EDF)** on advocacy techniques, including community organizing and power mapping. This training enabled PWD leaders to effectively engage with government officials and media outfits. A major outcome of this training was the development of an **advocacy brief** that outlined specific recommendations for mitigating the effects of the subsidy removal on PWDs.

Between February and March 2024, the EDF held **seven one-on-one advocacy meetings** with key government officials, including the **Secretary to the Edo State Government (SSG)** and the **Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues**. These engagements resulted in critical commitments from the Edo State government, including the promise to establish the Disability Commission, the introduction of accessible transportation to wheelchair users,

implementation of subsidized or free transportation for PWDs, and the enrollment of unemployed PWDs in the Equity Health Insurance Scheme.

Additionally, the project conducted **media engagements**, holding two **press conferences** and participating in two **radio programs** to raise public awareness about the challenges faced by PWDs. These efforts ensured that the issues affecting PWDs were widely discussed and garnered public support.

In conclusion, the **ResilientNet** project successfully achieved its objectives, securing government commitments to address the socio-economic challenges faced by PWDs. The project laid the foundation for continued advocacy efforts to ensure the full implementation of the **Edo State Disability Law** and the inclusion of PWDs in economic and social policies. The lessons learned from this





Melody Omosah Esq, The Executive Director NAPVID and EDF Members presenting an Advocacy brief & findings on impact of fuel subsidy removal On Persons With Disabilities (PWDS) In Edo State, Nigeria to Hon. Christabel Omoh Ekwu, The Commissioner for Social Dev. And Gender Issues during an advocacy visit to her office



INTRODUCTION

project provide a roadmap for future initiatives aimed at promoting the rights and inclusion of PWDs in Nigeria.

Project Background And Purpose

The ResilientNet project, supported by the National Democratic Institute and implemented by the Network for the Advancement of People with Visible Disabilities, was launched in response to the increasing socio-economic vulnerabilities faced by Persons with Disabilities in Edo State, Nigeria. The catalyst for the project was the removal of the fuel subsidy by the Nigerian government, a policy change that had exacerbated the already precarious economic situation for PWDs. Prior to the subsidy removal, many PWDs in Edo State struggled with limited access to employment, healthcare, and social services. With the elimination of the fuel subsidy, these challenges deepened, as rising transportation costs, inflation, and reduced access to essential services further marginalized this already vulnerable group.

The ResilientNet project was designed to empower PWDs by advocating for their inclusion in the state's economic and social policies. The primary goal of the project was to ensure that the Edo State government developed and implemented policies, programs, and projects that included PWDs and catered to their specific needs. Recognizing that the removal of the fuel subsidy had disproportionately impacted PWDs due to their dependence on transportation and social support systems, the project focused on building a network of advocacy and support to secure targeted economic relief for PWDs.

Central to the purpose of the project was the promotion of inclusive governance. The project sought to support Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in their efforts to advocate for the state government to provide economic palliatives specifically aimed at reducing the hardship caused by the subsidy removal. Additionally, ResilientNet had promoted the creation of a Disability Commission in Edo State to facilitate the implementation of the Edo State Disability Law. This law, which guaranteed rights and protections for PWDs, including access to public services and non-discriminatory practices, was yet to be fully operationalized due to the absence of an implementing body.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the **ResilientNet** project were deeply rooted in its desire to mitigate the socio-economic shocks PWDs experience in the aftermath of the subsidy removal. A major objective was to **build consensus among OPDs** in Edo State regarding the specific economic measures that can alleviate the financial burdens placed on PWDs. By engaging PWDs in discussions and research activities such as focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the aim of the project was to craft evidence-based advocacy to address the unique challenges they face, particularly in the areas of transportation, healthcare, and social inclusion.

Another critical focus of the project was to **support OPDs in advocating for economic palliatives** from the Edo State government. These measures should be designed to cushion the immediate impacts of the subsidy removal by providing financial support, subsidized transportation, and improved access to essential services for PWDs. Additionally, the project advocated for longer-term structural changes, including the **establishment of the Edo State Disability Commission**, which would be responsible for enforcing the state's disability law and ensuring that PWDs are represented in policy decisions.

The scope of the **ResilientNet** project was comprehensive, executed in **six-months**, from **November 2023 to April 2024**, during which a variety of advocacy, research, and stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken. These activities included advocacy workshops, program planning meetings, media engagements, and direct advocacy with government officials. Through these efforts, the project sought not only to address the immediate needs of PWDs in the context of the fuel subsidy removal but also to lay the groundwork for long-term policy reforms that will promote inclusivity and adaptability for PWDs in the state's emergency response and economic planning frameworks.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The **ResilientNet** project involved a diverse range of stakeholders who played crucial roles in its implementation and success. **NAPVID**, as the implementing organization, saw to the coordination of all project activities, ensuring that the project's objectives were met within the set timeline and budget. **NDI**, as the primary funder, provided the financial resources and technical support necessary to execute the project, while also ensuring accountability and transparency in its delivery.

The **Edo State Government** was a key target of the project's advocacy efforts. Various ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues, the Ministry of Health, and the Edo State Transport Authority, were engaged to ensure that policies and programs that impact PWDs are inclusive and responsive to their needs. The **Edo Disability Forum**, a coalition of OPDs representing various disability groups in the state, served as the primary advocate for PWDs, mobilizing its members to engage with government officials, participated in advocacy events, and ensure that the voices of PWDs are heard.

Additionally, the project involved **media organizations** and **civil society groups**, which are essential for raising public awareness about the challenges faced by PWDs and amplifying their demands for economic inclusion. The media played a particularly important role in disseminating information about the project's progress and outcomes, ensuring that the wider public is informed and engaged in the advocacy efforts.

Through the collaborative efforts of these stakeholders, the **ResilientNet** project created a more inclusive and adaptable socio-economic environment for PWDs in Edo State, addressing both their immediate needs in the context of the fuel subsidy removal and their long-term rights and opportunities within the state's governance structures.



Melody Omosah Esq, The Executive Director NAPVID and EDF Members presenting an Advocacy brief and findings on impact of fuel subsidy removal On Persons With Disabilities (PWDS) In Edo State, Nigeria to Hon. Patrick Iria Uanseru The Commissioner for business trade and cooperative during an advocacy visit to her office



PROJECT APPROACH

METHODOLOGY OR APPROACH USED

The **ResilientNet** project employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated both **qualitative** and **quantitative** research methodologies to achieve its objectives. The project aimed to address the socio-economic impact of fuel subsidy removal on Persons with Disabilities in Edo State, Nigeria. The methodology was designed to gather comprehensive data, facilitate advocacy, and foster engagement with key stakeholders to push for targeted economic palliatives and policy reforms that would benefit PWDs.

The project methodology can be broken down into the following key components:

1. Initial Project Planning and Preparation

The first step in the project implementation was a **project planning meeting** held on November 9, 2023, at NAPVID's Secretariat in Benin City. This meeting brought together key project staff, including the Project Coordinator, Project Officer, Finance Officer, Communications Officer, and two volunteers. The purpose of the meeting was to align the team on the project's objectives and develop both a detailed **workplan** and a **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan**. This planning session was critical for ensuring that the project activities would be implemented efficiently within the allocated six-month timeline. A **draft workplan** outlining key activities, timelines, and responsible personnel, as well as an **M&E plan** identifying outputs, outcomes, and indicators for progress, were produced.

2. Data Collection through Research on the Impact of Fuel Subsidy Removal

To ground its advocacy efforts in evidence, **ResilientNet** conducted a **comprehensive research study** focused on assessing the economic, social, and healthcare impacts of the fuel subsidy removal on PWDs in Edo State. This study employed both **quantitative surveys** and **qualitative methods**, including **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** and **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**, to capture diverse perspectives on the issues faced by PWDs.

- **Quantitative Research:** Sixty structured questionnaires were administered to PWD households across the three senatorial districts of Edo State—Edo North (Auchi), Edo Central (Ekpoma), and Edo South (Benin City). The survey aimed to gather statistical data on the economic challenges, social impacts, healthcare concerns, and the effectiveness of existing government support programs for PWDs. The respondents were selected to represent

different disability clusters (e.g., visually impaired, physically challenged, hearing impaired and persons with albinism) and to ensure gender and age diversity.

- **Qualitative Research:** Three FGDs were held with 36 PWDs, allowing for in-depth discussions about the unique challenges they faced as a result of the fuel subsidy removal. Each senatorial district hosted one FGD, ensuring geographic representation of Edo State. Additionally, six KIIs were conducted with key stakeholders from various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) involved in social protection and public service delivery. These interviews offered insights into the inclusiveness of government support programs and identified areas for improvement.

3. Advocacy Engagement and Capacity Building

Following the data collection, **advocacy tools** were developed to support the project's campaign for economic palliatives and policy reform. A **2-day advocacy workshop** was organized between November 30 and December 1, 2023, where members of the **Edo Disability Forum (EDF)** were trained on community organizing, power mapping, and rights-based advocacy. This training was facilitated by Comrade Austin Osakue, a seasoned advocacy expert, and culminated in the development of an **advocacy brief** outlining the position of the EDF on the fuel subsidy removal and recommended government actions.

During the workshop, participants finalized an **advocacy implementation plan**, which mapped out engagement strategies with key decision-makers in Edo State, including the Executive Governor, Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues, and other relevant officials. This phase of the project was crucial for equipping PWDs and their representatives with the skills and tools needed to advocate for their rights effectively.

4. Media Engagement and Public Awareness

To amplify the voices of PWDs and increase public awareness of their plight, **ResilientNet** engaged with the media through **press conferences** and **radio appearances**. Two press conferences were held in February and March 2024, where members of the EDF presented their findings and called on the government to implement inclusive economic and social policies. In addition, two radio talk shows aired on **ITV Radio 92.3**, a popular grass root station in Benin City, further increasing the reach of the project's advocacy messages. These engagements not only informed the public but also created opportunities for dialogue between PWDs, government officials, and civil society.

5. Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials

A major component of the **ResilientNet** project's methodology was direct engagement with government officials through **one-on-one advocacy meetings**. Between February and March 2024, the **Edo Disability Forum** held seven advocacy meetings with high-ranking government officials, including the Secretary to the State Government, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, and the Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues. These meetings allowed PWDs and their representatives to present the findings from their research and make specific demands, such as the implementation of disability-friendly transportation services and the establishment of a disability commission in Edo State.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the six-month project period, the **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan** developed during the initial project planning phase was used to track progress against the project's goals. This plan included specific output and outcome indicators that were reviewed regularly to assess the effectiveness of the project's advocacy efforts, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach. The M&E process was essential for ensuring that the project remained on track and achieved its intended outcomes.

In conclusion, the **ResilientNet** project's approach combined thorough research, capacity building, advocacy, and public engagement to address the challenges



Melody Omosah Esq, The Executive Director NAPVID and EDF Members presenting an Advocacy brief and findings on impact of fuel subsidy removal On Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) In Edo State, Nigeria to Mr. Paul Aklulowe The Technical Adviser to chief of Staff Edo State. during an advocacy visit to her office



PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS / MILESTONES

faced by PWDs in Edo State. The mixed-methods approach allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to inform advocacy strategies, while the active involvement of PWDs in the project's execution ensured that their voices were central to the campaign for inclusive socio-economic policies.

The **ResilientNet** project was implemented over a six-month period, from **November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024**, during which several key milestones were achieved. These milestones reflect the project's progress in ensuring that Persons with Disabilities in Edo State were adequately included in advocacy efforts for economic measures and the establishment of a disability commission in the wake of fuel subsidy removal. Below is a detailed timeline highlighting the major milestones achieved during the project's implementation.

1. Project Planning Meeting (November 9, 2023)

The project officially commenced with a **planning meeting** on November 9, 2023, held at NAPVID's Secretariat in Benin City. This meeting brought together the key project staff, including the Project Coordinator, Project Officer, Finance Officer, and Communications Officer, along with two volunteers. The goal of the meeting was to align the team on the project's objectives, finalize a **detailed workplan**, and develop an **M&E plan**. The draft



workplan outlined the major activities, timelines, and responsibilities, while the M&E plan set clear indicators for tracking project performance.

Project Planning Meeting with Staff at the NAPVID Office, held on Thursday, November 9th, 2023

2. Research on the Impact of Fuel Subsidy Removal on PWDs (November 22-25, 2023)

In the second phase of the project, a **comprehensive research study** was conducted to assess the socio-economic impacts of fuel subsidy removal on PWDs in Edo State. Between November 22 and November 25, 2023, **three Focus Group Discussions** were held across the state's senatorial districts—Auchi (Edo North), Ekpoma (Edo Central), and Benin City (Edo South). The research gathered both **quantitative and qualitative data**, with a total of **60 structured questionnaires** administered to PWD households across these regions. Additionally, **Key Informant Interviews** were conducted with six key stakeholders from relevant government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. The findings from this research were crucial in shaping the advocacy approach and identifying specific needs of PWDs.

SUMMARY OF KEY DATA:

- **100% of participants** reported increased costs of basic items, primarily food and transportation.
- **75% of respondents** indicated a **200% increase** in transportation costs; **25%** indicated a **300% increase**.
- **100% of participants** reported a **reduced level of support** from family and friends.
- **85% of participants** are unemployed and rely on petty trades, with many businesses experiencing closures due to rising costs.
- **100% of participants** in Edo Central (Ekpoma) reported discrimination by transport workers.
- **60% of participants** noted that they only attend social events when transport is provided; **40%** no longer participate in social events.
- **100% of participants** reported deteriorating mental health, including feelings of depression and loneliness.

These findings provided critical insights into the economic, social, and healthcare challenges faced by PWDs in Edo State, forming the foundation for the project's advocacy recommendations and engagements with government

officials.

Find full research report here: <https://tinyurl.com/mrhmptej>



FGDs in Auchi, Ekpoma, Benin and KII with government Stakeholder

3. Advocacy Workshop and Development of Advocacy Tools (November 30 - December 1, 2023)

A major milestone was the **2-day advocacy workshop** held from November 30 to December 1, 2023, where the **Edo Disability Forum**, comprised of key leaders of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), received training on effective advocacy techniques. Facilitated by Comrade Austin Osakue, the workshop focused on **community organizing, power mapping, and rights-based advocacy**. During the workshop, participants developed key advocacy tools, including an **advocacy brief** and an **advocacy implementation plan**. These tools served as the foundation for subsequent engagement with government stakeholders.

2-day workshop on the 30th of November and 1st of December 2023 at the NAVID Event Hall



4. Official Project Launch and Stakeholder Sensitization (December 3, 2023)

The **official project launch** took place on December 3, 2023, coinciding with the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**. This event was held at Jasmine Gardens in Benin City and was attended by representatives from the Edo State government, civil society organizations, media, and PWDs. During the launch, the **Edo Disability Law** was unveiled, and government representatives, including those from the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Issues, reaffirmed their commitment to improving the socio-economic conditions of PWDs. This event marked a critical point for public sensitization on the issues faced by PWDs in the wake of fuel subsidy removal.

Official Project Launch, held at the Jasmine gardens and Event center, on the 3rd of December 2023.



5. One-on-One Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials (February - March 2024)

From February to March 2024, the Edo Disability Forum (EDF) engaged in a series of **one-on-one advocacy meetings** with key government officials. These meetings involved seven key offices, including the **Secretary to the State Government (SSG)**, the **Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues**, the **Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning**, and the **Managing Director of the Edo State Transport Authority**. During these meetings, the EDF presented findings from the research on fuel subsidy impacts and advocated for the immediate implementation of targeted economic palliatives and the creation of the disability commission. These engagements were crucial in building government commitment to addressing the

needs of PWDs.

By the end of March 2024, the advocacy efforts had yielded significant commitments from the Edo State government **Osarodion Ogie Esq. SSG**, promised to accelerate the implementation of the Disability Commission and promised to make government offices more accessible to PWDs. The **Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues, Mrs. Christabel Omoh Ekwu** confirmed that the Disability Commission would be established before the end of the current administration in November 2024. Additionally, the **Managing Director of the Edo State Transport Authority** committed to providing discounted or free transportation for PWDs by April 2024, and assured of the procurement of buses that are wheelchair that are accessible. The **Ministry of Health** agreed to enroll unemployed PWDs in the Equity Health Insurance Scheme.

Photos from various advocacy Meetings with Government Stakeholders



6. Media Engagements and Public Advocacy (February - March 2024)

To amplify the voices of PWDs, **two press conferences** were held on **February 8, 2024**, and **March 19, 2024**, at NAPVID's event hall in Benin City. In these conferences, representatives of the Edo Disability Forum, led by spokesperson Melody Omosah Esq., presented the project's findings and called for government action on economic measures. Furthermore, **two radio talk shows** aired on **ITV Radio 92.3** in February and March 2024, further raising public awareness of the challenges faced by PWDs due to the fuel subsidy removal.

Media links:

<https://youtu.be/jv-XpiGtz38?si=87gwS2toIFYMd3QE>

<https://youtu.be/96zVpkn1mJs?si=yAfXwSILsW-PWa4R>

<https://guardian.ng/news/disability-forum-seeks-support-in-edo-over-hardship-hopelessness/>

<https://nigerianobservernews.com/2024/03/edo-to-prioritize-welfare-of-pwds-make-govt-house-disability-friendly/>

<https://www.bendelmirror.com/post.php?news=67>

<https://the9jatrend.com/2024/03/20/update-edo-govt-pledges-to-support-persons-with-disabilities-says-omosah/>

<http://alertnews5.blogspot.com/2024/03/napvid-boss-laments-how-dollarization.html>

<https://www.bendelmirror.com/post.php?news=122>

<https://the9jatrend.com/2024/03/20/update-edo-govt-pledges-to-support-persons-with-disabilities-says-omosah/>

<https://ruralurbannews.com/aftermath-of-subsidy-removal-edo-disability-forum-engages-state->

<https://guardian.ng/news/fulfil-pledges-pwds-tell-obaseki/>

<https://sunnewsonline.com/match-your-words-with-actions-edf-tells-edo-govt/>

<https://bendelmirror.com/obaseki-to-establish-edo-disability-commission/?amp=1>

Photos from press conferences held on February 8, 2024, and March 19, 2024, at NAPVID's event hall in Benin City



8. Project Review And Closing Meeting (april 2024)

The NAPVID Project Close-out Ceremony for the ResilientNet Project took place on April 4th, 2024, at Laity Hall, Benin City, with the primary aim of reviewing project successes, documenting lessons learned, and developing a sustainability plan for the Edo Disability Forum. Key attendees included NAPVID, EDF members, Mr. Bem Aga and Mrs. Tracy Keshi of the National Democratic Institute, Edo State government representatives, and various media outfits. During the meeting, the Edo State Transport Authority reiterated its commitment to disability inclusion by highlighting ongoing efforts to procure public transport vehicles with ramps.

The project report underscored important achievements, including advocacy efforts and challenges. Participants shared lessons learned, which informed discussions on a sustainability plan for continuing the project's impact.

LESSONS LEARNED

Throughout the implementation of the **ResilientNet** project, several important lessons were learned that can inform future projects focused on advocacy and inclusivity for marginalized groups:

1. **Early and Direct Engagement with Stakeholders is Critical:** Engaging government officials early in the project, particularly through one-on-one advocacy meetings, proved highly effective in securing concrete commitments. By building relationships with key decision-makers from the start, the project was able to mitigate the risk of government inaction.
2. **Evidence-Based Advocacy Enhances Impact:** The comprehensive research conducted on the effects of fuel subsidy removal on PWDs was essential in shaping the project's advocacy efforts. Providing government officials and the media with data-driven findings gave the project credibility and facilitated meaningful dialogue with policymakers.
3. **Flexibility in Logistics is Essential for Success:** Unexpected challenges, such as venue accessibility issues, required the project team to be adaptable. Quick decision-making and contingency planning ensured that these logistical challenges did not derail the project timeline or its outcomes.
4. **Unified Stakeholder Voice Strengthens Advocacy:** The training provided to the Edo Disability Forum (EDF) on advocacy and community organizing helped unify the voices of various disability groups, making the advocacy more cohesive and impactful. Ensuring that all OPDs were aligned with a common strategy was critical in driving engagement with government officials and the media.
5. **Media Engagement is Key for Sustaining Advocacy:** Consistent media outreach helped sustain the project's momentum and broaden public understanding of PWDs' challenges. Engaging grassroots media channels, such as ITV Radio 92.3, ensured that the project's message reached a wide audience, particularly in the regions most affected by the subsidy removal.



Melody Omosah Esq, The Executive Director NAPVID and EDF Members presenting an Advocacy brief and findings on impact of fuel subsidy removal On Persons With Disabilities (PWDS) In Edo State, Nigeria to Mrs Edugie Agbonlahor The Managing Director Edo State Transport Authority during an advocacy visit to her office



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcomes of the ResilientNet project and the lessons learned, several recommendations can be made for future projects aimed at advocating for the rights and inclusion of PWDs:

1. **Establish Mechanisms for Continuous Advocacy:** The commitments secured from the Edo State government during the project, particularly the pledge to establish the Disability Commission, should be monitored and followed up by the Edo Disability Forum (EDF). Future projects should focus on building sustainable advocacy mechanisms that ensure continuous engagement with government officials until these commitments are fully implemented.
2. **Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaborations:** Future efforts should involve closer collaboration between government ministries, civil society organizations, and the private sector to address the multi-faceted challenges faced by PWDs. For example, partnerships with private businesses could help provide employment opportunities or subsidies for goods and services specifically aimed at PWDs.
3. **Expand Media Outreach and Public Awareness Campaigns:** Building on the success of the radio programs and press conferences held during this project, future projects should broaden their media engagement to include television and social media platforms to reach an even wider audience. Continuous public sensitization is essential to keeping the plight of PWDs in the public eye and generating support for policy reforms.
4. **Ensure Broader Geographical Representation:** While the project covered all three senatorial districts in Edo State, future initiatives should ensure even deeper engagement with PWDs in rural areas, as they are often disproportionately affected by socio-economic changes. Tailored outreach programs could address the unique challenges faced by PWDs in these areas.
5. **Prioritize Accessibility in Public Services and Infrastructure:** Although the project succeeded in securing commitments for accessible transportation, the need for accessible venues, public buildings, and services remains. Future advocacy should emphasize the urgent need for implementing accessibility standards across all government facilities and public services to improve the quality of life for PWDs.

Through evidence-based advocacy, strategic stakeholder engagement, and targeted media outreach, the project secured meaningful commitments from the government, including the establishment of a Disability Commission and the provision of subsidized transportation and healthcare services for PWDs. The lessons learned from the project provide valuable insights for future advocacy efforts, particularly regarding the importance of direct stakeholder engagement, the power of unified advocacy, and the need for ongoing public awareness. Moving forward, it is essential to sustain the momentum generated by the project to ensure that the commitments made by the government are fully realized, creating a more inclusive and accessible environment for PWDs in Edo State.

The NDI representatives praised the project's positive outcomes and highlighted the importance of translating government commitments into concrete actions.

On April 25th, 2024, Melody Omosah chaired a session of EDF members for the final review of the project's sustainability plan. During this meeting, members of the Edo Disability Forum thoroughly revised the draft to ensure that the project's outcomes would be sustained in the long term. The plan focuses on key areas such as follow-up with relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, securing funding, and establishing clear operational guidelines. The sustainability plan will serve as a strategic tool for EDF to continue its advocacy efforts and drive meaningful impact beyond the project's lifespan.

Photos from Project ResilientNet Close-out Meeting







Resilient Net Project Close Out



PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT

During the implementation of the **ResilientNet** project, several key risks and issues were encountered, which had the potential to affect the achievement of the project's objectives. However, through strategic planning and adaptive management, these risks were mitigated to ensure that the project progressed successfully. Below is a detailed account of the major risks encountered and the mitigation strategies employed.

1. Risk of Government Inaction or Delayed Response

One of the major risks the project faced was the **potential for inaction or delays by government stakeholders** in responding to the advocacy efforts aimed at addressing the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) following the removal of the fuel subsidy. Given the complex bureaucratic processes and the transitional nature of political administrations, there was a significant concern that the advocacy recommendations might not be acted upon in a timely manner.

Mitigation Strategy: To mitigate this risk, the project took a proactive approach by **engaging with multiple levels of government stakeholders** early on in the project. The project team conducted **one-on-one advocacy meetings** with key government officials across various ministries, ensuring that the advocacy message was communicated directly to decision-makers. By building relationships with influential government figures such as the **Secretary to the State Government (SSG)**, the **Commissioner for Social Development and Gender Issues**, and the **Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning**, the project secured early commitments from these officials, thereby reducing the risk of inaction.

3. Risk of Logistical Challenges and Venue Accessibility

One of the issues encountered during the project was the challenge of finding a suitable venue for project activities that was **accessible to PWDs**, especially for major events such as the advocacy workshops and official project launch. In one instance, the initial venue for the 2-day advocacy workshop had to be changed at the last minute due to its failure to meet accessibility standards, creating logistical hurdles.

Mitigation Strategy: To mitigate the issue of venue accessibility, the project team responded swiftly by securing an alternative venue at the **NAPVID Event**

Hall, which was more accessible and suitable for the needs of PWD participants. The project team also established criteria for accessibility when selecting future venues for project activities to ensure that such challenges would not recur.

Additionally, the team maintained a high level of flexibility and coordination, enabling them to handle last-minute changes effectively without disrupting the overall schedule of the project.

6. Risk of Limited Participation Due to Economic Constraints

A significant challenge faced by PWDs during the project was their **limited ability to participate** in project activities due to the rising costs of transportation and other economic hardships exacerbated by the fuel subsidy removal. This risk threatened to reduce the participation of PWDs in FGDs, advocacy meetings, and media engagements.

Mitigation Strategy: To mitigate this, the project provided **transportation stipends** and other logistical support to ensure that PWDs could attend project events. In particular, during the **FGDs** and **advocacy workshops**, efforts were made to ensure that participants from all three senatorial districts had their transportation costs covered. Additionally, the project worked with local OPDs to coordinate transportation for PWDs attending events, ensuring that financial constraints did not hinder participation.

conclusion

In conclusion, the ResilientNet project successfully met its objectives by securing government commitments to address the socio-economic challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The project established a strong foundation for ongoing advocacy, ensuring the full implementation of the Edo State Disability Law and the inclusion of PWDs in key economic and social policies. The insights gained from this initiative offer a valuable roadmap for future efforts to advance the rights and inclusion of PWDs across Nigeria.