

International Standards: UNCRPD and SDGs (especially SDG 11 on sustainable cities) set the benchmark for inclusive design.

National Laws:

- Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018
- Rivers State Persons with Disability Welfare Enhancement Law, 2012

Issue: Lack of enforcement and non-domestication in Rivers State undermine these legal protections.

Study Objective & Methodology

Objective: Conduct a comprehensive audit in Port Harcourt and environs to identify accessibility barriers, assess compliance with existing legislation, recommend solutions based on severity and impact.

Methodology: Mixed methods (quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews) and, Checklist Inspection of public buildings, transportation, educational facilities, and more.

Key Findings of Accessibility Audit

Finding 1: Knowledge of Disability Inclusion Laws

Majority of residents in Rivers State are unaware of disability inclusion laws.

Awareness comes primarily from social media, traditional media, conferences, and civil society (e.g., FAECARE Foundation).

Finding 2: Accessibility in Government and Public Buildings/Facilities

The audit uncovered that many government buildings, particularly in Port Harcourt, fail to meet even the most basic accessibility standards. Critical infrastructures, in key Ministries, Department and Agencies are notably ill-equipped, lacking essential features like ramps, elevators, proper door widths, and accessible toilets. The situation is emblematic: a building may display a ramp at its entrance, yet internal floors remain out of reach for wheelchair users. Checklist inspections reveal a widespread failure to meet even minimal accessibility standards.

Finding 3: Accessibility in Schools

Numerous educational institutions lack accessible structures. While some secondary schools have attempted to retrofit ramps, many remain outdated or insufficiently maintained. In tertiary institutions, high-rise buildings such as canteens, hostels, and libraries pose severe challenges

for students with disabilities. Special school faces the additional challenges as teachers often lack sign language proficiency, hence communication barrier.

Finding 4: Access to Banks

Bank entrances are not designed for Persons with disabilities (e.g., narrow security doors).

Language barriers affect Persons with disabilities with hearing impairments.

Approximately 31.8% of respondents report a lack of priority treatment in queues. These contribute to a landscape where accessing essential financial services becomes a daunting task.



accessibility standards, limits participation in leisure activities and community life.

Finding 6: Public Transportation

Public transportation is a critical lifeline for urban mobility, yet 77% of survey respondents reported that buses and other forms of road transport in Rivers State are not accessible. Issues include unsuitable bus designs, high fares for smaller vehicles, and poor driver/conductor attitudes.

Finding 7: Air Transportation

Airline staff indicate a willingness to assist, but accessibility equipment is lacking. Responsibility for accommodations is deferred to FAAN, with limited planning for safe boarding procedures.

Finding 5: Recreational Facilities

Recreational centers (pleasure parks, malls) are often inaccessible (lack of ramps and adapted restrooms). Even when entrance access is available, internal facilities may not be. Recreational centers inconsistent

Some model primary healthcare centers are equipped with basic ramps; many private hospitals lack adjustable beds, trained staff, and sign language interpreters. Healthcare facilities, particularly private hospitals, often lack essential adaptations such as adjustable consulting beds and sign language interpreters, further disadvantaging Persons with disabilities.

Additional Concerns:

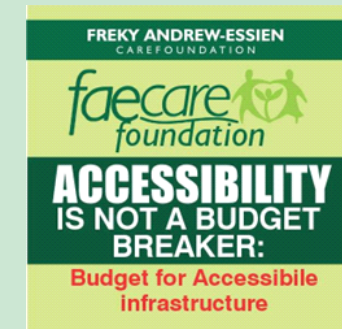
Markets and churches present significant physical challenges (e.g., crowded, chaotic environments, slippery surfaces).

Overall, 56.5% of respondents from the questionnaire believe Rivers State is not accessible for Persons with disabilities.

Recommendations

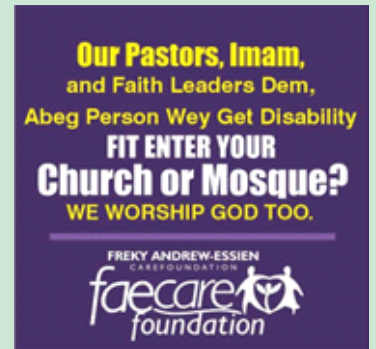
Recommendations for Action-Government:

Domesticate the Disability Discrimination Prohibition Act or enact a comprehensive rights-based disability law in Rivers State. Establish and fund a Rivers State Disability Council/Commission. Appoint a proactive Special Adviser on Disability Affairs. Mandate accessibility standards in all new building and infrastructure projects.



Society:

Organize and demand accountability on disability issues.



Refuse approval of plans that do not meet accessibility requirements.

Create an Accessibility Committee to allocate budgets and monitor modifications.

Provide training (e.g., sign language, disability awareness) for public service providers.

Recommendations for Action-Civil