

BIG ISSUES IN OUR LIVES

What Needs to Change

What Intersecting Discrimination looks like for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Our Experience with Types of Discrimination

People with intellectual disabilities experience discrimination because of who we are.

We also face discrimination because we have multiple disabilities, or because we are part of other groups who face discrimination. For example, maybe because of our gender or our sexuality.

Some people call this “intersecting discrimination.”



Our Rights

Article 5 of the CRPD says governments must work to stop discrimination.

“As a woman with a disability, I encountered a lot of difficulty. Because of my disability, people in the street laugh at me, look at me badly and ask me to go home because they think I can’t do anything else.”

SELF-ADVOCATE, BENIN



Big Problems We Face

Women

- Many women face sterilisation, they are not allowed to have children
- People don't believe that we are good parents
- We don't get clear information about our health
- We aren't allowed to make decisions about our lives and bodies

LGBTQ+ People

- People don't respect our identity
- We don't get to learn about sex and relationships

People with Multiple Disabilities

- People think that if we don't talk that we don't have an opinion
- People think we are behaving badly
- People don't believe us when we say that we are in pain
- We are excluded from services
- We don't get good support

Young people

- We are excluded from education
- We stop getting support when we become an adult
- We face bullying
- People don't believe that we can be independent

"Some girls do not understand their menstruation and they are afraid of it; they think they can die because of the bleeding."

SELF-ADVOCATE, SOUTH AFRICA



"I would love to walk in the street without any suffering. I want to ride the transportation without abuse or hearing some bad words."

SELF-ADVOCATE, BANGLADESH



"I didn't know what these feelings were for a long time or what even being gay means."

SELF-ADVOCATE, IRELAND



When Things Work Well

- We are respected and valued in our community
- We are empowered
- We get to make our own decisions
- We don't face violence and discrimination
- We get access to justice, people believe us when we report that something bad has happened
- We get the right support

What Needs To Change

What Governments Can Do

- Fund accessible services that support us
- Protect our right to justice

What Everyone Can Do

- Recognise the barriers that we face
- Help us to learn about our rights
- Support us to share our stories

"We have realized that we are all valuable as women, we are empowered, we have the same rights as anyone."

SELF-ADVOCATE, MEXICO



"I was treated as a monster — not human — because I cannot speak or easily show what I think. I want to tell the world that everybody should be treated as a human being, even when they can't speak."

SELF-ADVOCATE, NETHERLANDS



This document was made by self-advocates from the Inclusion International network. It was prepared for the Global Disability Summit in 2025. The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) funded this work through UNICEF. The content represents the views of people with intellectual disabilities around the world — it does not necessarily represent what GIZ or UNICEF think.

OUR BIG MESSAGE ABOUT
DISCRIMINATION

People with intellectual disabilities around the world want to be respected and valued in our communities.

We want women, children and youth with intellectual disabilities, and people with high support needs to get the support they need.

