



BIG ISSUES IN OUR LIVES

What Needs to Change

What ***Aging*** looks like for People with Intellectual Disabilities

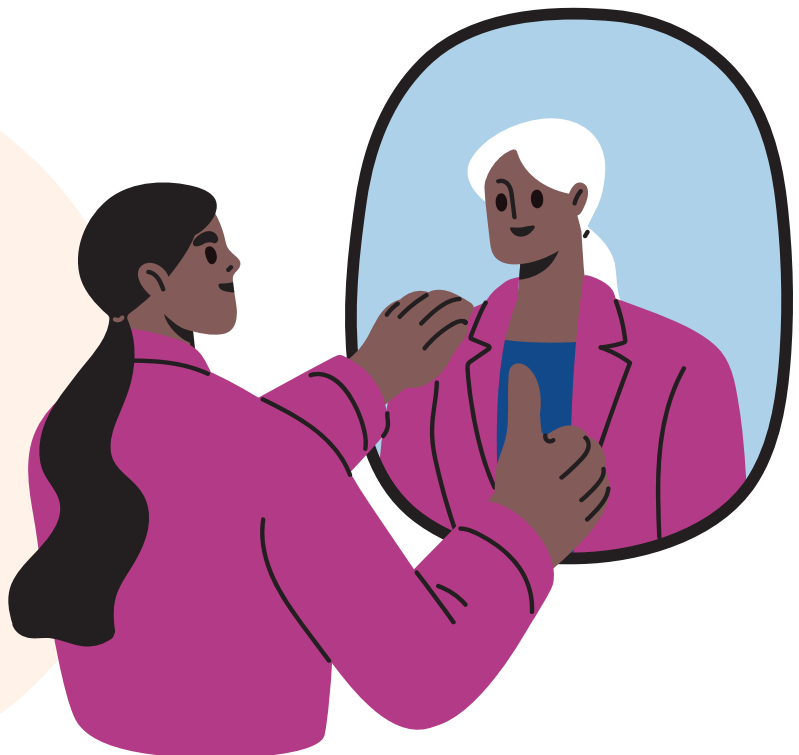
Our Experience with Aging

People with intellectual disabilities are living longer than we used to. Many of us are worried because we don't know what our lives will look like when we get older.

We are worried about staying healthy and how we will be able to get care and support.

"When I was born, my life expectancy was around 20 years. Luckily, I outlived that...our life expectancy is about 60 years these days, which only gives me another 18 years. I feel sad about that."

SELF-ADVOCATE, SOUTH AFRICA



Our Rights

- Our rights should always be respected, whether we are young or old.
- This means that governments must make sure that we are included in the community and we can access services we need, like inclusive health care, when we get older.

Big Problems We Face

Access to Care and Support

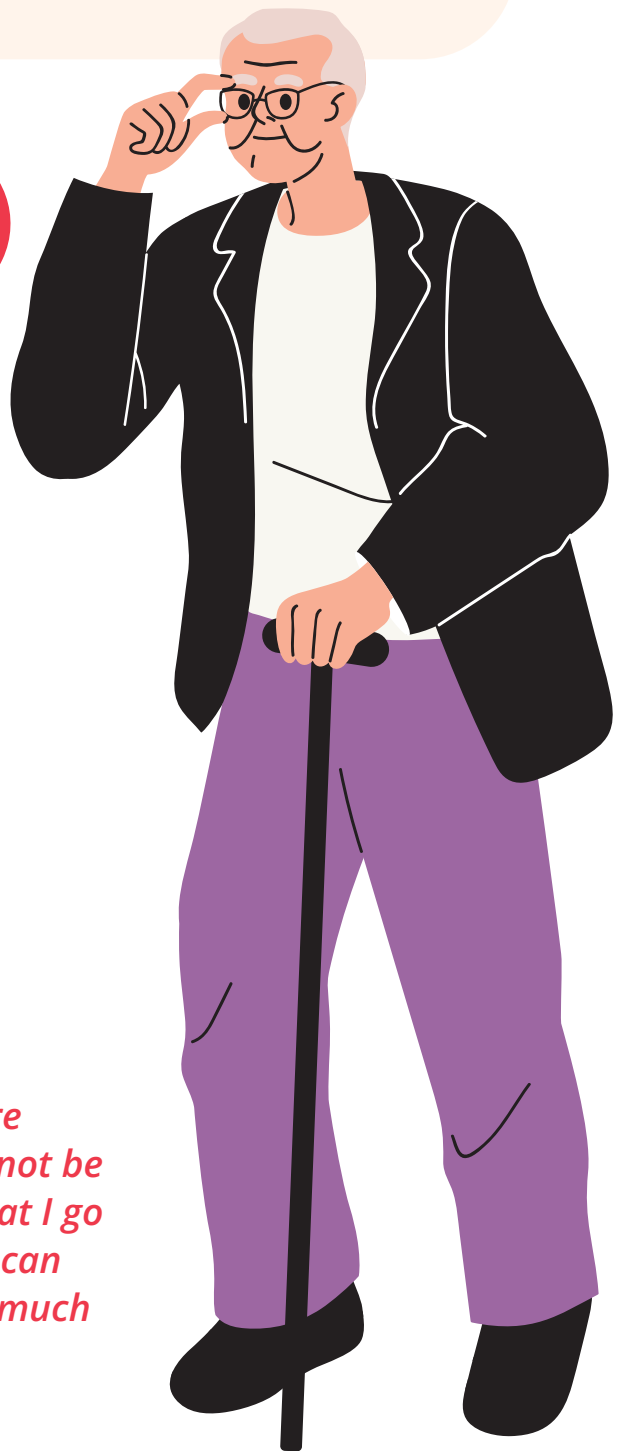
- There aren't many services for older people with intellectual disabilities
- We might not have enough money to take care of ourselves
- We might be forced to live in an institution
- We face discrimination in healthcare and this could get worse as we get older

Mental Health

- Getting older can make us feel worried
- Older people can feel lonely if they are not included in the community

"I had a chat with my parents lately. They were worried that after they passed away I would not be able to take care of myself, and suggested that I go and live in a hostel [institution]. But in fact, I can do home chores and I have a job. I think it is much better to stay at home."

SELF-ADVOCATE, HONG KONG



When We Get Older We Want...

- To stay in our homes and communities
- To get support to be independent
- To make our own decisions
- To choose who we live with
- To get support to stay healthy
- To get help in emergencies

"I enjoy getting older because I still learn new things every day and I teach children with disabilities. My life has a purpose."

SELF-ADVOCATE, SOUTH AFRICA



What Needs To Change

What Governments Can Do

- Make Services Affordable
 - Fund care and support services in the community, not institutions
 - Make sure disability benefits cover the cost of care as we age
 - Make healthcare and support services accessible and affordable
- Ask People What Support They Need
 - Ensure older people with intellectual disabilities are registered in national databases
 - Listen to what older people with intellectual disabilities want for their future

What Service Providers Can Do

- Support People to Live Independently
 - Make sure people living independently get help in emergencies



"It's the isolation, being alone. When you're in an apartment by yourself and you're getting older, things happen and then you start to question yourself and say, well, should I be alone? What if something happens? What if I fall, who's gonna be there to pick me up?"

SELF-ADVOCATE, CANADA



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.



“Listen to our thoughts and opinions... we need jobs that older adults are capable of doing, more physically accessible public transit systems, and sufficient resources for long-term care services.”

SELF-ADVOCATE, SPAIN



OUR BIG MESSAGE ABOUT AGING

People with intellectual disabilities around the world want to be included at all stages of our life as we age. We want support as we get older to make sure we don't have to go to institutions later in life.

