

Inclusion  
international



# 2024 Annual Report







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# President's Message

In 2024 our movement didn't back down. **Together, we held the line.** We made sure inclusion didn't get pushed off the agenda.

Our members reminded the world that inclusion isn't optional. It's not something to set aside when times get tough. It's what makes systems stronger.

Last year, we saw again that when our network is active and connected, we can have real impact. **Our approach is simple and strong: support members to lead, and help them connect with each other.**

Our work was grounded in people's lives and led by our members. Together, we:

- **Brought inclusion into humanitarian response**, working with members to address exclusion in emergencies and disasters
- **Kept pushing for deinstitutionalisation**, building momentum across Eastern Europe and Jordan, and supporting community-based advocacy and storytelling.
- **Challenged outdated ideas about care**, bringing family voices into the global care and support agenda and building new partnerships to fight for inclusive services.
- **Supported self-advocacy across regions**, helping members grow their voice, organise, and set new advocacy strategies, especially in Southern Africa.
- **Strengthened our shared voice**, working together through working groups and global discussions on inclusive education, legal capacity, self-advocacy, and more.

We will carry this work forward in 2025. We will continue to support our members to speak, organise, and act. And we will gather face-to-face at our World Congress in Sharjah next September—a critical moment to build momentum for our movement.

Thank you for your work. I am grateful for your leadership, and for the way you stand with each other.

**Sue Swenson**  
**President**

# Who we are



**Inclusion International is the global network of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Together we advocate for the rights and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities worldwide.**

For over 50 years Inclusion International has been committed to the promotion of human rights. Our organisation represents over 200 member federations in 115 countries throughout our five regions - the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia-Pacific.

Our members work to promote human rights and help make the rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) a reality. We want to create a world where people with intellectual disabilities and their families can take part in all parts of community life, just like everybody else.

Our members have agreed on a **Statement of Unity** to explain what an inclusive world means to us. As an international network, we believe that in order to achieve real inclusion society must:

- support people with intellectual disabilities to have control over their lives and to make their own choices and decisions.
- accept people with intellectual disabilities as equal members of their family and community.
- remove the barriers that prevent people with intellectual disabilities from taking part in all aspects of life.
- provide full access to mainstream services and systems like education and healthcare.
- remove all spaces where people with intellectual disabilities are kept apart and alone from other people.
- celebrate diversity and equality as the key to building stronger and better communities for ALL.





# Advocacy

As an international network, we make sure that the voices of our members and the issues that are important to our network are heard in places where important decisions get made, like the United Nations, in the CRPD Committee, and in other global forums.

# Advocacy Milestones

Our progress throughout the year

## January

GLOBAL ALLIANCE  
FOR CARE

In January, we **joined the Global Alliance for Care**, a group of organisations working together on care and support. We want to make sure people with intellectual disabilities and their families are included in the “care and support agenda,” which is the push for governments to reform their care and support systems.

## February

CRPD ELECTIONS

We **hosted a webinar to explain the CRPD Committee election process** and encourage members to speak to their governments about being nominated, as Sir Robert Martin’s term was ending. After the webinar, self-advocates from our network showed interest and began contacting their governments about being nominated in the next election round in two years.

## March

SALAMANCA DECLARATION  
ANNIVERSARY

March 2024 was the **30th Anniversary of the Salamanca declaration**, an important document for inclusive education. We were involved in a global dialogue on inclusive education hosted by UNESCO.

## May

DEINSTITUTIONALISATION  
GUIDELINES

We **hosted a webinar on inclusive support models** as part of the Global Coalition on Deinstitutionalisation’s “From Words to Practice” series about the [deinstitutionalisation guidelines](#), including in emergencies. Speakers shared examples of community support services from different regions and contexts.

## June

COSP

### Our network had strong representation at COSP17

with a **19-member** delegation from 8 countries made up of self-advocates, families, and others. We **hosted and spoke at 6 side events** including about humanitarian action and supported decision-making. Working with OHCHR, we helped make accessible formats and easy-to-read materials, while our delegation engaged in high-level meetings and **honoured Sir Robert Martin's legacy**.

## September

PACT FOR THE  
FUTURE

We worked with the stakeholder group of persons with disabilities and other organisations to **make sure the Pact for the Future includes the rights of persons with disabilities**. The Pact was adopted at the Summit of the Future.

## October

CARE AND SUPPORT  
AGENDA

From April until October, we **actively shaped the care and support agenda**. We joined consultations and expert meetings in New York and Geneva, and shared input with OHCHR to highlight care and support as a human rights issue.

Our contributions focused on the barriers people with intellectual disabilities and their families face, and what they need. On 30 October, **we marked the International Day for Care and Support** by sharing the key role families play in supporting their loved ones and each other.

## December

GLOBAL DISABILITY  
INCLUSION REPORT

### We helped develop the Global Disability Inclusion Report

by joining consultations and sharing experiences of people with intellectual disabilities. The report will launch at the Global Disability Summit in 2025.







# Programmes

Members Working Together

Programmes are where our members come together to share work, knowledge and tools to address issues they care about.



# Programmes

## Key achievements



## Empower Us

**Empower Us is our program to help grow self-advocacy leadership.**

We want more people with intellectual disabilities to learn about human rights and advocacy so that they can advocate for inclusion.

We also want our members to know how to support self-advocates.

We do this by:

- **Giving easy-to-understand training** about how to speak up for your rights
- **Sharing resources** about being a self-advocate leader
- **Bringing self-advocates together** to share their stories and learn from each other

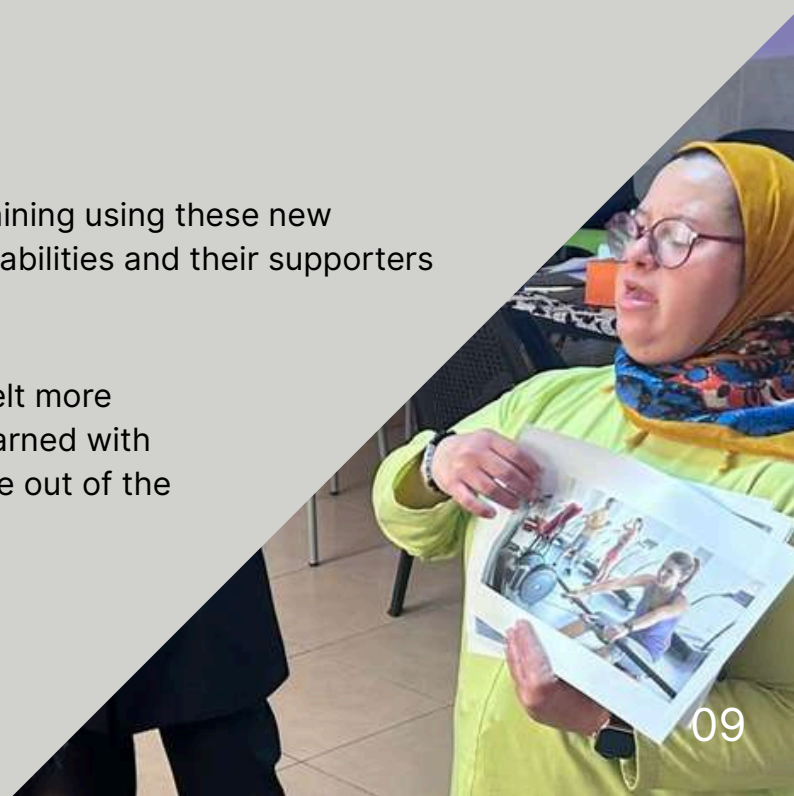
**In 2024, we developed new materials for Empower Us training.** These materials are for people with intellectual disabilities who aren't used to making decisions and speaking up. They help people take the first steps to becoming a self-advocate.

**These materials cover topics like:**

- Telling people about ourselves
- Making decisions
- Telling others what we want and need
- What good support looks like

Salma, a self-advocate from Egypt led a training using these new materials for 18 women with intellectual disabilities and their supporters at the Tafilah Institution in Jordan.

As a result of these sessions, the women felt more confident and began to share what they learned with their peers. In 2025, these women will move out of the institution to begin living in the community.



# Programmes

## Key achievements



## Listen Include Respect

The Listen Include Respect guidelines help organisations understand what it means to be an inclusive organisation. Our network worked with Down Syndrome International's network to create the guidelines together.

Listen Include Respect is made of step-by-step guides that help organisations understand what they need to do to make sure people with intellectual disabilities are included in their work.

In 2024, we used Listen Include Respect to:

- **Make big disability events inclusive** - for example, helping the United Nations to make sure the Civil Society Forum at the Conference of States Parties (COSP) had easy-to-understand materials.
- **Help organisations to create easy-to-understand resources that have been created and validated by self-advocates**, like the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA).
- **Make international development projects inclusive, starting from the beginning** - we used the guidelines to make our own projects fully accessible and inclusive, and to help partners like Women Enabled or the International Rescue Committee to do the same.
- **Support our members to use the guidelines in their work** - through creating training about Listen Include Respect and through our Listen Include Respect Champions Discussion Group.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) tells us that all people with disabilities have the right to meaningful participation, and the Listen Include Respect Guidelines are helping us make sure that everyone knows how to include people with intellectual disabilities.





# Programmes

## Key achievements



## Catalyst for Inclusive Education

Catalyst for Inclusive Education is Inclusion International's global programme dedicated to promoting inclusive education worldwide.

The programme connects members with expert advisors to help turn inclusive education into a reality in their countries. It features regional response teams made up of Inclusion International members and technical experts who provide targeted guidance and support.

In 2024, Catalyst continued to expand its regional networks in response to growing interest in inclusive education. Members worked together to develop learning tools designed to support inclusive education, particularly in emergency situations. They also organised regular peer learning sessions, creating a platform to share challenges, exchange experiences, and collectively develop solutions.

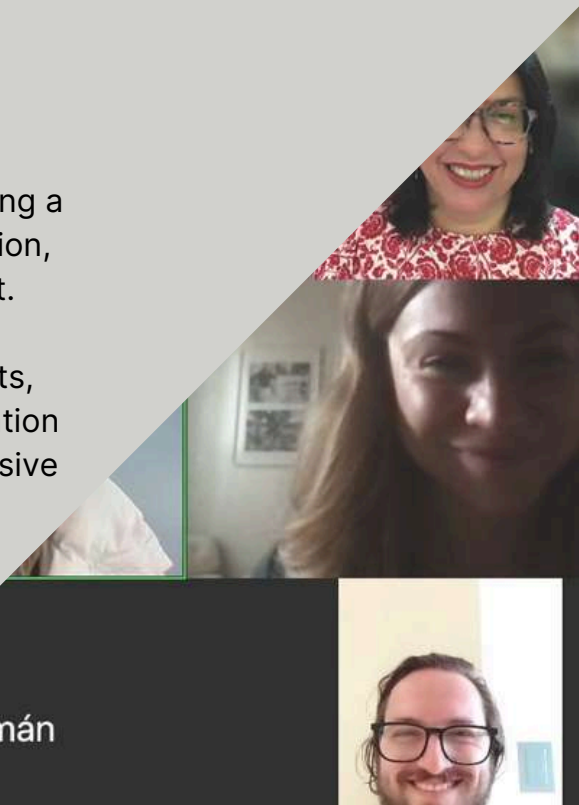
### Catalyst Expert Advice Sessions

In 2024, Catalyst hosted five expert advice sessions on the United Arab Emirates, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, and Peru. During these sessions, members presented the challenges they face in advancing inclusive education in their countries and received tailored support from experts and peers.

### Supporting Advocacy Efforts

Catalyst members helped create advocacy tools, including a timeline marking 30 years since the Salamanca Declaration, to show the impact of the inclusive education movement.

They also supported advocacy at COSP, other key events, and in the work of the UN Special Rapporteurs on Education and Disability—promoting a long-term approach to inclusive education.





# Projects

We work in partnership with members on specific time-limited projects in their countries.



# Projects

## Key achievements

### Self-Advocacy in Southern Africa

Inclusion International is working with our members in Zambia and Angola to create strong self-advocacy groups.

This work is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland.

After their Empower Us training to learn about self-advocacy, self-advocacy groups in Zambia and Angola have started to do advocacy work in their communities:

- **In Zambia and Angola, self-advocates worked on employment.** They went to meetings to talk about fair wages for people with intellectual disabilities, and talked to employers.
- **In Angola, self-advocates met with government officials,** organisations in the cross-disability movement, and youth organisations to talk about the issues that are important to them.
- **In Zambia, self-advocates did outreach to villages in rural areas,** meeting with the community members and helping them to understand intellectual disability.
- **The self-advocacy groups worked with the media** - using radios and tv to spread their messages about including people with intellectual disabilities.

The project has created opportunities for self-advocates. They are now advocating, speaking for others in the community, and helping to make their organisations more inclusive.

I will never be the same again. I didn't know that big people like government officials could hear my voice. Thanks to the Empower Us training, I am now a very important person. This time around, when I am walking down the road, people are able to greet me and try to find out more about what we are doing as self-advocates. This never used to happen before. I love this work of advocacy.

– Self-advocate from Friendly Barn Development Foundation, Zambia

# Projects

## Key achievements

### Deinstitutionalisation in Jordan

Inclusion International is working with Humanity & Inclusion to provide technical support to their EU-funded deinstitutionalisation project in Jordan.

The project runs until 2025 and supports Jordan's national strategy to move women with intellectual disabilities from institutions into the community.

2024 was the second year of the project. This year, we:

- **Supported 18 women with intellectual disabilities living in an institution to build self-advocacy skills.** Led by a self-advocate leader from the region, the training helped the women take the first steps towards self-advocacy. The training helped them build identity and confidence, and trained them on making choices and knowing how to ask for support. After the sessions, participants showed more confidence and began sharing what they learned with others.
- **Trained community-based and civil society organisations on inclusive participation,** using the Listen Include Respect guidelines, Article 19 of the CRPD, and global guidelines on deinstitutionalisation. The training helped build a network of local actors that can support inclusive community living as people move from institutions to communities.
- **Trained Jordanian government staff to better support families.** Family leaders from our regional network in MENA talked to the Ministry of Social Development about supporting families to create peer groups and using a rights-based approach, with practical tools and global examples.

In 2025, we will continue helping to build inclusive communities in Jordan as the project supports women to move out of the institution.





# Projects

## Key achievements

### Inclusive Education in Emergency Settings

Inclusion International is working with the International Disability Alliance and our network in Colombia and Niger to make sure children with disabilities are not left out of education in emergencies.

This work is funded by Education Cannot Wait.

The big goal of the work is to help humanitarian organisation and disability organisations work together better, and to create tools that help make sure children with disabilities can access inclusive education in emergencies.

In 2024, we:

- **Spoke to 82 children with disabilities and 80 caregivers living through emergencies Colombia and Niger.** They told us about the barriers they face in getting an education during crises. The information they shared with us with help us make new tools to help organisations remove those barriers.
- **Supported humanitarian organisations to work in a more inclusive way -** our partners in Colombia and Niger have been advising organisations working in education and emergencies about inclusion.
- **Created a new learning tool for the staff of humanitarian organisations.** The tool helps humanitarian organisations understand and use inclusive education practices. The tool was created through joint work between disability organisations and humanitarian actors.

Next year, we will create more tools to make education in emergencies work for all children, and train families, teachers, and organisations on how to use them.



# Projects

## Key achievements

### Self-Advocacy for Closing Institutions in Eastern Europe

Inclusion International and Inclusion Europe are working together with our members in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia on a new project funded by the U.S. State Department.

The big goal of this project is to support our members in Eastern Europe to create strong networks of self-advocates, who will do important work to push for closing institutions in their countries.

In the first year of the project in 2024:

- **Self-advocate leaders from Eastern Europe trained 112 people with intellectual disabilities on self-advocacy**, and trained 82 supporters on giving good support.
- **Self-advocacy groups in Eastern Europe met with government leaders, talked to people who run institutions, spoke in the media**, and did other advocacy activities. Their messages about closing institutions reached over 70,000 people!
- **Our members developed action plans for closing institutions** in their countries, based on consultations with self-advocates, families, and experts.
- **We launched a global network of survivors of institutions**, who will lead important advocacy work for our network on closing institutions.

While this project will be wrapping up early in 2025 due to funding cuts from the United States, self-advocates in Eastern Europe will continue to work with their organisations to advocate for closing institutions.





# Projects

## Key achievements

### Understanding what Girls with Intellectual Disabilities in Crisis Situations Need

Inclusion International worked with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and our members in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso on a project called Inclusive and Accountable. It focused on including adolescent girls with intellectual disabilities in humanitarian action.

The project listened to girls about what they want and need, and worked with humanitarian organisations to be more inclusive.

We helped IRC and our members use the Listen Include Respect guidelines to make sure the project was inclusive and led by self-advocates throughout.

In 2024:

- **Our members trained IRC teams in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso on using the Listen Include Respect** guidelines and how to include people with intellectual disabilities.
- **We held consultations with girls and their families**, designed and led by self-advocates in both countries.
- **We created a case study showing how to plan inclusive consultations** using the guidelines.
- **We developed a learning report sharing what the girls and families told us about how humanitarian organisations should include them.**

Although the project will end in early 2025 due to funding cuts from the US government, the tools and reports we created will support more inclusive humanitarian work and can be used by our members in future projects.



# Projects

## Key achievements

### Legal Capacity and Sexual and Reproductive Health

Inclusion International is working on a project with our partner, Women Enabled International, and our members in Spain, Kenya, and the USA.

The project also includes psychosocial disability organisations in Fiji and Uganda.

The project is about how women make choices about their sexual and reproductive health in different countries.

Through this project, we talk to women about their right to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. We want to find out if this right is being respected in different countries.

In 2024:

- **We trained organisations to run inclusive and accessible focus groups.**  
We also supported self-advocates from our member organisations to lead consultations in their countries.
- **We worked with project partners to run focus groups with women with intellectual disabilities about sexual and reproductive health rights.**  
These focus groups were co-led by self-advocates.

In 2025, we will support Women Enabled to write a report about legal capacity and sexual and reproductive health.

The report will share what we learnt from the focus groups, and make recommendations about how we can make sure women all over the world can make their own decisions.





# Projects

Where did we work with our members in 2024?



## Self-Advocacy in Southern Africa

Angola, Zambia



## Deinstitutionalisation in Jordan

Jordan



## Citizenship and political participation in Cameroon

Cameroon, Benin



## Education in Emergencies

Colombia, Niger



## Self-Advocacy and Closing Institutions in Eastern Europe

Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia



## Legal Capacity and Sexual and Reproductive Health

United States, Spain, Kenya



## Understanding what Girls with Intellectual Disabilities in Crisis Situations Need

Burkina Faso, Ethiopia





# Connecting Members

We connect people and organisations around the world who share knowledge about building inclusion.



# Connecting Members



In 2024, we met members in Glasgow for Europe in Action, in New York for COSP, in Sharjah to prepare for the 2025 World Congress, and around the world for project meetings.

We also hosted two fellows from KAIH and Inclusion Mauritius. Fellows Fayel Achieng Odeny and Pooja Gopee led research on legal capacity and social protection.

Online, we worked with Plena Inclusion in Spain to hold monthly Plena International meetings for self-advocates. These meetings focused on topics like inclusive health and political participation.

In 2024, we created online trainings for a new online Learning Platform. It will offer resources, videos, and learning materials created with and for our members. The platform already includes more than 30 modules, with input from many members.



**In 2025, our movement will come together in person at the World Congress in Sharjah, U.A.E.** We're working with our member, Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, to build a programme that reflects the priorities of our network.

**Together, we'll look at what inclusion means in different parts of the world and what it takes to make it real.**

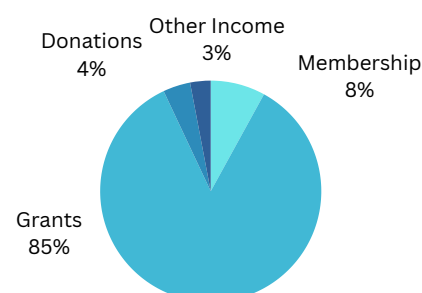
# Financial Report

## Financial Summary

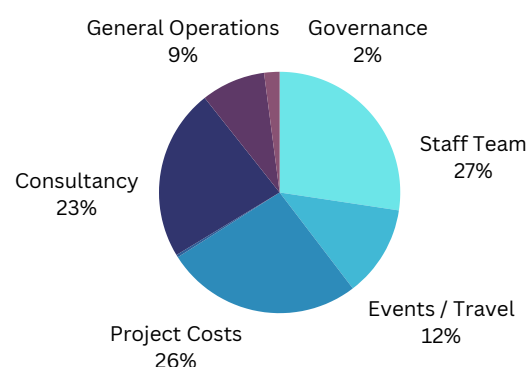
All figures are in USD. Financial activities for the years ending 31/12/2023 and 31/12/2024.

	2024	2023
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Income & Donations	172,514	154,001
Other Income	38,720	16,816
Grants	1,245,514	811,400
Investment	1,096	885
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,457,844</b>	<b>983,102</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,344,734</b>	<b>994,477</b>
Net Incoming / (outgoing) resources	113,110	(11,375)

## Income 2024



## Expenses 2024



	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Debtors (money we are owed)	235,647	58,021
Liabilities (money we owe to other people)	(111,844)	105,054
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>926,445</b>	<b>826,563</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Restricted Funds (for programmes and projects)	616,320	488,810
Designated Funds	156,189	183,817
Unrestricted Funds	153,936	153,936
<b>Total</b>	<b>926,445</b>	<b>826,563</b>



# The Council

## Made up of Officers and Regional Representatives

The Council leads our organisation and represents the voice of our members from all over the world. The General Assembly elects the Council members.

### Officers



**Sue Swenson:** President



**Luis Gabriel Villareal Peralta:**

Vice-President



**Lloyd Lewis:** Treasurer



**Nagase Osamu:** Secretary General



**Jyrki Pinomaa:** Co-Opted Officer



**Richard Bennett:** Co-Opted Officer



### Regional Representatives



**Gabriela Martínez Olivares:** representative for the Americas, Mexico



**Dominique Kantor:** self-advocate representative for the Americas, Argentina



**Stephanie Gotlib:** representative for Asia Pacific, Australia



**Shiva Shrestha:** self-advocate representative for Asia Pacific, Nepal



**Chantal Gnahoui:** self-advocate representative for Africa, Benin



**Fauzia Haji:** co-opted representative, Zanzibar



**Auberon Jeleel Odoom:** representative for Africa, Ghana



**Soufiane El Amrani:** self-advocate representative for Europe, Belgium



**Jyrki Pinomaa:** representative for Europe, Finland



**Sheikha Jameela Al Qasimi:** representative for Middle East and North Africa, United Arab Emirates



**Chaica Sultan Saqr Al Qassimi:** self-advocate representative for Middle East and North Africa, United Arab Emirates

# The Staff Team

**Connie Laurin-Bowie**, Executive Director

**Manuela Hasselknippe**, Director of Finance

**Kimber Bialik**, Director of Programmes & Network Development

**Manel Mhiri**, Global Advocacy Manager

**Federica Settimi**, Programme Manager - Inclusive Education

**Ailis Hardy**, Programme Manager - Self-Advocacy

**Clay Ballard**, Communications Manager

**Mark Mapemba**, Project Manager

**Tia Nelis**, Listen Include Respect Consultant

**Olivia Schalkwyk**, Project & Membership Assistant

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