



Taking part in elections: a guide for inclusion



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Inclusion
international



Sightsavers

Why should I vote?

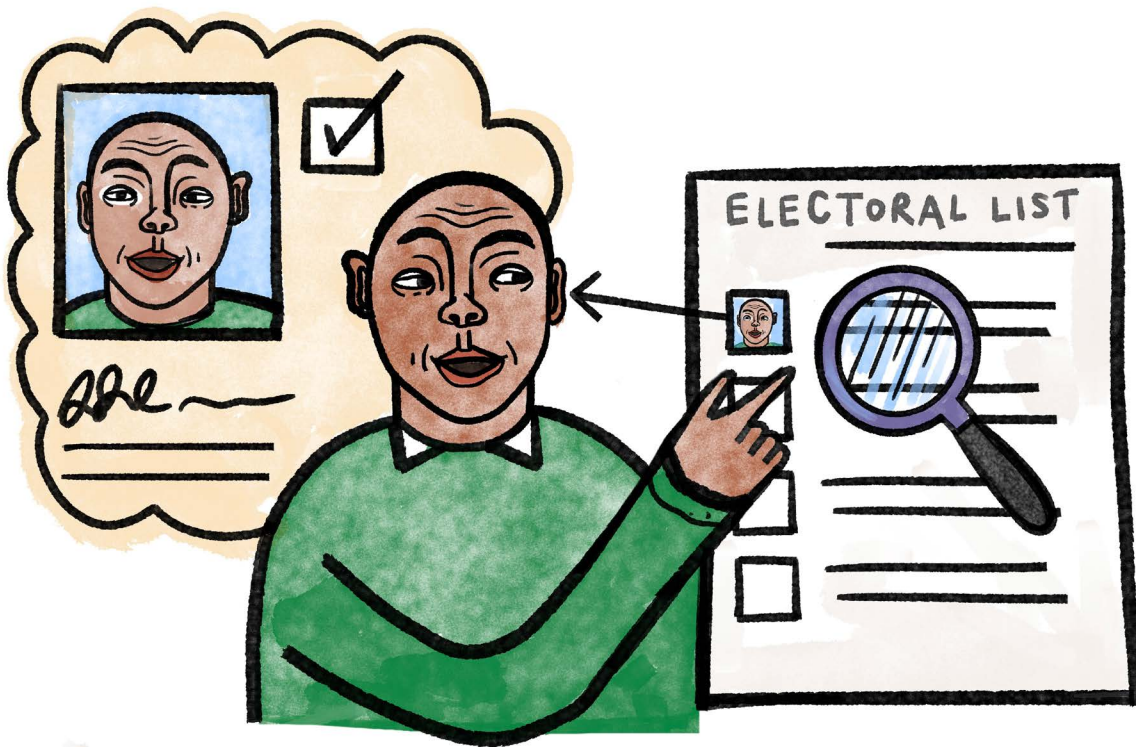
Decisions taken by governments have an impact on everyone's life.

These decisions can make important changes in the country and affect how resources are used.

Everyone has the right to participate in these decisions.

Voting is one way of doing this.

When your government understands what's important to you, it can make decisions that include everyone.



What to do before the elections

Register to vote

Before the elections, you need to register to vote.

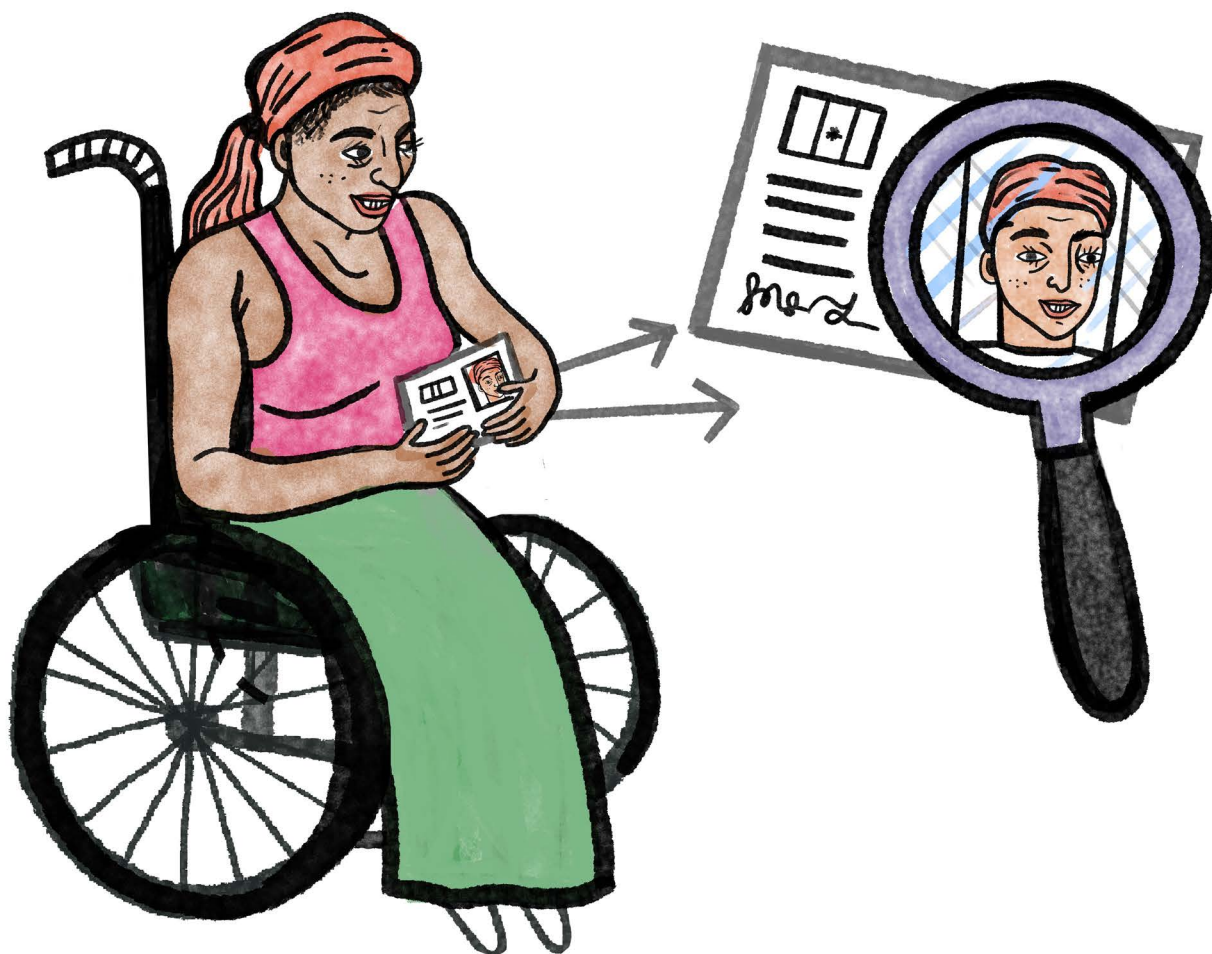
Registering means filling in a form with your name, age and address so that you can vote on election day.

This puts your name on a list of all the people entitled to vote. The government keeps this list. This list is called the electoral register.

You can register to vote free of charge at any ELECAM office in your commune.

ELECAM (Elections Cameroon) is the institution in Cameroon responsible for elections.

If your name is not on the list, you cannot vote.



To register to vote, you will need proof of identity.

Here are some examples of proof of identity: a birth certificate, a residence permit or a national identity card.

You may need to fill in a form to register to vote. A family member or support person can help you do this.

If you have registered to vote but do not see your name on the list, you should contact the electoral office where you registered to be included. This must be done before the voting day.

What to do if you don't have proof of identity

Many people with intellectual disabilities do not have documents to prove their identity.

Article 29 of the Convention says that governments must help you get the proof of identity you need to register to vote.

You can ask someone to help you obtain proof of identity.

In Cameroon, you can talk to the Ministry of Social Affairs or a local authority if you do not have proof of identity.

Decide who to vote for


Before the elections, you need to find out who is standing for election.

These people are called candidates.

You need to know what the candidates want to do and what decisions they are going to make.

You may want to find out what the different candidates say about the rights of disabled people.

You might be interested in what candidates say about education, employment or health.



Candidates may share this information on television, in radio interviews, in community discussions and on social networks or websites.

The information about candidates must be accessible.

This may mean that it is written or spoken in plain language so that it is easy to understand. This is not always the case.

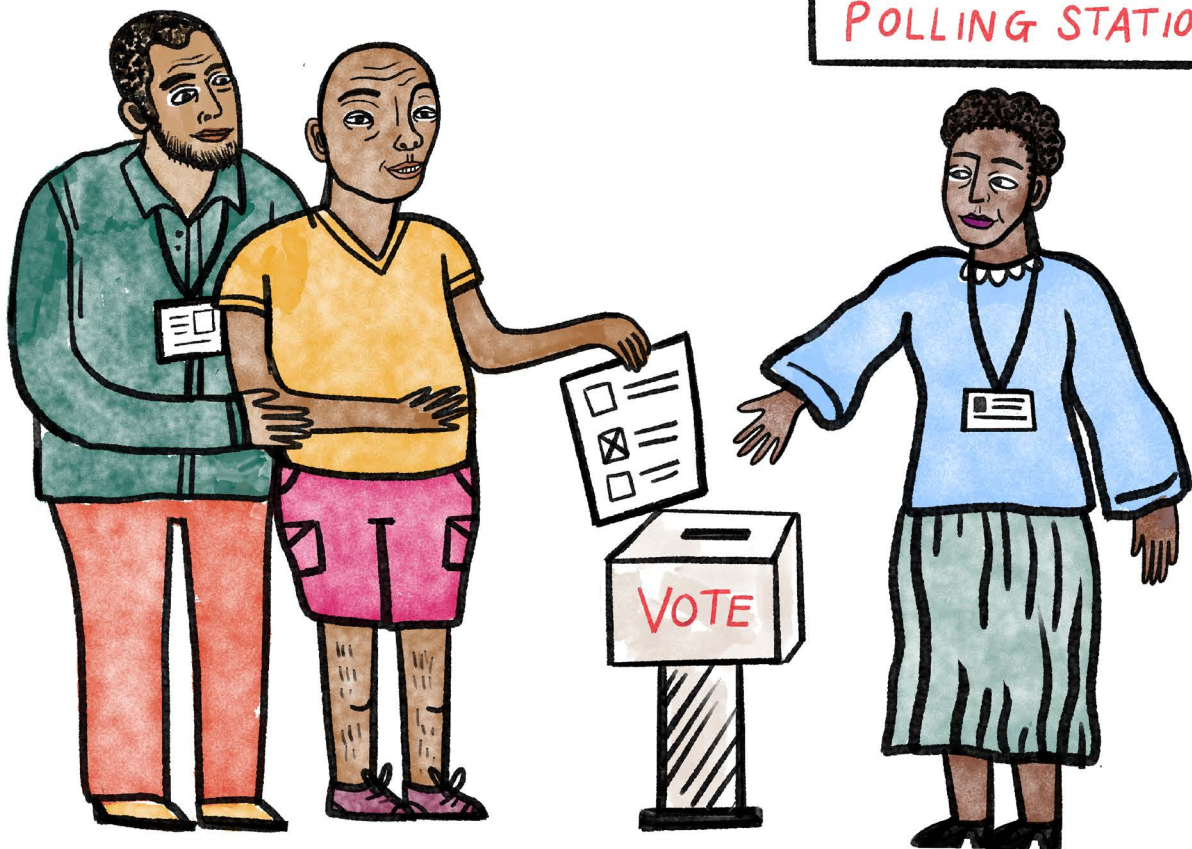
You can contact candidates and their teams and ask them for information that is easy to understand.

You can also request information from the political parties, or you might want to join a political party.

A trusted person who gives you good support can also help you to understand the information about the candidates.

It's a good idea to choose the candidate you want yourself, the one who helps you a lot, so that he or she runs the country

Khady, young disabled woman, Senegal



What to do on election day

On election day, you can go to the polling station to vote.

You will receive what is known as a ballot paper. This is where you write your vote for your preferred candidate.

A ballot paper has blank boxes next to the names of the candidates. The ballot papers include the candidate's name, photo and political party.

To indicate which candidate you are voting for, you place the candidate's ballot paper inside the envelope and put it into the ballot box.

Your vote must be secret. You do not have to tell anyone who you are voting for, even if you are asked.

Nobody has to tell you who to vote for. It is always your choice.

When you vote, you can:

- Choose someone to accompany you
- Ask for enough time to vote
- Ask for a quiet place to vote if you are disturbed by noise and crowds.

At the polling station, there should be:

- Clear information on how to vote
- Help for people who make a mistake on the ballot paper.

In general, there is someone on hand whom you can ask for help. Your support person can also help you identify who to contact if you have a problem.

What to do if you are told you are not entitled to vote

If someone at the polling station tells you that you can't vote, that's not right.

You and your accompanying person can explain that you are entitled to vote.

You can report this problem to ELECAM or to a organisation of people with disabilities called the Inclusive Society for Persons with Disabilities (Réseau national des Organisations de Promotion de l'Inclusion des Personnes Handicapées).

What to do after the elections?

After the elections, you need to ask yourself whether things were easy for you.

What was too difficult?

Governments must make voting easy to understand.

This means:

- The voting forms
- The location of the polling station
- Instructions on how to vote.



If this is not followed, you can make a complaint.

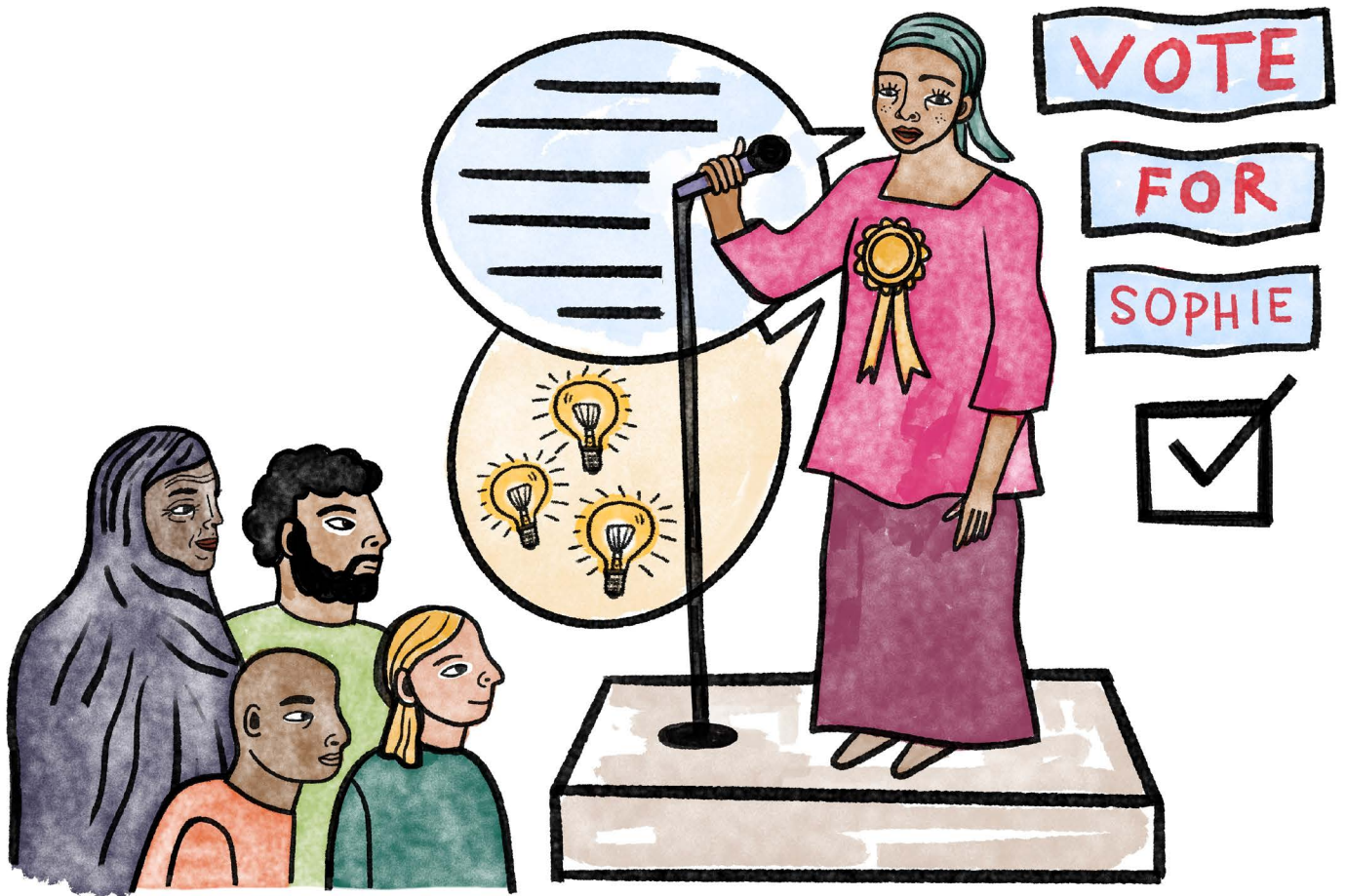
There should be easy-to-understand information on how to make a complaint.

Someone else can help you make a complaint. This could be a support person of your choice, a civil society organisation or a lawyer.

You can also talk to a disabled people's organisation and ask for help.

After the elections, it is useful to check how everything went and what could be improved.

If you had a good experience, consider sharing it with other people with intellectual disabilities to encourage them to take part.



Standing for election

Article 29 of the Convention says that disabled people have the right to take part in government and other decision-making groups, such as local councils.

This means that you can stand for election as a candidate.

Standing for election means wanting people to vote for you.

How organisations can help you stand for election.

You can get help to stand for election.

This help can include:

- Helping you register to stand for election
- Deciding what goals you have for your local authority
- Drafting information to share with the people who will be voting for you.



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Inclusion
international



Sightsavers