



# PLENA INTERNATIONAL

## 2023



Inclusion  
international



# PLENA INTERNATIONAL

Plena International is a project that Plena Inclusión is doing with Inclusion International. In this project self-advocates from different parts of the world meet once a month to talk about different issues that are very important for people with disabilities such as accessibility, employment, or independent living.

This document provides some interesting facts of the meetings that took place during the year 2023.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Who took part

2 Organising the meetings

3 Accessibility

4 Employment

5 De-institutionalisation

6 Independent living

7 Shadow report

8 Personal assistance

9 Feedback

10 Challenges and Changes for 2024

# WHO TOOK PART?

In 2023 we had organisations take part in the Plena International meetings and masterclasses from around the world.



## The Americas

- USA,
- Canada,
- Mexico,
- Colombia,
- Bolivia,
- Peru,
- Brazil,
- Argentina

## Asia Pacific

- China,
- India,
- Australia,
- Malaysia

## Africa

- Zambia,
- Mauritius
- DRC,
- Kenya
- Rwanda,
- South Africa,
- Malawi

## Europe

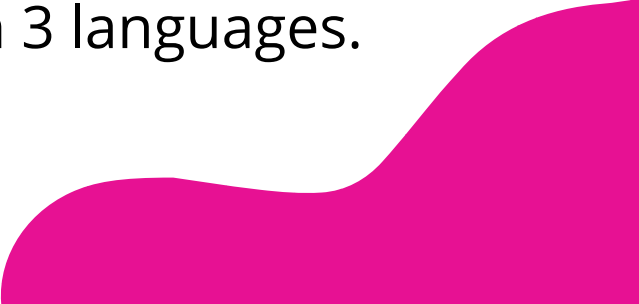
- Austria,
- UK,
- Ireland,
- Spain,
- Moldova,
- Belgium
- Scotland

## MENA

- Lebanon
- Egypt,
- UAE



# ORGANISING THE MEETINGS

- Inclusion International and Plena International worked together to organise the meetings. At the first meeting of the year, we decided on the topics we wanted to talk about during the year.
  - We created an email group for all self-advocates in the Inclusion International network. This helped more people know about the meetings.
  - We created a poster with all the dates, and topics and links to join the meetings. We shared this with our networks. [You can see it here.](#)
  - Each month we collected information before each meeting about the situations on the topic in different countries. We did this through a survey in 3 languages.
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# ORGANISING THE MEETINGS

- There were two types of meetings. Meetings and masterclasses. The meetings were discussions, and the masterclasses were more like training lessons.
  - The meetings started with some presentations by self-advocates who wanted to tell us how they were working on these issues in their countries.
  - Then we had a space where everyone could comment, ask questions and tell us about that issue in their country, or the projects they had in their organisations.
  - After the meeting we sent slides and recordings to the people who attended.
  - In the meetings we had between 20 -70 people!
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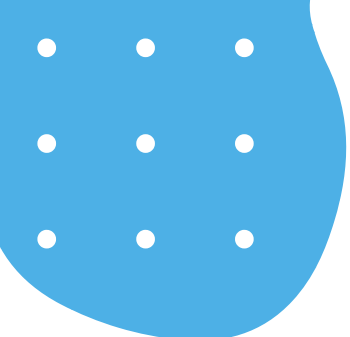


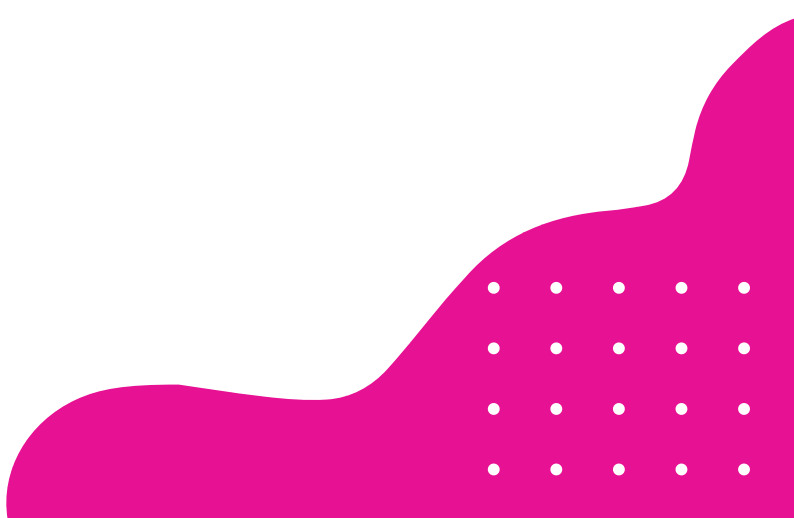
**APRIL**

# ACCESSIBILITY

Did you know...?

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises accessibility as a right for all persons with disabilities to live independently.
- In some countries cognitive accessibility is recognised in law, as in Spain.  
In other countries, such as Brazil they are starting to talk about recognising cognitive accessibility in laws.



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- In some countries such as Argentina or Austria organisations of people with disabilities trained the people who are members of Congress or Parliament in easy-to-read or easy-to-understand language.
  - In many countries there are organisations working on cognitive accessibility. People with intellectual disabilities work in many of these organisations.
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# MAY AND JUNE



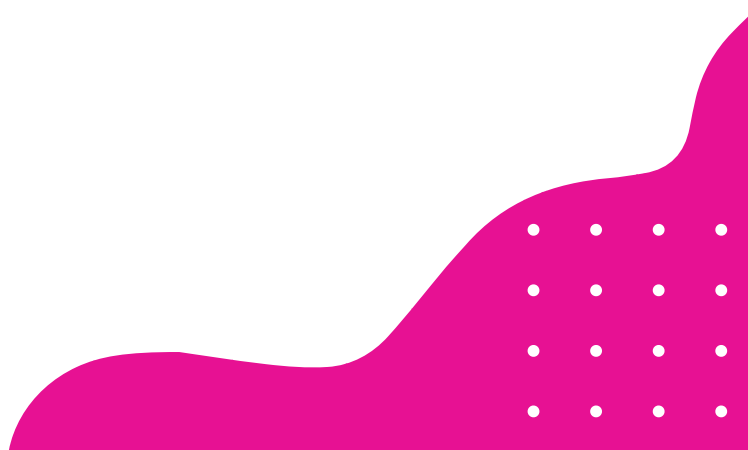
# EMPLOYMENT

Did you know...?

- Access to employment is very important to self-advocates. But there are many barriers we face in finding a paid job in the community. This includes poor attitudes of employers, sheltered workshops and inaccessible application forms.
- People with disabilities from different countries often work as an administrative worker, cleaning or gardening. In few countries people with disabilities work in public administration.



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- For people who have high support needs it is more difficult to access employment.
  - For people with disabilities in Spain who find it harder to get a job there is supported employment. It is called personalised employment.
  - In our masterclass we heard from self-advocates in the UK, Kenya, USA and México about projects they have done on inclusive employment.
  - It is important that employers respect the rights of people with intellectual disabilities during the recruitment and hiring processes.
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- It is important people with intellectual disabilities are respected as colleagues and have a chance to progress in their careers.
  - Self-advocates can train employers on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities, how to give good support and reasonable accommodations.
  - Some organisations have taken the skills of self-advocates to start businesses, such as starting Easy Read services!
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# JULY

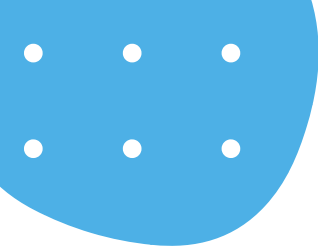


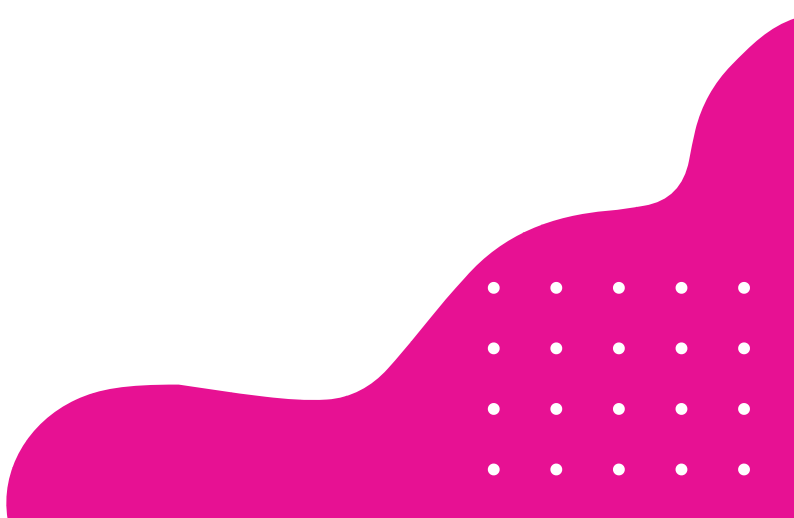
## DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

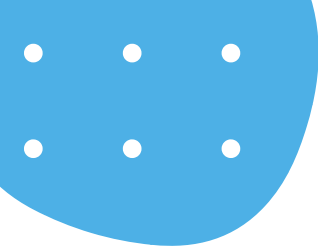
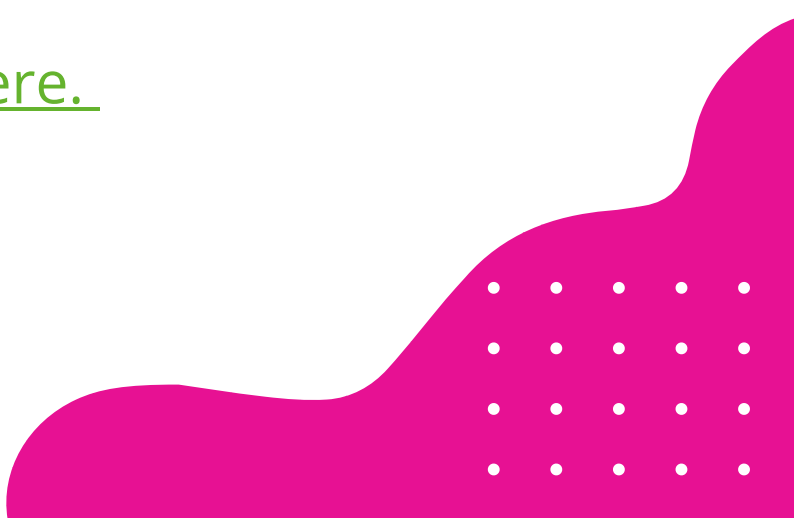
### Did you know...?

- An institution is the name we give to any place in which people with intellectual disabilities :
  - do not have control or choice over their lives
  - do not have support to make their own decisions
  - are excluded or separated from the community.
- De-institutionalisation is about moving people who live in institutions into community-based housing.





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- When people move they must also get the services they need to be supported and included in the community and to live the lives they choose.
  - This process can be very difficult and can take a long time.
  - Self-advocates around the world have worked on closing institutions for a long time.
  - We can share our ideas and experiences so that governments understand the services and support we need in the community.
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- In our masterclass we heard from self-advocates in China, UK, Spain and Egypt who have experience of institutionalisation and of moving into the community.
  - We can speak up for the people who are like us and are trapped in institutions.
  - We heard about United Nations guidelines on closing institutions and some easy videos made by self-advocates we can use to understand about deinstitutionalisation.
  - [You can see the videos here.](#)
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# SEPTEMBER

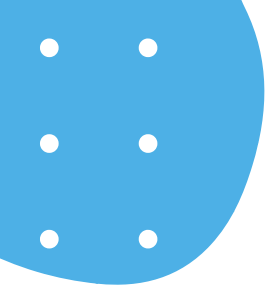

# INDEPENDENT

# LIVING

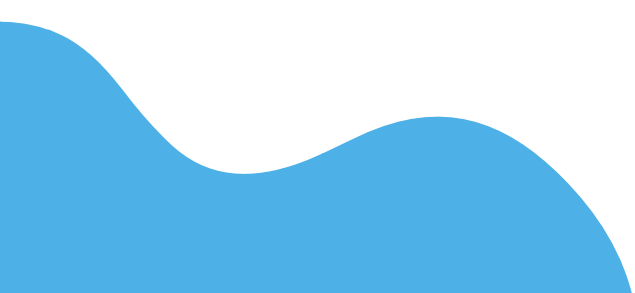

Did you know...?

- Many people with disabilities live with their families or in residential homes. Few people with disabilities live independently in the community.
- In Spain the project [Mi Casa: a life in community](#) helps people with high support needs to live independently and in the community.



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- There are many activities to do in the community that self-advocates like to do in many countries.

For example:

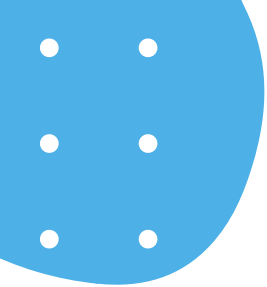


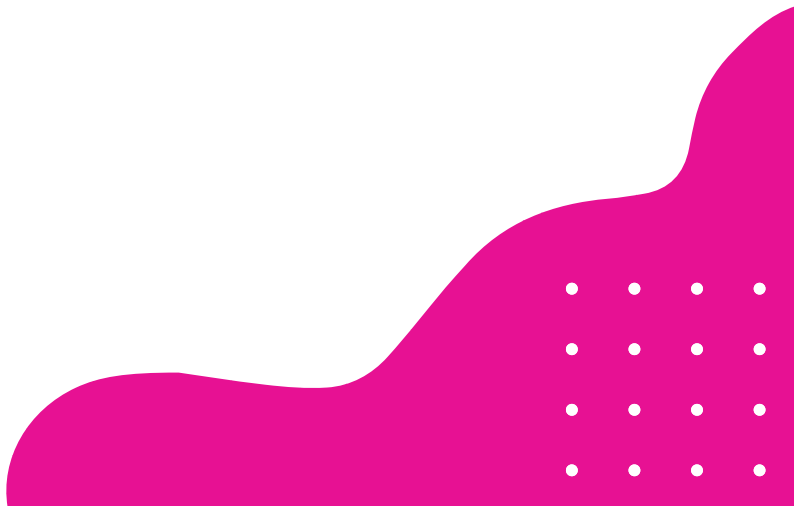
- go to the market
  - having coffee with friends
  - going to church
  - going to parties or to the cinema
  - playing sport.
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- In many countries there is no support for living in the community. Often it is the family itself that provides this support. There are also barriers that make it more difficult to live in the community, such as public transport are not accessible.
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# OCTOBER CRPD SHADOW REPORT

Did you know...?

- A shadow report is a report about the Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. The shadow report is sometimes called the 'alternative report' or 'parallel report'.
- A shadow report is sent to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities when a country is being reviewed. The Committee tells governments what they need to do so they are respecting the rights of people with disabilities.



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- Governments may not understand what day to day life for people with disabilities is like. The shadow report explains what life is really like for people with disabilities in the country, and how our rights are or are not being respected.
  - In our masterclass we heard from self advocates from Malawi, Moldova, Australia and Colombia who had taken part in writing the shadow report in their country.
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- We heard it is important self-advocates are part of the shadow reporting process. We can explain what life is like for people with intellectual disabilities in our countries and what needs to change.
- We heard that the shadow reporting process can be long and difficult because lots of different disability organisations must be included.
- The issues that are important to us should come directly from us and should be included in the report. Our organisations can help us by:
  - making sure meetings are inclusive,
  - that we are trained on our rights
  - that we have good support,
  - that we have accessible information.

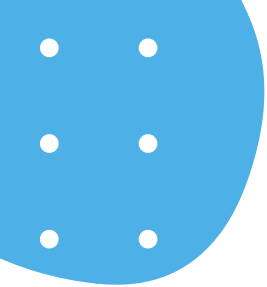


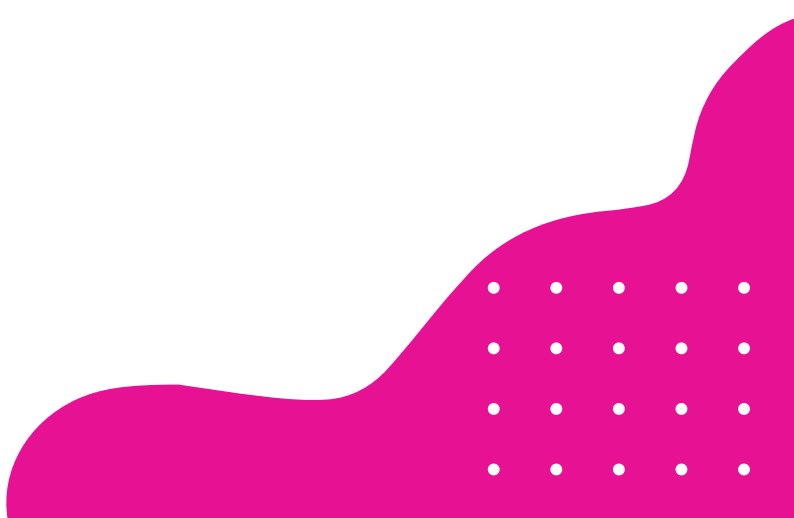
# NOVEMBER PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

Did you know...?

- Personal assistance is a form of support people with disabilities to enable them to do things for themselves. It does not do things for you, it supports you so that you can do things yourself.
- In some countries, government assistance is available for personal assistance. For example, they give you money to pay for it or you can ask for the service. In other countries you have to pay for it with your own money.





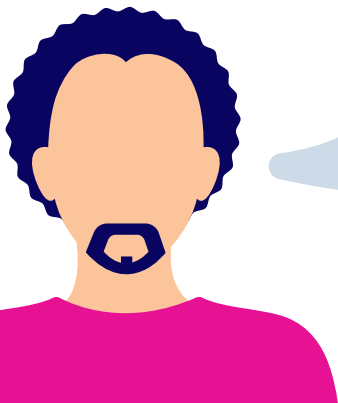
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- In Spain there are teams of self-advocates trained in independent living, personal assistance and leadership that promote personal assistance. This team informs professionals, policy makers and families who do not yet know about personal assistance.
  - In some countries, such as Scotland, there are organisations that provide the service of personal assistance. Each person chooses what support wants to receive and how they want to receive that support. You can see an example by clicking [here](#).
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# DECEMBER FEEDBACK

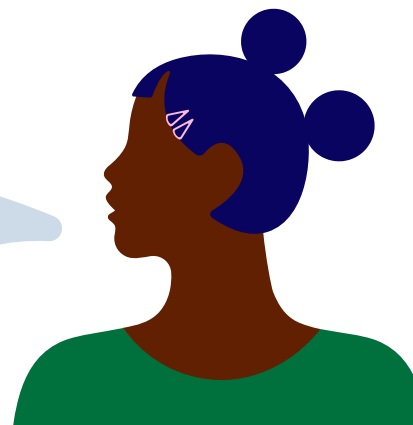
We asked self-advocates to give us feedback about our meetings and masterclasses.

We asked:

***What is the Plena International work for you?***



Plena International is a window to the world because we can learn about the experiences of people from other countries.

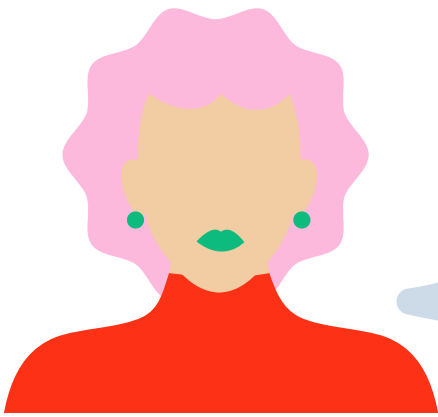


I would define it as learning.



Being able to share our experiences

***What did you most like about the meetings and masterclasses?***



What I liked most about the meetings was learning how the rights of people with intellectual disabilities work in other countries.

Exchange experiences between each other Meeting people from different parts of the world.



Down to earth interactions and insights

***What do you think we need to change for our future meetings?***

To provide different languages so that every body can follow the meeting



Plan an in person meeting. Have more time for discussions

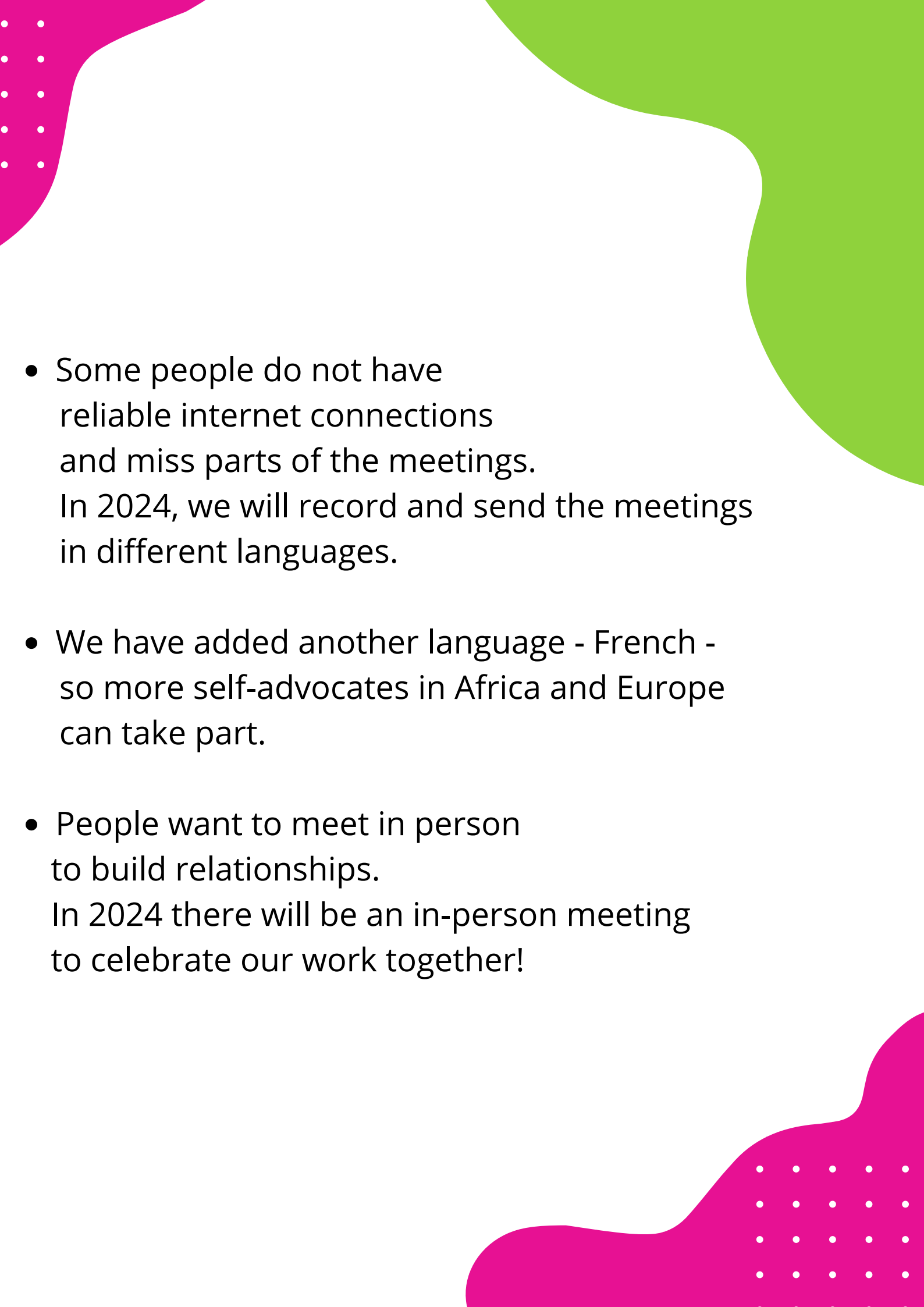


Send information and links further in advance and send recordings afterwards



# CHALLENGES AND CHANGES FOR 2024

- The meetings and masterclasses were run slightly differently, which was confusing. In 2024, all the meetings will be run the same way.
- The information was not always sent in good time. In 2024, we will have a project manager responsible for this.
- People wanted more time for discussions, so for 2024, we have more time planned and discussion questions to help.

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- Some people do not have reliable internet connections and miss parts of the meetings. In 2024, we will record and send the meetings in different languages.
  - We have added another language - French - so more self-advocates in Africa and Europe can take part.
  - People want to meet in person to build relationships. In 2024 there will be an in-person meeting to celebrate our work together!