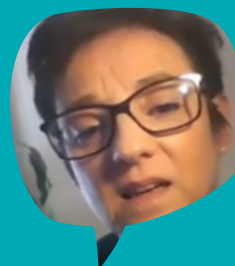




# Europe for us

**No longer invisible:  
Stories from people with  
intellectual disabilities**



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 23 to 37.

“Europe for us” is available in:

- English
- French
- German
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Romanian
- Spanish

Go to [www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us) to find the other language versions.

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# Editor's note: Importance of being a self-advocate



Hi to all our readers.



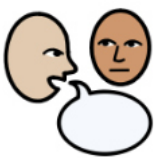
All people with intellectual disabilities have the right to become a self-advocate.



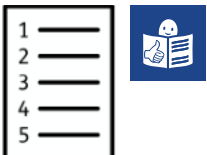
Being a self-advocate is important because it means that you can make decision about your life and who you want to live with.



To start a self-advocacy group you need to have people with intellectual disabilities in the group.



Once your group is set up the group can have meetings and they can talk about things that are important for people with intellectual disabilities. Having a self-advocacy group means that the people in the group are the ones who talk about things, and they can ask for help from their support.



You need to have an agenda for the meeting and you need to make sure the agenda is written in easy-to-read for people to follow what is being talked about.



The self-advocate group listens to what the other members of the group have to do and share their own ideas.





**I am no longer invisible**  
Senada Halilčević for  
End Segregation campaign

## What does end segregation mean to you?



End segregation means being part of the community.  
I can do everything other people do.

People notice me in the society.

People understand that I am more than my disability.  
Every day I try to show that I can do everything I want.

## Can you describe your life in the institution?



When I was 1 year old,  
I went to an institution.



When I was 7 years old,  
I went to another institution.



I could go home only for the holidays.

I could leave the institution  
when I went to the doctor.



I finished high school at an institution.  
I started high school when I was 15.  
I graduated when I was 20 years old.





I went to the third institution when I was 23.  
I stayed there for 7 years.



I don't remember much about my childhood.  
It was hard for me at school.  
My class was separated from other children.

Me and other students with disabilities  
couldn't develop our skills  
and decide for our lives.



Some of the staff at the institution  
was good and some was bad.



Once an employee raised her hand to me  
and wanted to hit me.



I could not do what I wanted.  
I could not see my family when I wanted to.  
I could not meet new people.  
I could not learn what I wanted.  
I did not know life outside the institution.

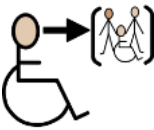
## Why do you think community-based living is important?



Living in a community is important.

People with intellectual disabilities have quality and can contribute to society.

This makes people with intellectual disabilities happy.



People with intellectual disabilities are involved and part of something bigger.



They can make decisions about their lives.

They can make friends and have hobbies.

They can look for a job with support and live as any other citizen.

## What would you like to be achieved in terms of integration and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities?

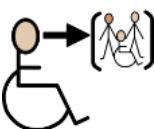


I want people with intellectual disabilities to see their potential.



To see how much they are worth and participate in the society.

I would like their voice to be heard and to show how much they can do.



I want society to understand their value and other people to accept them as equals.

## What kind of support do people with intellectual disabilities need when living outside of institutions?



People with intellectual disabilities need to learn how to be independent in the community.



Assistants are important for people with intellectual disabilities. Assistants teach them how to do things.



We need a support system that will fight for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.



The support of family and friends is very important to live an independent life outside the institutions.



**I want us to live freely and be  
members of our communities**

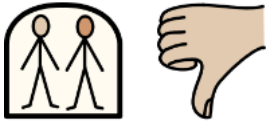
László Bercse for  
End Segregation campaign

## What does end segregation mean to you?



For me end segregation means  
living independently and being included.  
Living freely and being members of communities  
like everyone else without anyone violating our rights.

## Have you ever lived in an institution and if yes can you describe your life in the institution?



I have never lived in an institution.  
I have heard many bad experiences from  
other self-advocates.  
It is always sad to hear that they are separated  
and cannot make any decision about their lives.

## Why do you think community-based living is important?



I think community-based living is important  
because we can meet other people  
and be part of our communities.  
We can find work more easily.  
We can live independently with the right support  
and play an active role in the society.

## What would you like to be achieved in terms of integration and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities?



We need inclusive employment.

We need supported decision making instead of guardianship.

We need the right to vote.

We need inclusive education.

We need inclusive communities that support us.



## What kind of support do people with intellectual disabilities need when living outside of institutions?



People with intellectual disabilities living outside institutions need jobs to be financially independent.



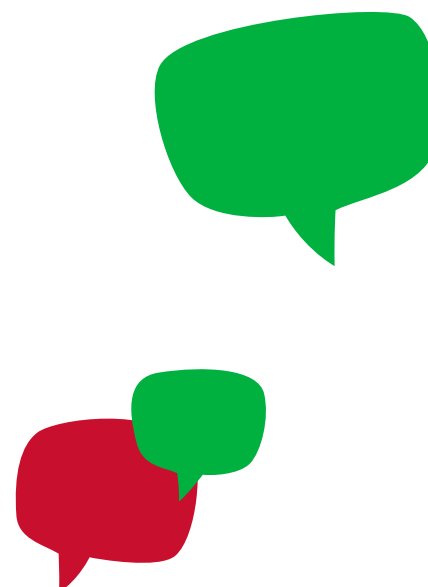
We need support services in our homes and personal budgets to choose the services we want.



We have to raise awareness about accessible information.

We need accessible information so we can be independent.





# Stories from people with intellectual disabilities in Wales

## Kelsey and Katy



Kelsey and Katy spend a lot of time together.  
They are doing a lot of activities.  
Kelsey is a volunteer at the self-advocacy group.



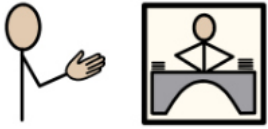
It is easier to be independent without the lockdown  
and safer to get on the buses.  
No need to rely on their parents.  
The bus service is pretty regular and reliable in their area.  
They enjoy relaxing after a busy day.



## Ffion



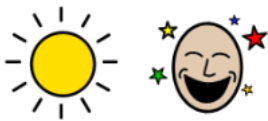
Ffion went to Cardiff with friends and to Cyprus with her family.



Ffion is happy because she got a paid job. She is the Executive Assistant.

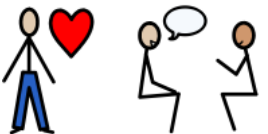


Ffion had paid employment before but she found it stressful. This time she has plenty of support from her colleagues and she loves it.



Ffion is going to have a full summer with many activities and events to attend.

## Nicole



Nicole does performances. Nicole has a boyfriend and a social life. Nicole relies a lot on her mum for transport.



Nicole voted on the last local elections. Very soon she is going to live independently.



The builders have got planning permission and she starts buying things for her house.

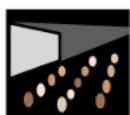


# Stories from people with intellectual disabilities in Spain

## Carlos de la Torre



Carlos lives in Seville.



Carlos said that he likes to draw,  
go to the movies  
and be with his friends.



Carlos has good relationships with people.  
Carlos works well as a team.

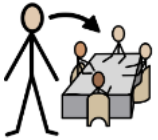




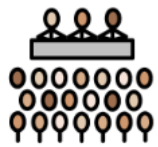
If Carlos doesn't know something  
he tries to learn it.



Carlos fights to defend the rights  
of people with intellectual disabilities.



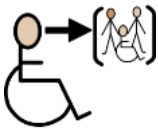
Carlos is a self-manager and  
representative of users of his organization.



Carlos said that the Valencia  
conference will be a great reunion.



Carlos said that we all have the responsibility  
to work for a better future  
and achieve inclusion for all.



No one is left out.  
All or nothing.

## María Huertas



Maria works in a dining room.  
But it's an exception.  
There are still very few women  
with intellectual disabilities who have jobs.



## Zeinabou



Zeinabou has the support she needs to enjoy inclusive education in an ordinary school.



But there is still a long way for everyone to enjoy something like this.

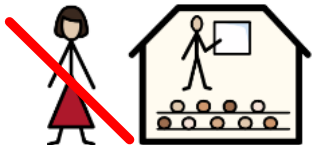
## Camino Jimenez



Camino is art historian.  
Camino now studies a graduate degree.



But Camino is an exception.



Women with disabilities usually don't have an opportunity to go to university.



People with disabilities should have the chance to live a normal life.



## Sandra Roldán



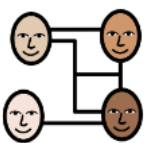
Sandra works as an administrative assistant. But there is still a long way to go for women with intellectual disabilities to study and be able to work.



## Cristina Abelenda



Cristina has spent her entire life in residences. Now Cristina finally lives independently and has a job in a company.



## Paloma Chico



The isolation of people with intellectual disabilities makes us think about building broader networks.



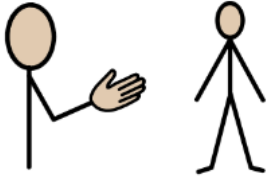
To end isolation families should open up and create projects and strategies.



Soledad Cero creates meaningful networks and contacts for people to take care of each other.



## Mauricio Palomar



During the pandemic  
Mauricio didn't feel alone  
because he had support.



Without support he could not have done  
everything he did.  
Being connected gives Mauricio more security.



# Stories from people with intellectual disabilities in Ireland



The stories come from Blossom Ireland.  
Blossom Ireland is an organization that provides skills training for young people with intellectual disabilities.



Blossom Ireland prepares people with intellectual disabilities for life as an adult.

## Lucy – Age 21



Lucy has Down Syndrome.

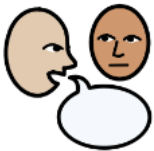
Lucy is a Special Olympics medal winner.



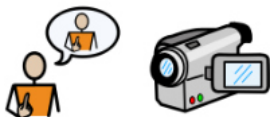
Lucy is very creative, enjoys music and she wants to become nail artist.



Lucy struggled with other people's attitudes towards herself as a person with disability.



Lucy bravely opened up,  
shared her thoughts,  
hopes and fears with the group,  
inspiring others to do the same.



Lucy even went on  
to film promotional videos for the course and  
talked about having a disability on camera.



Lucy is on a path to becoming a nail artist  
where she can showcase her creative side.

## Patrick – Age 19



Patrick has a diagnosis of Down Syndrome.

Patrick is very kind, honest and devoted to his family.

Patrick enjoys practical pranks and scaring others.

Patrick is working on improving his independence.

Patrick loves showing kindness  
and encouragement of others.



Patrick had issues facing his disability.

When he was younger,

he was bullied by a peer and

mocked because of his disability.

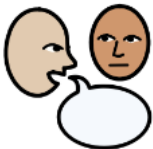


Patrick participated in a course at Blossom Ireland.

Patrick struggled to talk

about disability at the beginning.

Patrick said he is brave even when he is afraid.



Soon he was able to talk about  
disability in a positive way.

Patrick gave other participants  
positive feedback  
and words of encouragement.



After the course Patrick gave an interview  
for a national newspaper.



# European Citizen's Prize



Inclusion Europe received an award from the European Parliament for the “My Talents. For Diversity” project.



Project “My Talents. For Diversity” was funded by the European Commission.

Project partners were, Plena Inclusión, EVPIT, and Antwerp Management School.



The award is called The European Citizen's Prize. The award goes to the projects that promote European values and cooperation.



The project “My Talents. For Diversity” shared good practices around Europe about inclusion.



The project offered training to improve working conditions for people with intellectual disabilities.

# Explanations



## Accessible

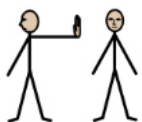
Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.  
Such as:

- Ramps to get into a building.
- Information in easy-to-read.
- Information in sign language.



## Commissioner at the European Commission

A Commissioner is a person who is responsible for a field of work at the **European Commission** and manages a lot of people.



## Discrimination

Discrimination means that you are treated worse than others or that you do not get the chances you deserve.



It is discrimination when it happens because of your disability.

It can also happen to other people.

For example, people who have a different skin colour.  
Or older people.

## Easy-to-read

Easy to read is information that is written in a simple way so that people with **intellectual disabilities** can understand.

It is important to use simple words and sentences.  
If there are words that are difficult to understand, an explanation is provided.

The text needs to be clear to see,  
for example, black writing on a white background is good.

It needs to be well-spaced.

Easy-to-read often uses pictures to explain what the text talks about.

Someone with an intellectual disability needs to check the information is easy to understand.



Easy-to-read documents often have this logo, so it is easier to find them.

There are rules on how easy-to-read should be done.



## Educate

Educate means to teach.

It means to make sure people have access to training so they can learn new skills.



## ÉFOÉSZ

ÉFOÉSZ is an association of organisations that care and support the rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability in Hungary.



## Employment

Employment is when a person works and gets paid for their work.

It is usually based on a contract between the worker and the person who provides the job.

This person is the employer.



## EPSA

The European Platform of Self-Advocates is made up of organisations of **self-advocates** from different countries in Europe.

We call it EPSA for short.

It is a part of **Inclusion Europe**.



## European Commission

The European Commission works with the **European Parliament**.

The European Commission suggests laws for the European Parliament and the **Council of the European Union** to discuss.

It also makes sure that the laws that have been decided upon are being followed by the member states.



## European Parliament

The European Parliament is a place where important decisions of the **European Union** are made. For example: laws.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs) make these decisions and speak for all the people who live in the European Union.

Every five years,  
the people who live in the European Union  
**vote** for their country's MEPs.



## European Union

The European Union (in short, EU)  
is a group of 28 countries.

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together  
to be stronger politically and economically.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the people who live in those countries.

The EU makes laws in different areas.

Some examples are:

- Laws to protect the environment.
- Laws for farmers.
- Laws to protect consumers.

A consumer is someone who buys things.

The EU also makes laws that are important for people with disabilities.

It also made a law that gives people with disabilities more rights when they are travelling.

The EU also gives money to its member states.

Some of this money is used for people with disabilities.



## European Pillar of Social Rights:

The European Pillar of Social Rights makes sure people in the European Union have new and more effective rights.



## Government

A government is a group of people that make decisions on how to run a country. For example,

- about where the money is spent,
- about public transport,
- about schools,
- about hospitals.

Every few years there are **elections** to **vote** for a new government.



## Guardianship

Guardianship allows some people to make life choices for others.

The person who makes choices for you is your guardian.

Your guardian can decide things for you, like where you live.



Sometimes, people under guardianship are not allowed to vote, get married, or take care of their kids.



## Healthcare

Healthcare is the services given to someone who is ill or who needs to take care of their health.

Healthcare involves going to the doctor, getting medicine and getting support for health problems of the body or the mind.



## Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe is an organisation for people with **intellectual disabilities** and their families.

We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.

We also want to make a difference to the laws in Europe.

We started in 1988.

We have 79 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.



## Inclusive education, training, employment

Inclusive education, training or employment means that people with **intellectual disabilities** can learn and work together with other people without disabilities.



## Institutions

Institutions are places where people with **intellectual disabilities** live with other people with intellectual disabilities.

They live apart from other people.

This is what we call “segregated”.

Sometimes this happens against their will.

People who live in institutions have to follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.

## Intellectual disability

If you have an intellectual disability,  
that means it is more difficult for you  
to understand information  
and learn new skills than it is for other people.

This makes some parts of life harder.



People with intellectual disabilities  
often need support in learning or at work.

Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult.

It affects you for your whole life.

There are things that can make life easier  
for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in **easy-to-read** language.

Some people say learning disabilities  
instead of intellectual disabilities.



## Lockdown

A lockdown happens when there is a need to control a situation that can be harmful.

During a pandemic like the one of COVID-19, the countries have lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus.



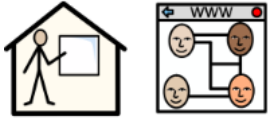
## MEPs

The members of the **European Parliament** are the **politicians** who sit in the European Parliament. We call them MEPs for short.



## NGO Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs are generally defined as nonprofit and independent of governmental influence.



## Online Schooling

Online schooling is a way for students to attend their classes using a computer or another device to connect to the internet.

These classes happen with the help of online applications for meetings or online classrooms.



## Petition

A request made for something desired, especially a respectful or humble request, as to a superior or to one of those in authority.



## Podcast

Podcast is an audio file that anyone can listen to at any time either with a podcast app, website or youtube channel.



## Policies

Actions or practices of governments and institutions.

Policies are trying to make the situation better.

Policies can be a set of rules or guidelines to follow in or to achieve a specific goal.



## Rights of people with disabilities

A right is a rule that makes sure people are protected and they can have and do what they need to live a life with respect and safety.

Rights of people with disabilities are rules that are about the lives of people with disabilities.

For example, the right to get an education, or the right to live.



## Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is when people with **intellectual disabilities** speak up for themselves.

These people are called self-advocates.



## Segregation

Segregation is when someone is set apart from others for an unfair reason.

For example, because of their disability.



## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in short, UN CRPD) is an important document.

It tries to make sure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected.



## Vote

Voting means choosing the **politicians** who represent us and make decisions for us.

You can vote in different areas.



For example:

- in your town or city  
when you elect a new mayor in your country
- when you elect a new president
- or at the European elections,  
when you choose the new  
Members of the European Parliament (**MEPs**).



## Working conditions

Working conditions is the working environment and the circumstances of the job.

This includes the working hours, legal rights and responsibilities.

Working conditions also include the work that a person does with their body or their mind.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

## Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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[bit.ly/Inclusion Europe Newsletter](http://bit.ly/Inclusion_Europe_Newsletter)



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