

Inclusion International Position Paper:

Inclusive Employment

Position papers explain what Inclusion International members think about issues that are important to people with intellectual disabilities and their families. The position papers explain what we want the world to look like.

Every country is at a different point in their journey towards inclusion. The steps we take to move toward our goal will look different in every part of the world, but Inclusion International members around the world agree that full inclusion is our goal.

What inclusive employment means:

Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) says that every person with a disability has the right to work in an “open, inclusive, and accessible” workplace.

To Inclusion International, inclusive employment happens when people with intellectual disabilities have a job that they chose themselves, in a place where:

- People with disabilities and people without disabilities work together and are treated as equals
- Everyone gets the support they need to do their job
- Everyone is valued and treated like they belong
- Everyone is paid fairly for their work, and people with disabilities are paid equally to people without disabilities.

Places where people with disabilities have jobs separately from people without disabilities are not examples of inclusive workplaces – these are called sheltered workshops.

Inclusive employment is not something that is just for people with disabilities. Inclusive workplaces are open to everyone, and are places where everyone can get the support they need there, including people with intellectual disabilities.

This means that when we talk about inclusive employment, we also want other people who might need more support at work to get it. For example, in an inclusive workplace, families and carers would also get the support and flexibility they need to do their jobs.

Where we are:

Around the world, people with intellectual disabilities are excluded from workplaces.

Some examples of the challenges people face are:

- People with intellectual disabilities are discriminated against because some people do not understand intellectual disability or have wrong ideas about what it means.
- Businesses also have the wrong ideas about what skills people with intellectual disabilities can bring to their workplace.

- People with intellectual disabilities are sometimes labelled as “not fit to work” or “unemployable” by employers and communities.
- When people do not have access to inclusive education, it is harder for them to get a job.
- Many people get pushed into sheltered workshops instead of real jobs in the community. People also sometimes get stuck in job training programmes that keep teaching them skills but never help them use those skills in a real job.
- In some countries people with intellectual disabilities will lose their benefits if they work, which means they will be worse off and have less money if they get a job.
- People’s right to make decisions (this is called legal capacity) not being respected means that they cannot sign job contracts or open bank accounts to get their pay, which makes it hard to get an keep a job.

When people with intellectual disabilities do get a job, they also face many challenges at work that make it harder to keep their job :

- Employers sometimes pay people with intellectual disabilities less than people without disabilities to do the same job
- Many people do not get the support or adjustments they need at work because employers do not know how to give good support
- People can be discriminated against or bullied by their co-workers at work

All people with intellectual disabilities face barriers like these to getting and keeping work, but some groups – like women with intellectual disabilities or people with higher support needs – have even more challenges being included in work.

Families of people with intellectual disabilities can also be excluded from work. Families are usually the main people giving support and care, which can take time away from their jobs. If families and caregivers do not have flexible jobs that support them to take time off for their families when they need it, they might not be able to work.

Our Goal :

Real jobs for real pay are a human right.

Inclusion International demands that the right to work in inclusive workplaces in the community become a reality. This means:

- Governments and organizations must stop running and spending money on sheltered workshops.
- People with intellectual disabilities who work in sheltered workshops must get support to move to jobs in workplaces that are inclusive.

- People with intellectual disabilities who want to learn specific skills to help them get a job should have access to inclusive job training opportunities.
- Information about employment rights and getting a job must be available in accessible formats, like plain language or Easy Read.
- Governments must make laws and policies that support full inclusion and good support at work. For example, they must make sure that people with intellectual disabilities get the same protection from employment laws and unions as everyone else.
- Governments must remove barriers in other systems that make it more difficult for people to get and keep work. For example, this means making sure that public transportation is accessible and that people with disabilities who get benefits from their social protection system do not lose them when they start working.

- People with intellectual disabilities must get different types of support on the job, including adjustments (this is also called reasonable accommodation) when they need it.
- Families of people with intellectual disabilities must also get support on the job and adjustments when they need it.
- Employers and co-workers of people with intellectual disabilities should have access to the training and support they need to help them make their workplaces inclusive.
- People with intellectual disabilities must be treated with respect and treated as equals in their workplaces.

Our goal is a world where all people with intellectual disabilities have access to paid jobs that they chose themselves in inclusive workplaces with good support and opportunities to grow. Families should get the support they need in their workplaces to deliver good support and care, and employers have the tools they need to make sure their workplaces include everyone.