

Inclusion
international



2023

Annual Report





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President's Message

The world changes every day. We solve problems and new ones arise. As we work to guarantee the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their families, we recognise growing challenges from climate change, natural disasters, political movements, violence, war, ethnic violence, gender inequality, and ableism.

Our strategy – **to build a stronger network and better connections among our members** – is a source of new and better solutions every day.

Your work and your connections with each other are helping. Inclusion International's worldwide network continues to be a source of inspiration, solutions to problems, and even peace in the world.

Looking back on 2023, we have achieved a lot:

- We provided our members more ways to learn together and strategise through new **working groups** and continued **discussion groups** from 2022.
- We received recognition from the UN, with the **Listen Include Respect** recognised within the UN Resolution on Easy-to-Understand Communications.
- We advocated for our movement, achieving our highest social media engagement ever at **COSP16**.
- We strengthened the work of our members, supporting self-advocates in our network to develop a new **Southern African self-advocacy strategy**.

A first-rate Secretariat and staff continues to support you and your work, and I join you in thanking them for the commitment and capability they bring to our movement.

Our achievements give us courage to meet even more challenges. Our advocacy priorities for 2024 include celebrating the **30th anniversary of the Salamanca Declaration**, shaping the post-2030 **Pact for the Future**, and developing partnerships to ensure inclusive reforms surrounding **care and support**.

Keep an eye out for the save-the-date announcement for Sharjah, UAE in September 2025! Face-to-face meetings are irreplaceable. Let's build on our strengths and build the movement.

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 now represents over 200 member federations in 115 countries throughout five regions, including 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 come together through our **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

EASY-TO-
UNDERSTAND REPORT

We influenced the process leading to the UN's Resolution on Easy-to-Understand Communication. A self-advocate represented our movement in the UN expert group meeting in April 2023, and we participated in the half-day meeting during COSP16. Over 7 representatives from the Inclusion International network contributed at the event. As a result, **the LIR guidelines were recognized in the resolution.**

June

CONFERENCE OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE CRPD

Our network had strong representation at **COSP16**, hosting and speaking at **10 side events**. We collaborated with the COSP bureau chair to make the conference more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities. Working with the IDA, we made the Civil Society Forum more accessible by creating an easy-to-understand agenda, presenting an accessibility tips video at the plenary, and sharing a guidance note with all speakers.

July

DEINSTITUTIONALISATION
GUIDELINES

We published a series of accessible videos on the **CRPD Committee Guidelines for Deinstitutionalisation, including in Emergencies**. These videos were created with the help of self-advocates with lived experience in institutions and are now available on the UN CRPD Committee website.

August

OHCHR REPORT

We contributed to the **OHCHR report** on “Good practices of support systems enabling community inclusion of persons with disabilities” through written contributions and online consultations.

2023

POLITICAL
DECLARATION OF THE
SDG SUMMIT

We contributed to the disability movement’s efforts to influence the political declaration of the UN’s **Sustainable Development Goals Summit** in September by commenting on drafts, organising members to contact delegates, and sending unified letters.

Our joint efforts, along with other disability groups and UN agencies, led to the inclusion of references to people with disabilities throughout the declaration.





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 programme to support the growth of self-advocacy leadership.

Empower Us was developed following Inclusion International's 2016 global report Self-Advocacy for Inclusion.

In 2023, Inclusion International conducted training sessions in Zambia and Angola to empower self-advocates, led by Mark, a self-advocate, and project manager. In Jordan, Salma, a self-advocate from Egypt, introduced the concept of self-advocacy to 74 women living in an institution through easy games, helping them decide if they would like to participate in more detailed Empower Us training in 2024.

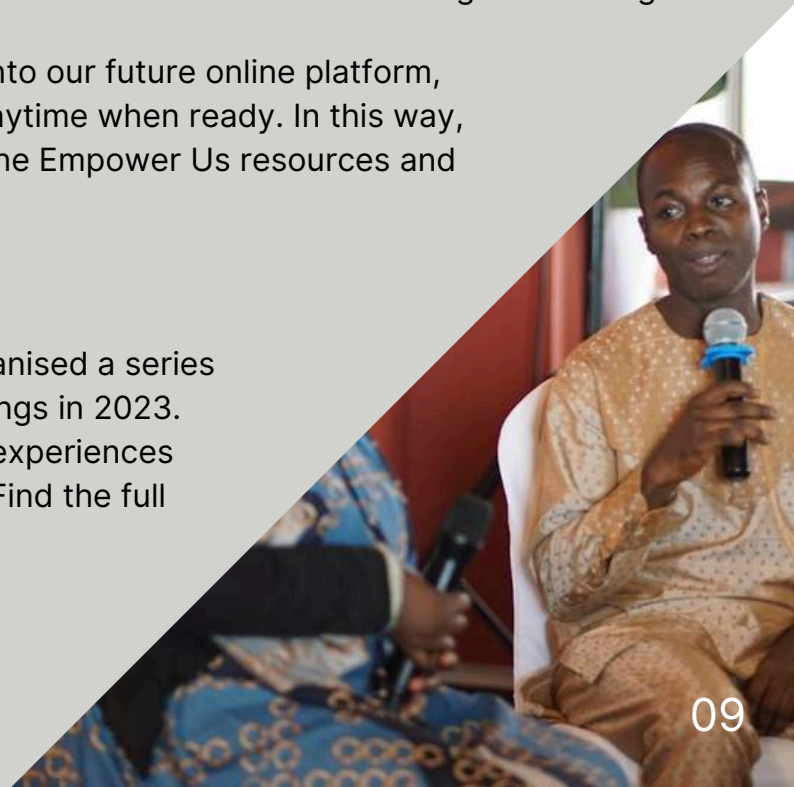
In each country, we supported 15 self-advocates with their support persons. The training covers topics about Inclusion, making decisions and speaking up, advocacy, human rights, United Nations, Articles in the CRPD and making advocates. Through this training:

- Members are including self-advocates in leadership positions.
- Self-advocates advocate for themselves and others with member support, for example, as part of CRPD shadow reporting.
- A self-advocate was hired to work for our member in Zambia following the training.

We are putting the Empower Us training onto our future online platform, where members can access the training anytime when ready. In this way, more members will have a chance to use the Empower Us resources and training.

Plena International

In partnership with Plena Inclusión, we organised a series of international online self-advocacy meetings in 2023. These groups meet regularly to exchange experiences and learn about self-advocacy strategies. Find the full report on Plena Internacional [here](#).



Programmes

Key achievements



Listen Include Respect

The Listen Include Respect guidelines help organisations understand what it means to be an inclusive organisation.

Our network created the guidelines with the network of Down Syndrome International.

This resource gives 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.

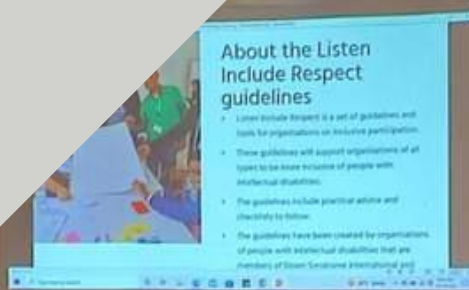
In 2023, we supported stakeholders such as the International Disability Alliance, the International Rescue Committee, and UN DESA in using the guidelines in their work. Working closely with self-advocate consultants in our network, we made sure there was leadership from people with intellectual disabilities in this work.

We also supported members in using the guidelines; for example, we worked closely with Keystone in the USA to run a session for service users and their support workers to plan how to use the guidelines in service delivery.

Members advocated using Listen Include Respect to influence a UN resolution on Easy-To-Understand communication. In June, self-advocate members from Argentina, Kenya, Brazil, Australia, Canada and the USA spoke at a United Nations General Assembly meeting. The result is that Listen Include Respect is recommended as a resource States should refer to when working on Easy-To-Understand.

We used the guidelines to help us design and plan many projects we worked on this year. Self-advocate experts in our network trained project partners on the guidelines and helped create accessible project tools and resources.

Our work on creating online Listen Include Respect training for members continued and should be ready to share with members in 2024.



Programmes

Key achievements



Catalyst for Inclusive Education

Catalyst for Inclusive Education is Inclusion International's global programme to promote inclusive education.

It connects members with experts to help make inclusive education a reality in their countries. The programme includes regional response teams from Inclusion International members and expert advisors who offer technical guidance.

In 2023, Catalyst expanded its regional groups due to increased interest in inclusive education. Members discussed new activities focusing on advocacy, thematic sessions, and masterclasses available on the II e-learning platform.

Catalyst Expert Advice Sessions

In 2023, Catalyst held two expert advice sessions focusing on Zanzibar and Afghanistan. Members presented the challenges of inclusive education in their countries and received support from experts and other members.

Thematic Sessions

At the 2023 Conference of State Parties, UNESCO and Inclusion International co-organised a side event on inclusive education, discussing challenges, innovative policies, lived experiences, and strategies for equitable education.

On September 26, 2023, the Global Education Monitoring Report and Inclusion International presented findings on technology in education for students with disabilities, highlighting good practices and remaining challenges.





Projects

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

Projects

Key achievements

New Project Launches in 2023

In 2023, we did project planning with our members to get ready for lots of work in 2024.

These are the new projects we started setting up in 2023:

Education in Emergencies

We started working on a new project in Niger and Colombia funded by ECW. The project is all about making it easier for children with disabilities living in emergency situations to get inclusive education.

Youth & Advocacy in Eastern Europe

We started working with Inclusion Europe and with our members in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia on a new project about helping these countries have stronger self-advocacy and to grow their work on closing institutions.

Helping Humanitarian Organisations be More Inclusive

We started working with the International Rescue Committee to learn what girls with intellectual disabilities need when they are living in emergency situations. Our members in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso are part of the project.

Legal Capacity and Sexual and Reproductive Health

We started a new project with our partner Women Enabled. We are working with our members in Spain, the USA and Kenya and psychosocial disability organisations in Fiji and Indonesia. We will talk to women with disabilities about their right to make decisions around their sexual and reproductive health. We will make new resources about the right to make decisions on sexual and reproductive health.

Projects

Key achievements

Deinstitutionalisation in Jordan

Inclusion International is leading a European Union-funded project in Jordan, partnering with Humanity & Inclusion - Jordan. The project, running until 2025, aims to help women with intellectual disabilities transition from institutions to community living, supporting Jordan's national deinstitutionalisation strategy.

In 2023, we:

- Began implementing the project at Tafilah institution in southern Jordan.
- Conducted training for 30 staff members on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and person-centered approaches.



Inclusion International also focused on:

- Training women in Jordan with intellectual disabilities living in institutions. Using the Empower Us program, Inclusion International provided training on self-advocacy and basic skills to 74 women.
- Creating an advisory group to guide the project that shares experiences with deinstitutionalization and offers recommendations for the project.



Projects

Key achievements

Self-Advocacy in Southern Africa

With our members in Zambia and Angola, we started a new project about self-advocacy this year.

This project is funded by the Government of Finland.

The big goal of this project is to support Inclusion Africa and its members in Southern Africa create strong groups of self-advocates who can start making change in their communities.

Through the project in 2023, we:

- Trained 30 people with intellectual disabilities in Zambia and Angola to become self-advocates
- Supported our members in Zambia and Angola to start 2 new self-advocacy groups - these were the first self-advocacy groups in their countries!
- Supported the new self-advocates groups in Zambia and Angola to do advocacy in their communities - through this project, they talked to their governments about their rights, trained people in the community, held events, and talked to the media.
- Supported Inclusion Africa's self-advocates to create a self-advocacy strategy for the region.

The whole project is also run to be inclusive based on the Listen Include Respect guidelines. This means that self-advocates are in the lead on the project and everything is done in an accessible way - from our project planning to our reports.

Next year, the project will continue and the self-advocacy groups in Zambia and Angola will keep advocating for their rights in their communities.



Projects

Key achievements

Building Resources for Families Advocacy

Groups of families around the world are doing advocacy to make their communities more inclusive, and the big goal of this project is to help make those family groups stronger.

This work is funded by the Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI), which is a fund run by the World Bank. The IEI funds projects that create resources that will help make education systems more inclusive.

Through interviews and focus groups with families in Kenya, Zanzibar, Benin, Peru, and Nicaragua, we heard directly from family groups about what information and tools they need to grow their advocacy work.

We then worked with our members in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa to build those tools and resources that families asked us for.

In 2023, we:

- Created 8 practical tools that our members can use to help new family groups come together, build a vision, and start doing advocacy work
- Created 8 practical tools that family groups can use to make their advocacy on inclusive education stronger
- Published 1 report about how the work of local family groups has led to real change for inclusive education

In the year to come, we will work with members to test the new tools so we can make them available to the whole network later in the year.



Projects

Key achievements

Legal Capacity with Women Enabled

We started a new project with our partner Women Enabled.

We are working with our members in Spain, the USA and Kenya.

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

Through this project we will talk to women about their right to make decisions around their sexual and reproductive health. We will make new resources about the right to make decisions on sexual and reproductive health for girls and women with disabilities.

The project runs between 2023 and 2025.

In 2023 we:

- Trained our partners at Women Enabled on Listen Include Respect
- Worked closely with Women Enabled to prepare for inclusive and accessible focus groups
- Supported Women Enabled to create accessible resources for our partners
- Worked with Women Enabled and our member in Spain to run focus groups co-led by self-advocates for 20 women with intellectual disabilities

In 2024 our members in the USA and in Kenya will run their focus groups. We will continue to provide our members and Women Enabled support with the project.



Projects

Where did we work with our members in 2023?



Self-Advocacy in Southern Africa

Angola, Zambia



Youth & Advocacy in Eastern Europe

Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia



Deinstitutionalisation in Jordan

Jordan



Legal Capacity and Sexual and Reproductive Health

United States, Spain, Kenya



Building Resources for Families Advocacy

Zanzibar, Peru, Nicaragua, Kenya, Benin



Helping Humanitarian Organisations be More Inclusive

Burkina Faso, Ethiopia



Education in Emergencies

Colombia, Niger





Connecting Members

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

Connecting Members



Throughout 2023, members came together in-person for regional events and project meetings to connect together as a network.

We met with members in Nairobi, Kenya for a regional Self-Advocacy gathering, in New York for COSP, in Estonia for the Hear Our Voices! Self-Advocacy Conference, and across the world for Empower Us trainings.

We also created spaces for our members to work together online through **new working groups** and **new discussion groups** that brought our members together around shared interests.

The new Working Groups covered topics on Deinstitutionalisation, Employment, Siblings, and Inclusive Development.

The new Working Groups and our Discussion Groups that continued from 2022 met 18 times over 2023.



Looking ahead to 2025, our movement will be connecting in person again at the 2025 World Congress in Sharjah, U.A.E.



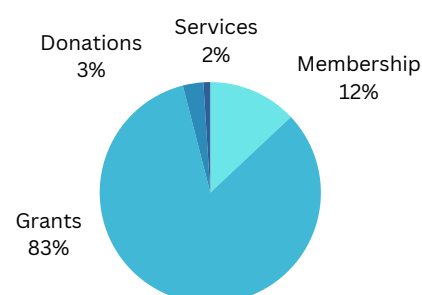
We are working directly with our member, Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services to develop a programme and space for our members to explore what it means to be inclusive, globally. We look forward to seeing you in the U.A.E.!

Financial Report

Financial Summary

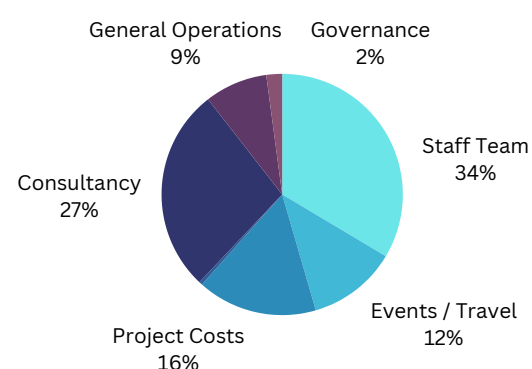
All figures are in USD. Financial activities for the years ending 31/12/2022 and 31/12/2023.

Income 2023



	2023	2022
Income		
Membership Income & Donations	154,001	132,750
Other Income	16,816	422
Grants	811,400	957,003
Investment	885	146
Total Income	983,102	1,090,321
Total Expenses		
	994,477	1,141,810
Net Incoming / (outgoing) resources	(11,375)	(51,489)

Expenses 2023



	2023	2022
Assets		
Debtors (money we are owed)	58,021	182,547
Liabilities (money we owe to other people)	105,054	93,970
Net Assets	826,563	839,787
Funds		
Restricted Funds (for programmes and projects)	488,810	568,754
Designated Funds	183,817	117,098
Unrestricted Funds	153,936	153,935
Total	826,563	839,787

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



Tim Gadd: Treasurer



Nagase Osamu: Secretary General



Jyrki Pinomaa: Co-Opted Officer



Jimmy Innes: Co-Opted Officer



Regional Representatives



Gabriela Martínez Olivares: representative for the Americas, Mexico



Dominique Kantor: self-advocate representative for the Americas, Colombia



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 for Africa, 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

Federica Settimi, Programme Manager - Inclusive Education

Ailis Hardy, Programme Manager - Self-Advocacy

Manel Mhiri, Global Advocacy Manager

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