



#WhatWENeed 2026

Claiming our Freedom, Living our Rights

Background: Since its inception in 2018, #WhatWENeed has been a space for persons with psychosocial disabilities and our allies to share our realities, work and aspirations for inclusion. The campaign has consistently affirmed that *'we are persons with disabilities and holders of all human rights'* as guaranteed by the CRPD. It gives a platform for our members to present their work and advocacy to a wider global audience, and to learn from each other's experiences across countries, cultures and contexts.

In 2026, as we mark twenty years of the CRPD, we continue this reflection on how far we have travelled and how much further we need to go. The CRPD gave our movement the identity, language and tools to aspire for fuller and self-determined lives. **'Claiming our Freedom, Living our Rights'** speaks to our continuing advocacy to be free from torture, coercion and exclusion, and to exercise our rights in everyday life; to make our own decisions, live in our communities and pursue our life goals on an equal basis with others. This year's campaign invites members, partners and networks to share what this means in their own lives and contexts, the barriers that remain, and the practices and possibilities emerging within our communities.

Building on our core thematics, #WhatWENeed 2026 also creates space for emerging issues shaping our lives and movements today, as informed by our membership. We welcome stories, reflections, creative expressions, practice examples and analyses across the following thematics.



TCI pays our respect and homage to our esteemed Founder Director, **Dr. Bhargavi Davar**, who steered the vision of TCI and launched this campaign in 2018, with the support of Steering Committee members. We dedicate and launch all successive #WhatWENeed campaigns to honour her life, her work, and her legacy.



Core Thematics

1. Deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization remains an unfinished human rights agenda, and in many contexts, an uninitiated one. Despite recognition in high-level policy forums and among stakeholders including UN, that institutionalization is a form of disability-based violence and a site of widespread human rights violations, persons with psychosocial disabilities in all corners of the world continue to languish in institutions; formal or informal, small or large. Our movement has long documented the horrors of institutionalization and its human cost; the lives, dreams and aspirations denied, and the struggle to be treated as human beings with rights, on an equal basis with others.

OPDs across the world have been mobilizing support and developing practices to advance deinstitutionalization in our own ways and contexts. We need the world to sit up and listen to our reflections, our stories, our practice-based evidence, the dilemmas and challenges we face, and the successes we have achieved. Our demand is not just to close large institutions and transfer us into smaller homes or other segregated settings, but to realize our right to live in our communities, dismantle institutional thinking and secure freedom from ill-treatment and torture in all its forms.



Call for Submissions

We invite members to share their experiences and practices, including rights-based crisis support, and their demands of States and other stakeholders to move deinstitutionalization forward. We also invite our networks and allies to contribute their reflections on deinstitutionalization practices, experiences of visiting institutions in their regions, and how they have supported, or can support, the advocacy of the movement of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

2. Community Inclusion

The concept of community inclusion has been twisted, tweaked and adapted to suit whoever speaks about it. Its growing visibility has also meant that it is increasingly interpreted through the lens of stakeholders' convenience rather than through the CRPD lens. We have witnessed the dilution of the concept to mean only the provision of personal assistance, or bringing mental health services closer to our homes, and, more recently, the promotion of care rights over support, reinforcing paternalistic approaches to our lives. It is an unfortunate reality that these limited versions of community inclusion are propagated, and their shortcomings are then cited as failures of deinstitutionalization process.

We understand that the way inclusion comes to life cannot be universalized. Yet, our members' collective experience shows that there are shared principles, concepts and practices grounded in rights-based approaches that hold true across contexts. Within TCI, we

have always aspired to live in our communities, with reasonable accommodations and support. For us, it means living violence-free lives in our communities and the right to make our own decisions. It means access to housing, lifelong learning and participation in social and economic life that respects diversity, with space for leisure, sports, spiritual pursuits, friendships, relationships and play.



Call for Submissions

We invite our members to share their own visions and understandings of community inclusion: what works for us, what does not, and what makes inclusion meaningful in our everyday lives. We welcome tools or guidelines that members have found useful. We also invite our partners and allies to reflect on how their understanding of community inclusion has changed over the years, what they have learned from OPD-led practices and models, and how these learnings have shaped their own work.

3. Access to Justice

None of the rights discussed above can be fully realized for persons with psychosocial disabilities as long as we are denied legal capacity and the right to decide, either formally through discriminatory laws or informally through others overriding our will and preferences. Labels such as ‘mental patient’, ‘mentally ill’ or ‘person of unsound mind’ become legally codified identities that deny our personhood. These violations shape our everyday lives; where and with whom we live, what we eat, whether we can make decisions about our own bodies, who we enter into relationships with, and whether we can hold a bank account, own property or run our own business.

Historically, people who have departed from social norms, challenged social hierarchies or gender roles, or differed from society’s ‘sanist’ expectations have been subjected to control. Our movement have long challenged these violations in law and everyday practice. Our peers have developed ways of practicing supported decision making that respect one’s will and preferences, advocated against mental health legislation that continue to promote coercion, and pursued strategic litigation to challenge disability-based discrimination. We have also attempted to analyze our countries’ legal landscapes to identify entry points, and explored and practised restorative, transformative and community based approaches to justice.



Call for Submissions

We invite members to share what these efforts have made possible, where they have encountered resistance, and what remains unresolved. We welcome reflections on the role of peer support in exercising the right to decide, lessons from legal challenges that succeeded or failed, and experiences of seeking justice within communities. We also invite our networks and allies to share how they are working alongside our movement to make legal recognition, choice and access to justice a reality in our everyday lives.

4. Intersectional Identities & Issues

Persons with psychosocial disabilities live at the intersections of multiple identities, which shape both our experiences of exclusion and our ways of finding support and belonging. These intersections shape our experiences of disability-based violence, including gender-based, reproductive, healthcare and psychiatric violence, restrictions on bodily autonomy and parenting, exclusion from political participation and social and cultural life, and barriers during migration and displacement. They also raise concerns about medical assistance in dying being offered more readily than the support we need to live with dignity in our communities. These intersections further influence whose voices, knowledge and leadership are recognized within and across our own and allied movements.



Call for Submissions

We invite contributions from and about women, gender-diverse persons, young people, children, older persons, indigenous and rural communities, racialized groups, asylum seekers and refugees. We welcome experiences of how these barriers come together, and practices that respond to people's lives in their full diversity. We also invite reflections on the CRPD Committee's Guidelines on addressing intersectional discrimination AND Guidelines on identifying and addressing disability-based violence, and how these guidelines could make our experiences visible, strengthen our advocacy and support demands for accountability in our own contexts.

Emerging thematic

5. **Climate crises and disasters** are affecting communities across our membership, yet persons with psychosocial disabilities remain largely excluded from climate frameworks, planning and responses, including within the formal UNFCCC processes. Institutionalization, denial of legal capacity and stereotypes compound this exclusion, while people in institutions face risks of being left behind during disasters. Responses continue to focus narrowly on treatment and medication, ignoring our rights to housing, land, livelihoods, safety and community inclusion.

Through #WhatWENeed 2026, we invite members to share how climate disasters have affected their lives and communities, the barriers they have encountered, and the innovative ways they have sustained themselves and supported one another. We also welcome experiences of engaging in climate advocacy and reflections on what governments, donors and other stakeholders must do to support OPD-led practices and ensure our inclusion in climate justice and promote community living instead of institutional models as the default solution. With the recent adoption of General Comment 9 & 10 on Article 11 of the CRPD, we also welcome submissions analysing these key documents, reflecting on how they address issues raised by our movement during the consultations, and identifying advocacy actions and plans to put them into practice.



6. **Economic justice** is closely connected to our ability to make choices and live in the community. Persons with psychosocial disabilities are often invisible within data collection, inclusive budgeting and social protection systems, and subjected to economic abuse by people around them. We continue to face barriers in accessing income support, employment opportunities, universal health coverage and essential mainstream services, while disability assessments in many countries remain medicalized and outdated. Current data tools like the Washington Group Questions often fail to adequately capture persons with psychosocial disabilities in census and surveys, further making our constituency invisible in policymaking. These barriers keep pushing our peers into poverty, leaving them with no means to survive and thrive in our communities.

We welcome contributions on experiences of economic abuse, loss or gain of access to and control over money and resources, and social protection that responds to the lives of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Members are invited to share mechanisms, practices, advocacy and models that support economic security, inclusive budgeting, and reflect on the barriers that prevent people from benefiting from these supports.



7. **Digital rights and assistive technology** are increasingly shaping how we access information, services and opportunities, and how we connect and organize. Technology can make everyday life more accessible through translations, accessibility features and tools for communication and decision-making. At the same time, technology can enable abuse, surveillance and violations of confidentiality. Psychiatric histories and other personal information may be recorded, shared or made public without our consent. Records that follow us across services and settings can expose us to discrimination, with little control over who accesses them or how they are used. The effects of artificial intelligence also raise questions about whose assumptions shape these systems and how they affect our rights.

Through #WhatWENeed 2026, we invite members to share both the possibilities and the challenges of how technologies have made their lives more accessible, experiences of digital exclusion or abuse, and practices that protect privacy and choice. We welcome reflections on access to assistive technology and how we can shape its design and use, while retaining control over our information.



Miscellaneous

We also invite our members and networks to send us lead articles, advocacy manifestos, declarations, projects and good practice examples of their work on **topics crucial to them**. We welcome reflections on how movements and OPDs are responding to funding cuts, democratic backlash and shrinking civic space, including innovations, flexibility from partners and donors, and solidarity that have helped sustain their work. We also invite contributions documenting our movement's histories and the leaders, including those no longer with us, whose work and knowledge have shaped our journey, keeping their contributions visible and carrying their learnings forward.



Process of making submissions

Submission formats



Submission process

Please send your submissions to secretariat@tci-global.org

All the submissions will be reviewed by TCI Secretariat. We will be in touch with you if there is any feedback or if we have any questions regarding the submission. All reviewed and accepted submissions will then be uploaded on our campaign website, <https://whatweneed.in/>

Please feel free to explore the website to check our campaign archives.

NOTE: Kindly note that this is a voluntary campaign, and we do not have funding available to support any activities. However, we are happy to provide technical support for your submissions