TCI’s Annual Advocacy Campaign

#WhatWENeed

A Campaign Report

2023

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About TCI

Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI) is a global Organization of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities [an OPD]. TCI forecasts a future in which all human rights and full freedoms of persons with psychosocial disabilities are realized. Empowered by the extraordinary vision and guidance of the CRPD, TCI’s purpose is to situate ourselves at the center of the cross-disability movements at the national, regional, and global levels, to reclaim our dignity and autonomy, experience our independence and to realize our right to live in the community. The identity of ‘Persons with psychosocial disabilities’ has been derived from the CRPD description of disability and is inclusive of persons who identify as ‘users and survivors of psychiatry’, ‘mad’ persons’ and persons with intersectional and neurodiverse identities, including persons with psychosocial disabilities.

History of the campaign

Since 2018, when the Lancet Commission on Mental Health was issued, TCI has worked to challenge and correct the medical oppression on us, persons with psychosocial disabilities, with the #WhatWENeed Campaign. The mental health sector and allied actors, particularly variants of the movements for global mental health and INGOs, have pushed our human rights to “Right to mental health” and SDG Goal 3. Considering that framing our needs under “mental health” has, since many decades, exposed us to risks of institutionalization and cruel, inhuman and torturous treatments, frequently without choice, this restriction of our lives and needs to SDG Goal 3 is suspect. We wanted to voice out #WhatWENeed, as persons with psychosocial disabilities and not what everyone else thinks we need. The previous year’s campaigns can be located here.

Why #WhatWENeed

We are not just asking for “mental health reform” but for a transformation of worldview, policies, laws and programs impacting us and our resettlement within the disability inclusion discourse. The campaign amplified our positioning that, “We are persons with disabilities. We are holders of all human rights as provided for, in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. The campaign was also a way for our movement to reclaim the mental health week, starting the 1st week of October, to pass these key messages. Every year, the campaign has focussed on issues of topical interest at the time. Other than the issue of stopping the normative violence against us, inclusion in the SDGs, questions of our identity, political participation, support systems, de-institutionalization and various themes related to our community inclusion have been featured in the campaign by our members, partners, and allies.

1 https://tci-global.org/
2 https://tci-global.org/our-origins/
3 https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/about/
campaign gives a platform for our members to present their work and advocacy to a wider global audience.

#WhatWENeed 2023: We have a voice!

The 2023 campaign was an extension of the core thematics of TCI’s work and vision. It also allowed us to open the space for many constituencies of persons with disabilities, touching on newer themes such as climate change, disability assessment tools and highlighted intersectional identities of persons with psychosocial disabilities. There is clear recognition that persons with psychosocial disabilities, ‘mad’ persons, persons of ‘unsound mind’, and persons with intersectional, neurodiverse identities are a historically oppressed group and a path must be charted for effective and immediate deinstitutionalization. TCI’s cherished topic of “community inclusion” is building up into a global agenda for OPDs, many policy making organizations and the United Nations as well; while at the same time, several countries have still not raised the standards of inclusion and support for persons with psychosocial disabilities, striving to bring further reforms to irredeemable mental health laws. TCI has been striving to open the dialogue around community inclusion, its principles and dilemmas so that organizations and funders across the globe are able to introspect and think through their inclusion models. Following the concept of providing space for TCI members to share their works and advocacy on topical areas of interest, the 2023 campaign invited submissions on the below mentioned thematics:

![Figure 1: #WhatWENeed 2023 thematics](image-url)
From planning to execution: #WhatWENeed 2023 journey

The campaign was officially launched on October 06, 2023 and ran till December 31, 2024. The dissemination of the submissions was carried on till February 10, 2024 to give visibility to the member’s contribution. A concept note was prepared for the campaign along with a flyer. Initially, the campaign saw a slow uptake among members and networks. The Secretariat dedicated a month to reshare and repost the previous year’s submissions to refresh the vibrancy of 2022 campaign and to share ideas with members regarding the nature of submissions. The received submissions were reviewed, feedback was given to members wherever it was requested for and then approved by the Secretariat team. All the submissions were uploaded on the official campaign website and social media handles (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn). It was also ensured that all posts were uploaded on a regular basis taking into consideration design elements and accessibility.

**Key features of the 2023 campaign:** The 2023 campaign provided an opportunity for TCI to revive its Facebook page along with a dedicated Instagram handle. This was helpful as it enabled re-establishing contact with older and senior members of the TCI family. A range of explanatory posts and ideas on each thematics were also created to make them more accessible and easier to understand. The previous submissions were given a spotlight, right at the beginning, to revisit the spirit of the 2022 campaign and to share ideas for members. The two key resources of TCI, the Addis Declaration and TCI Photo story were launched along with dedicating one whole week to capture the prominent messages from each document. A short launch video along with posts were also created to disseminate both widely. The TCI Secretariat reached out to members, leaders, partners and networks to mobilize them to contribute to the campaign.

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5 [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/campaign-2023/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/campaign-2023/)
6 [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/campaign-2023/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/campaign-2023/)
7 [https://twitter.com/TCI_Global](https://twitter.com/TCI_Global)
8 [https://www.instagram.com/tci_global/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D](https://www.instagram.com/tci_global/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D)
9 [https://www.facebook.com/tciglobalopd](https://www.facebook.com/tciglobalopd)
10 [https://www.linkedin.com/company/tciglobal/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/tciglobal/)
Campaign analytics

Figure 2: #WhatWENeed 2023 campaign flyer

Figure 3: TCI's follower count on social media platforms
**Figure 4: #WhatWENeed website analytics**

- Total Posts: 54
- Total Impressions: 3707
- Website Visits: 914

**Figure 5: #WhatWENeed social media analytics**

- Total Reach: 23012
- Total Posts: 308
- Total Engagements: 2247
- Total Impressions: 20738
Figure 6: #WhatWENeed Youtube analytics

Figure 7: #WhatWENeed submissions social media analytics part 1
Social Media Analytics of Submissions

**Figure 8**: #WhatWENeed submissions social media analytics part 2

Social Media Analytics of Submissions

**Figure 9**: #WhatWENeed submissions social media analytics part 3
Figure 10: Global atlas of campaign submissions
Figure 11: Campaign website visitors from 120 countries!
Key highlights

Community inclusion is often spoken about in abstract terms, as a philosophy or value, but the #WhatWENeed 2023 was remarkably effective in providing concrete examples and insights into the multiple dimensions of this concept. We witnessed a vibrant Community of Practice around community inclusion through the various submissions. Although community inclusion was one of the thematics of the campaign, the submissions we received, inadvertently, highlighted numerous aspects that make up the larger canvas of community inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities. There were compelling submissions around deinstitutionalization, addressing intersectional discrimination, initiating discussions around identity positions, refreshing take on awareness and sensitization activities and provided an opportunity for disseminating new resources to advance the understanding and practice of community inclusion.

We have distilled key highlights from the campaign and present the same below

**Newer ways to participate in the campaign:** TCI members, both old and new, were able to contribute to the campaign, as the campaign had innovative submission ideas like nominating an Inclusion Champion¹¹, which gave the OPDs a chance to reflect and nominate one person from their organization recognizing their efforts towards their work; submitting local words on community inclusion¹² which led them to share that often times, there is not a single word for the term ‘community inclusion’ in their local language but often phrases that are used to describe it and messages on community inclusion in their local language¹³ which comprised of messages on upholding human rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, true and meaningful inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities and the right to live independently and being included in the community, on an equal basis with others.

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¹¹ [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/inclusion-champions/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/inclusion-champions/)
¹² [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/community-inclusion-in-local-words/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/community-inclusion-in-local-words/)
¹³ [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/community-inclusion-messages/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/community-inclusion-messages/)
Inclusion of newer voices: The identity of ‘Persons with psychosocial disabilities, for TCI, has been inclusive of persons who identify as 'users and survivors of psychiatry', ‘mad’ persons, persons with intersectional and neurodiverse identities and including persons who self-identify with psychosocial disabilities. We leave it to the persons to define and construct their own identities and their belonging to TCI. We have, in these years, built a strong alliance with OPDs of other under-represented groups based on our common experience of discrimination and exclusion. The campaign 2023 included voices from our peers from persons and groups with neurodiverse identities (autistic persons), persons with dyslexia and stammering, persons with albinism and persons with epilepsy. Another group that was highlighted during this year’s campaign was older persons with psychosocial disabilities. TCI developed a full-length paper detailing the challenges faced by and recommendations for inclusion of older persons with psychosocial disabilities. Another TCI member shared how older persons are excluded from disability policy areas and how they advocate with their government by collecting data on human rights violations within institutions. A successful webinar focused on youth with psychosocial disabilities was also organized during the campaign to mark the International Human Rights day.

Inclusion of newer regions: The campaign 2023 witnessed TCI members from newer regions connecting with the thematics of the campaign. A youth member from Lesotho shared her works from her region; another member from Cameroon shared how they used music to advocate for the rights and inclusion of persons with albinism and a member from Montenegro discussed their works on advocating for deinstitutionalization of older persons with psychosocial disabilities. One of TCI’s network from Canada shared about the strong advocacy they are doing around the heinous Medical Assistance in Dying (MaiD) law.

14 [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/submission-for-whatweneed-2023-by-puneet-singh-singhal-ssstart/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/submission-for-whatweneed-2023-by-puneet-singh-singhal-ssstart/)
15 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvKwCRvXEHM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvKwCRvXEHM)
16 [https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/submission-for-whatweneed-2023-by-winfred-wanja-kirumia/](https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/submission-for-whatweneed-2023-by-winfred-wanja-kirumia/)
18 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeKKwn8qwmk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeKKwn8qwmk)
19 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpnjkW7shfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpnjkW7shfY)
20 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfvP8NxesjI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfvP8NxesjI)
21 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvKwCRvXEHM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvKwCRvXEHM)
23 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4BDjT1Z0Ls](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4BDjT1Z0Ls)
**Addis Declaration**: One of the big highlights of the campaign was the official launch of the final version of the Addis Declaration\textsuperscript{24}. Persons with psychosocial disabilities and organizations from 5 countries in East Africa region met in Addis Ababa on July 26, 2022 at the East Africa Subregional Convening, organized by Transforming Communities for Inclusion – Global in partnership with CIC-Kenya, TRIUMPH, RDDF and UNSAI, and developed the “Addis Declaration”, through a consultative process, over 2 days\textsuperscript{25}. The deliberations included participants coming together, discussing the key priority areas to be addressed by the governments in East Africa, call for actions and worked together for the drafting of the ‘Addis Declaration’. There were intensive discussions among the participants on the barriers they faced with respect to their identity, incapacitating laws, lack of social protection mechanisms, community supports for independent living, housing, barriers to work and employment, political participation etc. These deliberations were led by TCI members from East Africa and hence highlighted their situation and demands from the various stakeholders. A mutually derived and approved list of barriers and recommendations was then officially adopted by the present plenary members and named ‘Addis Declaration’. The Declaration strongly resonated with persons with psychosocial disabilities from Tanzania and was adopted by them in September 2023. The Declaration was put into its final form, complete with enlisting the various human rights instruments available to our movement from East Africa and launched during the campaign with a short video\textsuperscript{26} and the final text. Our leading member from Kenya also shared how the Declaration was already guiding their advocacy efforts and leading to tangible results in their region\textsuperscript{27}. The advocacy, utilizing the Declaration, had led to initiating discussions in courts on mental capacity and legal capacity with respect to persons with psychosocial disabilities; ensured that Persons with Disabilities bill in Kenya was consultative and included persons with psychosocial disabilities etc.

**TCI photo story**: TCI, along with one of its founding members, Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse, worked on developing a photo story demonstrating an inventory of inclusion practices\textsuperscript{28}. This photo story was developed based on a Grassroot Conclave, organized by Bapu Trust in 2023. It was a gathering of the grassroot cadres of their partner organizations who had been trained to ‘program for

\textsuperscript{24} \url{https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/addis-declaration/}
\textsuperscript{26} \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeR_TqYF7ZY}
\textsuperscript{27} \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyNAxFDcT6I}
\textsuperscript{28} \url{https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Photo-Story.pdf}
inclusion’ and had been practicing inclusion in their communities. The traditional songs and dances, adapted to the theme of Inclusion, were powerful immersive experiences for all participants, from different cultures, celebrating land, forest, identity, connection, community and resilience; and sharing the deeply felt impact of violence, destruction and appropriation as indigenous areas change to modern slums and cities, especially on children, elderly, women and poor households. The photostory tried to capture and present an inventory of inclusion practices from various regions of India with messages around inclusion fit for the global context. It aimed to present a community of practice around inclusion and demonstrated how and in what ways can communities be transformed for inclusion. The campaign 2023 provided a global platform for the launch and wide dissemination of this resource. It was highly appreciated by the members, networks and partners as a resource which not only talked about inclusion practices, but successfully displayed the how-to aspect of the practice.

Focus on women and girls with psychosocial disabilities and access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR): Strong submissions, coming from women and girls with psychosocial disabilities, and their representative organizations were received. These submissions spoke about how essential it is to ensure the right to bodily autonomy for women; their right and their own decision to have family and children; importance of upholding and respecting their choice, will and preferences and not practicing substituted decision making and subjecting them to forced sterilization or treatments. The role of the community to support women with psychosocial disabilities was also highlighted. It was emphasized that community should be informed about the rights of women with psychosocial disabilities and opinion builders should be mobilized to step in when they witness violence or violations happening within community spaces. It should also be understood that violations happen within institutions, hospitals and within families and communities. Pertinent questions such as when sexual violence happens with persons with psychosocial disabilities, is it even considered an issue; who do they report to were also raised.

30 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00AJ5L_ipNY
pointing to the fact that the experiences of persons with psychosocial disabilities are rendered invisible because of their identity.

**Fresh take on CRPD compliant awareness strategies:** Article 8 of the CRPD is the bulwark of inclusion programs addressing social, behavioural and attitudinal change towards persons with disabilities. Within the scope of campaign 2023, a refreshing take on creating awareness and sensitization was discussed. It was expressed how awareness should be focused on promoting and facilitating inclusion, rather than the traditional mental health awareness modules and the foundation should be CRPD compliance. Topics such as rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, challenges and violations faced by them, diversity of disability experiences, highlighting contributions of persons with psychosocial disabilities, garnering community support towards them etc. should be included in awareness campaigns. A variety of ways of raising awareness were also shared such as Forum Theatre, Human Library, Community consultations, using arts and dance etc. The methods should be culturally relevant, should result in an outcome of cultivating pathways to inclusion and should open spaces for dialogue, and not confrontation.

**Deinstitutionalization and alternatives to institutionalization:** The perils of institutionalization, within psychiatric hospitals, long term stay residential settings, rehabilitation centres, drug deaddiction centres were shared by the members. Forced institutionalization to address substance use as a punishment was also highlighted. Members shared their advocacy on deinstitutionalization using UN guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies as the reference point. It was also reported that the awareness on DI guidelines, especially among policymakers remain low and this is being addressed by continuous engagement with local government representatives, creating awareness on the need for DI, sensitizing them towards the DI guidelines and fostering collaborations with local government stakeholders. Another member shared the ways in which they have attempted to introduce their government to an alternative to an institutions. They have set up a centre, which acts as a safe space and respite centre for individuals with substance use issues to come

31 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76MhiH7q1Gc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76MhiH7q1Gc)
33 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1TpuEWaqTI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1TpuEWaqTI)
34 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX5akDW3Y2c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX5akDW3Y2c)
and stay, for as long as they want, in their wellbeing and healing journey. There is no place for coercion and involuntary treatments. This model was shared with the government to create awareness and garner their support towards addressing this issue, without the confines of an institution and a forced regime of treatments etc. TCI’s strong members from the UK shared their advocacy against the labelling of human distress experiences as illness and shared a strong manifesto on Speaking Out Against Psychiatry. Advocacy by TCI members in sessions of CRPD Committee against the legislations and acts that still permit forced hospitalization were also submitted during the campaign. TCI launched a global survey on deinstitutionalization and community inclusion during the campaign. A total of 73 responses from 31 countries were received. An event was organized by one of our members on having discussions around institutionalization and an installation to demonstrate isolation and situation inside institutions, was also held.

**Building a ‘solidarity economy’**: The concept of creating a solidarity economy between peers with psychosocial disabilities to address difficulty of accessing capital by gathering economic resources was discussed. Solidarity economy as a concept is rooted in social movements and is transformative in its nature by redistributing power, resources and autonomy to groups which have been historically oppressed.

**Conversations around identity positions**: Identity is central to our work and advocacy. This campaign also included conversations around adopting the identity of being persons with psychosocial disabilities. It was shared how some of the cross-disability spaces still tend to exclude our constituency by terming it as an illness and something that is being treated. However, the constant and relentless advocacy of our members around our preferred identity of being persons with psychosocial disabilities has also led to initiating a discourse around the politics of identity of being counted and considered a disability.
Flavours of peer support: The campaign 2023 had an electric and colourful canvas of peer support modalities. It was a common sharing that peer support was not offered as a service, rather as a way to develop well being and healing and in the words of one member followed the principle; ‘we respect each other’s dreams and support each other to act in order to make those dreams come true’. The peer support methods should be safe, non-hazardous or harmful and playful to cultivate a safe space for facilitating solidarity and oneness. Ways in which peer support was practices were art therapy, body and soul work, using music, dance, movement, play and gardening to name a few\textsuperscript{42}.

Challenges

- The initial response to the campaign was slow. Although enquiries and questions regarding the submissions were received, they did not necessarily translate into submissions.
- The social media engagement was also low during the period of the campaign. It was observed that Twitter, the most active platform for TCI was also not showing the usual activity. Some of the reasons shared were Twitter being blocked in countries due to political atmosphere, not many active TCI members on Twitter or Instagram during the period etc.
- The usual volume of blogs and photo submissions was not met during the 2023 campaign. The nature of submissions was more on videos, shorter submission formats such as inclusion words in local language, nominating inclusion champions etc.
- Coordinating time and ensuring the availability of newer members for the interview series was a bit difficult to execute.
- The Secretariat team was in intensive travels during the campaign along with planning for future travels hence leading to over exertion on the small team to manage all the tasks related to the campaign.
- Multiple partners shared that they were undergoing restructuring within the organizations, hence were unable to contribute to the campaign.

\textsuperscript{42} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfOQH9HZCP8
Key learnings:

- The campaign proved to be a strong building bridge between TCI and its new members. The spotlight interview series was highly successful in this regard.
- For the future campaigns, advanced planning is essential. Planning the campaign, drafting concept note and dissemination must start in August itself, instead of September. Also, the focus should be more on gathering new submissions, instead of only highlighting the previous posts.
- TCI needs to strengthen active engagements with all its members, throughout the year.
- As TCI has been running the campaign as a voluntary activity for the members, TCI needs to inform the members, well in advance that it has very limited budgets to support submissions and encourage formats that do not require financial assistance.
Thank You Note

TCI expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all its members, its networks and partners who participated in the campaign and made it such a roaring success. This campaign reinvigorated a true sense of a community for all of us at TCI, cutting across all barriers, bound together by a common vision of transforming our communities for our rightful and true inclusion.