



Pathways to Inclusive Communities: Navigating the Practice of Community Inclusion

November 16-18, 2024

Bangkok, Thailand

About TCI: Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI) is a global and membership-based Organization of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities [an OPD] with representation in more than 50 countries. TCI is a post-CRPD movement and works for the empowerment of organizations of persons with psychosocial disabilities for leading advocacy initiatives at national, sub-regional, and global levels. Empowered by the extraordinary vision and guidance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, TCI's purpose is to situate ourselves at the center of the cross-disability movements at the national, regional, subregional, and global levels, as a way to reclaim our personhood, our identity, dignity and autonomy, experience our independence and to realize our right to live in the community. TCI forecasts a future in which all human rights and full freedoms of persons with psychosocial disabilities are realized. TCI is inspired by the strong history and legacy of senior leaders, past and present, and movements of users and survivors of psychiatry, ex-patients liberation movements, and a variety of mad pride movements, which have existed since the 1960s.

TCI takes this opportunity to pay our respect to the memory of our esteemed Executive Director, **Dr. Bhargavi Davar**, who steered the vision of TCI and established the foundation for the rightful inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities. We dedicate this plenary conference to honouring her life, her work and her legacy.

Introduction to the conference

TCI Global, in collaboration with our members and partners, is honoured to organize and present our in-person **plenary conference** focusing on the key thematic of community inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities. We envisage this conference to be a learning space, to foster rich and insightful conversations, discuss and display good practices from the grassroots, contribute to knowledge building, and strengthen collaborations with cross-disability movements and multi-stakeholders. TCI aims to bring together its members, partners, networks, allies, and stakeholders to address critical issues such as deinstitutionalization, access to justice, intersectional discrimination and no access to mainstream services, inclusive development, arts-

based therapies, cultural ways of well-being and healing, and advocacy at both global and national levels.

Series of events planned

Sr. No.	Event	Date
1	TCl Members Plenary	16-17 Nov, 2024
2	TCl Multi Stakeholders Meeting and Partnership Development Meeting	18 Nov, 2024
3	TCl General Assembly	19 Nov, 2024
5	TCl Strategy Meeting with Members	19-20 Nov, 2024

Setting the context

TCl, since its inception, has been rallying around Article 19 of the CRPD on the right of persons with psychosocial disabilities to live independently and be included in communities. TCl's programs and advocacy, developed over the years, have been a step in the direction of ensuring that all rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities are respected, protected, and upheld, in line with the CRPD, on an equal basis with others. In recent years, our movement has taken steps towards reclaiming our position on decision-making tables, echoing nothing about us without us, relentlessly pursuing advocacy at the highest echelons of national and global human rights spaces, and working towards strengthening OPD leadership and organizational structures. TCl has been a proud facilitator of these processes, through our movement-building strategies, capacity-building programs, advocacy initiatives, and nurturing partnerships with members and allies.

Despite these significant developments, our constituency remains under-represented and excluded. **Our identity** is still not accepted by policymakers, is often stigmatized, 'othered' within disability spaces, and marginalized. CRPD gave us the gift of being persons with psychosocial disabilities, but we are still labelled as 'patients'. **Institutionalization** remains a big challenge, that renders us invisible from community spaces and subjects us to gross human rights violations including torture, abuse, degrading treatment, or punishment. Despite 18 years of the CRPD and more recently, the UN Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies¹, institutions for persons with psychosocial disabilities persist in various forms, often justified as necessary for respite, residence, or care. Deinstitutionalization is not a new concept; however, successful and good practice examples remain rare, and failures are more widely known and cited frequently.

Living in the community, independently, with community support systems and services is a right for every person with a disability. However, in our context, it has been considered a value, or a kind of ideal to work towards, and not a capacity building or a practical matter to be built into programs, policies, and community development

¹ CRPD/C/5

designs. Through TCI's community inclusion project, we have developed and piloted a CI indicators tool, that helps to document the range of inclusion activities and also measures the impact of community inclusion models.

Service provider lobbies have promoted the belief that medical treatment and institutionalization can cure people and mainstream them. Inclusion has been restricted to solely providing services (partially required) or resolving 'symptoms' leaving behind critical elements of addressing legal barriers, working with intersectional identities, bolstering community support systems and networks, cultural ways of well-being and healing, etc. The dismissal of **intersecting identities** and resulting discrimination has also been a pervasive issue for our movement. Since its inception, TCI along with its members has been elaborating on a view of a community that is neurodiverse and biodiverse and is best visualized as human ecosystems.² TCI has time and again demonstrated various good practice examples of its members on how such ecosystems are enabled and maintained.

The presence of **legal incapacity laws** undermines and threatens the identity and personhood of persons with psychosocial disabilities. Countries assume and have been led to believe mental health legislation as a sign of modernity, despite them being colonial vestiges of many Commonwealth nations, now acquiring the robes of modern law, even in countries with no colonial history³. Such discriminatory laws and policies render us as non-persons and restrict the right to have all other rights for persons with psychosocial disabilities and make access to justice impossible. Despite growing calls for community inclusion, funding and investments into institutions and legal infrastructure continues.

In recent years, owing to the strong advocacy by OPDs, the **advocacy priorities** have become broader, shifting away from the narrow mental health door to the broader human rights and development door⁴. Where we have been constantly talking about community inclusion and strengthening support systems and services within communities, some vested groups have taken up the care agenda. This agenda pits women's rights movements against disability rights movement, talks about equating the rights of caregivers and care receivers, and emphasizes on monetizing care among social networks bringing an interest in politics within social relationships⁵. Climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction agendas have often ignored persons with psychosocial disabilities, and wherever included, the discourse has been dominated by prescribing a 'mental health pill' or delivering MPHSS for our constituency⁶.

² TCI (2022). TCI positionality on Community Inclusion. TCI Global, Geneva. Available at: <https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/TCI-Positionality-on-Community-Inclusion-2022.pdf>

³ TCI Global. (2023). Background Reading Paper on Legal Capacity Laws, Policies and Practices, and Women with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities (For a webinar). Webinar available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKIK1Mc8rSg&list=PLTZaELcJTT613lghITz5vv1jBqkX_8JTS&index=13

⁴ Same as point 2

⁵ <https://tci-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Final-Support-versus-care-TCI-response-to-A-HRC-52-52.pdf>

⁶ https://tci-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/TCI-Global_Submission-for-General-Comment-on-Article-11-CRPD.pdf

Our movement has suffered fragmentation due to dominance by one or two leaders, frail or absent organizational structure and processes resulting in getting coopted by global mental health and allied movements. TCI, through its core instruments⁷, has played a huge role in enabling the creation and empowerment of national OPDs of persons with psychosocial disabilities and enhancing their participation in the broader disability and human rights advocacy. The **movement-building** strategies of TCI are unparalleled for our constituency. While working with our members, we have affirmed the immense importance of developing leadership within the movement in regions across the world with a keen focus on new and emerging leaders.

TCI's annual advocacy campaign, **#WhatWENeed**⁸, since 2018, has been challenging and correcting the medical oppression on us and reclaim the world mental health week. It has focused on topical thematics which are critical for our movement. Other than the issue of stopping the normative violence against us, inclusion in the SDGs, questions of our identity, political participation, support system, deinstitutionalization and various themes related to our community inclusion have been featured in the campaign by our members, partners and allies. The campaign gives a platform for our members to present their work and advocacy to a wider and global audience.

In the context of the above stated issues, TCI aims to foster conversations and build knowledge through the planned plenary conference.

Conference objectives

- To contribute to the discourse and capacity building around community inclusion, deinstitutionalization, and allied thematics.
- To present and disseminate findings, tools and resources for promoting grassroots practices on community inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities
- To strengthen partnerships with cross-disability movements, donor agencies, government agencies, civil societies, and UN agencies to create a unified approach towards community inclusion.
- To generate actionable strategies for movement building and developing informed advocacy initiatives.

Key Thematics

1. Deinstitutionalization
2. Community Inclusion
3. Strengthening partnerships

⁷ Fellowships, Microgrants, OPD support grants, Catalyst grants, Country Mission, Exploratory Visits, Subregional convenings, Plenary meetings, #WhatWENeed campaign

⁸ <https://whatweneed.tci-global.org/>

4. Access to justice
5. Engaging with persons with intersectional identities
6. Strengthening leadership and organization development
7. Global advocacy landscape

Conference format and participation

The conference will have a range of session formats such as plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions, marketplace (country status reports), interactive sessions etc.

TCI in partnership with **CBM-A** will also be conducting an in-person meeting of the **CoP on DI** (Community of Practice on Deinstitutionalization), with support of **DFAT**. Globally, there is a small number of OPDs working on deinstitutionalization, in their own ways, to address the process and nuances of implementing it. In 2024, TCI convened a Community of Practice (CoP) for our members working on national-level deinstitutionalization processes to capture deeper insights into DI practices that can be used for further advocacy and knowledge sharing at national, regional, and global levels. This in-person meeting will give an opportunity for the members to meet each other, engage in peer-to-peer learning, support the building of networks for DI processes, and contribute to a discussion paper capturing the nuances of implementing DI guidelines from grassroots communities to the global advocacy spaces.

Under the auspice of the plenary conference, we aim to organize a **Partnership Development meeting**. This platform will enable organizations, partners and allies to meet each other and contemplate ways of working together to take the vision of community inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities forward.

TCI aims to ensure that this plenary conference is attended by persons with psychosocial disabilities, their representative organizations, users and survivors of psychiatry, mad persons, persons with intersectional and neurodiverse identities, and all persons who self-identify as a person facing high restriction of participation and exclusion due to attributions of 'mental disorders and multi-stakeholders such as cross-disability partners, donor agencies, INGOs, UN agencies, National Human Rights bodies, human rights organizations, women organizations, youth networks, Indigenous networks, and our technical allies and partners.

In addition to broader outcomes of capacity building, advocacy strengthening and partnership building, the plenary conference will have an outcome document of actionable strategies for OPDs to further their works and advocacy. We envision development of a **roadmap for OPDs on advocating for Disability Inclusive Development under the umbrella of SDGs**.

The Organizing Committee

TCI secretariat together with,



Our Donors for the Plenary



Our Co-Partners for the Plenary

