



TCI at COSP 18

Floor intervention – Empowering persons with disabilities and enhancing social development policies through innovative financing

Dear Chair

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak at the forum,

My name is Waqar Puri, I identify myself as a person with psychosocial disability and I am representing Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI), a global OPD of persons with psychosocial disabilities,

Our movement -of persons with psychosocial disabilities, including young people, women and girls, people with neuro diverse identities continue to be on heightened risk of being detained, and segregated on the basis of our disability, inside closed-door institutions, social care shelters and various detention facilities, with no recourse to live in open communities.

We are discriminated, denied access to health, education, social, economic, political and cultural opportunities to live a life on an equal basis to others.

Professional lobbies managing these institutions have the highest legal normative power to sequester us into this shackling. Lives are spent exhausting ourselves in fighting this impossible system, where epistemic injustice is very high: our stories, knowledge, our personal practices, ways of life, everything is extinguished before this system, as we are stripped of our personhood and all resources that are needed to live a decent life of our own making.

The DI guidelines clearly emphasizes that institutionalization is a violation of human rights and that all persons with disabilities have the right to live independently and be included in the community. The guidelines call for a comprehensive shift from institutional care to community-based supports and services, ensuring that support systems are person-centered, inclusive, and empowering.

Traditional funding models often reinforce segregation by allocating resources to large institutions rather than community-based alternatives.

However, transitioning from institutionalization to community inclusion requires more than policy changes—it necessitates innovative financing mechanisms that prioritize the community living of persons with psychosocial disabilities,

To enhance inclusive social development policies,

At TCI we have been supporting pilot initiatives on community inclusion and we call civil societies for collaborations and partnerships, together as stakeholders, we must ensure that investments are rooted towards community inclusion – which is more encompassing and is a wider strategy and has a broader vision for inclusion of all persons with disabilities,

It envisions communities as a resource for mutual support, availability of relationships, social capital, availability of all necessary mainstream resources and services, availability of disability specific services and an overall inclusive psychosocial ecosystem, supporting peaceful and just communities.

Investing in Community Inclusion as an independent stream of works, inclusive of a strong core component of de-institutionalization, is the larger package policy makers must aim for.

Agencies working on community inclusion must draw from the DI guidelines as a new reference point. Donors, governments and bi-lateral agencies must consider community inclusion as an independent stream of funding. An inclusive community is not only for persons who are leaving institutions, not only for persons with disabilities, but it is for all persons living in communities,

Thankyou,

Side Event – Closing doors – KHS event

Thank you, Geniveve,

Esteemed delegates, I am happy to contribute to this side event from the floor, my name is Waqar Puri, I identify myself as a person with psychosocial disability and I am representing Transforming communities for Inclusion,

I congratulate the organizers for holding this important and specific space to address the issues of children with disabilities with a specific attention to deinstitutionalization and ensuring rights-based supports and care within mainstream communities and families,

Coming from my personal experience of exclusion and segregation from the mainstream community during my childhood, I believe that children with disabilities are at most heightened risk of being institutionalized, especially children with high support needs, including children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities,

Thank you, panelists, for highlighting about legal shackling and the need to transform the laws from mental health to human rights ... also that we need to have global partnerships to support community inclusion initiatives,

Psychiatric diagnosis and treatment is forced upon children with disabilities for being 'slow learners', 'autistic', 'attention deficit', and such and many of us have lost our childhood to these treatments.

Families forcefully push their children into such centers for so called rehabilitation treatments and they remain confined there for many years or becoming a 'revolving door patient'.

There are massive investments made to various types of institutions and institutionalization is not care. It is segregation. It removes children from family, culture, love, and belonging. Even other facilities like independent living centers, small group homes, rehabilitation centers, reproduce institutional dynamics: such as -- rigid routines, lack of personal agency, no bonds of permanence. These are not acceptable alternatives at all.

The convention and guidelines on DI, are clear: **no child should be placed in an institution, under any circumstances.**

And hence, we emphasize to ensure to cease any further investments being made which segregates children with disabilities from their families and communities, we must develop strategies and support state parties to transition from institutionalization to community-based settings,

Investing in Community Inclusion as an independent stream of works, inclusive of a strong core component of de-institutionalization, is the larger package policy makers must aim for.

We have learnt from our member organizations that Community support systems are a viable social entity that needs to be recognized by the state parties and States must ensure that communities and families are empowered and prepared,

We must ensure the establishment and strengthening of community support systems that are responsive to the lived experiences of children with psychosocial disabilities. This includes actively engaging communities and families, building inclusive and responsive community networks, reinforcing peer support structures, and promoting informal support mechanisms rooted within communities. These systems are essential not only to prevent institutionalization, but also to enable children with disabilities to live and thrive in mainstream community settings, with dignity and autonomy.