



International Youth Day 2021

Concept Note

On 12 August 2021, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and its members are joining the rest of the world to celebrate the International Youth Day. The theme of International Youth Day 2021 is “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health”, with the aim of highlighting that the success of such a global effort will not be achieved without the meaningful participation of young people.

This 2021 International Youth Day’s theme is rooted in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of the 2030 Agenda. It is an opportunity to examine how governments, young people, and youth-led and youth-focused organizations, as well as other stakeholders, are transforming access to food and how these efforts are contributing to the achievement of the goal of not leaving anyone behind.

Young people with disabilities and those with intersectional identities like young women with disabilities, indigenous youth with disabilities, etc. often face additional challenges to access food in a way that respects their rights and diverse requirements as well as embracing their unique realities and identities. Studies show that “nutrition and disability are intimately linked: malnutrition can directly cause or contribute to disability, and disability can lead to malnutrition.”¹

Human rights are indivisible and realising the right to food is critical for the realisations of other rights of persons with disabilities. Article 28 of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) addresses the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection, “*including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions,*” and to be able to enjoy this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.²

1. Groce, N., Challenger, E., Berman-Bieler, R., Farkas, A., Yilmaz, N., Schultink, W., . . . & Kerac, M. (2014). Malnutrition and disability: Unexplored opportunities for collaboration. *Paediatrics and International Child Health*, 34(4), 308–314.

2. UNCRPD Article 28.

Without an adequate standard of living, young people with disabilities are often forced in a segregated institutional setting or with family members merely in search of the basics required for survival, such as access to food and shelter, hindering the realisation of their right to independent living and being included in community.

Moreover, the United Nations' first report on persons with disabilities and the SDGs highlighted that the average percentage of persons with disabilities who are unable to afford protein every second day is nearly double that of other people. This access to meals with protein affects women with disabilities more than men. It was further established that data from developing countries shows that persons with disabilities and their households are more likely to not always have food to eat, compared to other persons and their households.³ Studies also show that, children and youth with disabilities are less likely to benefit from school-based malnutrition reduction efforts because they are less likely to attend school than their peers.⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted persons with disabilities' access food. For instance, a report on findings from the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor revealed that persons with disabilities around the world did not have access to food and adequate nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost one third (633) of the survey respondents in 81 countries said that persons with disabilities in their country could not access food.⁵ This challenge of access to food inappropriately affected children and young people with disabilities.

To ensure that young people with disabilities are meaningfully involved in transforming food systems, IDA and their members are mobilising the Youth with Disabilities Network to collect video messages from young people with disabilities worldwide to celebrate the International Youth Day over the week of the 12 - 20 of August 2021.

The key outcome of this campaign is to initiate discussions between young people with disabilities and all stakeholders, including but not limited to government officials, international

3. Realization of The Sustainable Development Goals By, for and with Persons With Disabilities UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development 2018.

4. Groce N., Challenger E., Kerac M. (2013) Stronger Together: Nutrition-Disability Links and Synergies - Briefing Note. (Nutrition Working Group: Global Partnership for Children with Disabilities). UNICEF: New York.

5. Disability rights during the pandemic. A global report on findings of the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor 2020.

and national civil society organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, among others, around the key issues they raise as well as strengthen the global network of youth with disabilities. We also expect that the discussions can be carried forward to the Global Disability Summit and Youth with Disability Summit scheduled for February 2022.

Additionally, the campaign will contribute to:

- Empowering young persons with disabilities to think about what could be improved in their community/country/society for youth with disabilities and allowing them to express this.
- Gaining visibility of young persons with disabilities by other youth involved in the celebration of International Youth Day.
- Tackling issues raised by young persons with disabilities living in different parts of the world in an innovative way and reaching new audiences.
- Developing linkages between young persons with disabilities and other youth who may share the same concerns and enhancing future opportunities for cross collaboration.
- Enhancing the emergence of new themes brought up by/for/with young persons with disabilities themselves beyond the main theme chosen for this year.

This campaign designed by youth with disabilities for their peers in a world hit by a pandemic will allow them to release a one minute video with an immense visibility on IDA' social media. A one minute video for an everlasting message is the philosophy of this campaign, which will be followed by many other activities, webinars and projects by/for/with youth with disabilities.

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