

Opening Statement: Joint Committee on Disability Matters
Certificate in Disability Inclusive Practice (CDIP) Students, University
College Cork (UCC).

We would like to thank the committee for their invitation to discuss **How can we create independent living and help communities to be inclusive?**

We, Bríd Broderick, Bart Cronin, Diarmuid O’Leary and I, Claire McCarthy, are students on The Certificate in Disability-Inclusive Practice (CDIP), a one-year course for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in UCC. The [CDIP](#) is part of the [id+ Project](#) which promotes the rights of people with ID to attend inclusive third-level education and to go into paid work. [The id+ Project values are based on the UNCRPD.](#)

The [CDIP is where we have learned about the UNCRPD](#) and what it means for our lives. We have become aware and gained leadership skills and self-confidence. Lived experience is important in making laws and policies because people with disabilities have lived in the situations and know what needs to be changed.

The CRPD shows us what could be done for the rights of people with disabilities. But there are gaps, and we need to fix the gaps, so we have the right to live independently and be included in our communities.

Article 19:

- Housing and being able to live independently in our own apartment or space is really important. There is a lack of housing and too much red tape to apply. It needs to be more accessible for people with ID to apply for social housing. The form needs to be in easy read.
- It is very important to be included in the community to have groups to socialize with and be with in community spaces. It is very important to us not to be sidelined because of disability. People with ID should get the opportunity to go on work placement to the community to share their lived experiences and train staff and be staff.

Article 24:

- Being UCC students has been positive because we are integrating with other students and getting involved in classes that we are interested in. People with disabilities have the right to full inclusive education, not to be sent to special education.
- But policy needs to change for this to happen.
- There's still the issue of transport and grants for further education, especially for people with ID. The graduates of last year's CDIP wrote about this in a [book chapter](#).

Article 27:

- Getting a job is important to be fulfilled.
- People need to be able to work, and earn enough money, so they don't have to worry about payments (like Disability Allowance and Back to Work Schemes) being cut.

- We need equality within the workforce, to be included in what is happening and to be supported to work. [We did a 3-month supported, paid work placement last year in UCC.](#) We would like if other colleges look at this to get people with ID into employment and for employers to engage with colleges to know that people with ID can work.

The whole UNCRPD is important including Articles 5, 8, 9, 12, 23, 30. We would be happy to meet and talk more about the CRPD. We want to close the gaps between the ideas in the CRPD and what is happening in our lives now.