

COSP16 Side Event: Zooming in on the rights of persons with disabilities: Launch of the 2023 Disability Data Initiative's report

Date: June 16, 2023

Time: 9:45-11am EDT on Zoom

Speaker: Florildama Bocel, Mujeres con Capacidad de Soñar a Colores, Guatemala

I belong to the group of women with capacity to dream in colors from Guatemala. My name is Florildama Bocel. I am speaking from the standpoint of our experiences as indigenous women with disability. We give each other support.

Because the women in rural areas who have disabilities experience different forms of discrimination, we do not have access to education, work, accessible information, health, we are discriminated because we are women, because we are indigenous, because we live in the rural communities.

Because of our age, that has left us behind and still does.

From our experiences, as rural women with disabilities we have had many difficulties because we're all experiencing our disability in a different manner, there is a great barrier that we have identified that is that we do not have access to information.

Because we speak a native language, but if I want information in my native language, if I did not understand the Spanish I would not have the possibility to access the information. It is difficult for me, and it is difficult for other members of the community.

We lack knowledge on the number of barriers they face. On a daily basis having found this space and this group, in which we participate as women with disabilities has been a very nice space, because we have learned many things having access to information. For instance on sexual and reproductive health, we learning about menstruation and self-respect. We have shared the knowledge and we

have had a group encounters in this area under this initiative we have been taught to learn, to protect ourselves, not to be afraid. This space has been very positive to learn about ourselves and to receive support from each other.

No one excludes you, nobody tells you what is right or wrong, when we come together in such a space, it is a very nice opportunity, not only for those who belong to the group, but also to the other women who have been participating in different activities.

We find that women are very enthusiastic. They want to learn when the forthcoming activities will take place, it is a place for autonomy, for freedom. These women normally spend a long time at home. They never go out, are prevented from doing things, but when they come to our groups, it is a place of freedom where women can share with each other. So, for me and for my fellow women with disabilities, it has been a challenge but it has been very positive to bring together women with disabilities from rural areas.

I wanted to share with you that this is the first group of women with different disabilities and it is a great joy for us to let others know about our work and to be heard.

Thank you!