

# Reducing inequalities for persons with mental impairments or psychosocial disabilities (SDG 10)

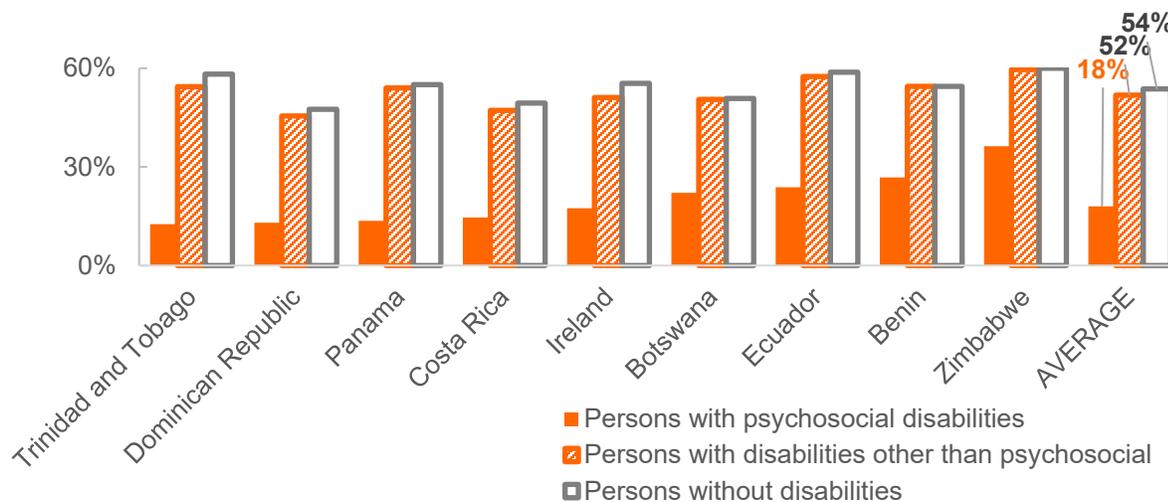


## Disability-inclusive development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, and recognizes disability as a cross-cutting issue to be considered in the implementation of all of its goals. The Agenda also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly referencing persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

Persons with psychosocial disabilities experience major violations of their rights, participation, legal capacity, dignity and inclusion. **One in four persons with psychosocial disabilities experiences physical or sexual violence in a given year, a much higher rate than experienced by the rest of the population.** The denial of legal capacity also strips persons with psychosocial disabilities of critical civil and political rights such as the right to marry, to have children, to have legal representation, to defend their rights in court, and to vote or stand for public office. **On average, in eight countries, around 2011, only 20 per cent of persons with psychosocial disabilities were married versus 37 per cent of persons with other disabilities and 38 per cent of persons without disabilities**Error! Reference source not found..

Figure 1: Percentage of persons aged 15 and over who are employed, by psychosocial disability and disability statuses, in 9 countries, around 2011.



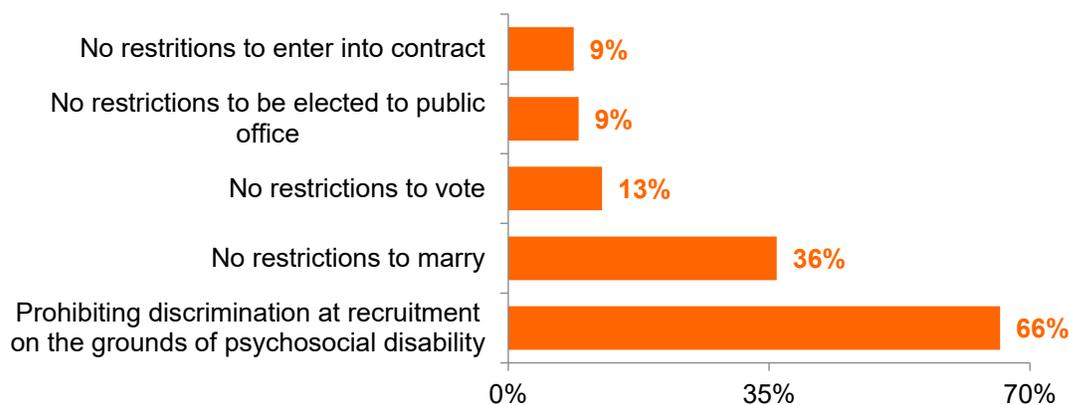
Source: UNDESA<sup>1</sup> (on the basis of data from IPUMS<sup>2</sup>).

Access to education, employment and other income-generating opportunities are also denied to many persons with psychosocial disabilities, who tend to have lower literacy rates than the rest of the population. Even more marked gaps are observed in access to the labour market. **Among nine countries, on average, only 18 per cent of persons with psychosocial disabilities are employed compared to 52 per cent of persons with other types of disabilities and 54 per cent of persons without disabilities (Figure 1).** Evidence from three countries, around 2015, also indicates that persons with psychosocial disabilities are more likely to find health facilities hindering or very hindering and to consider their overall health bad.

When compared to persons with other types of disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities are five times more likely not to be included in family decisions and almost twice as likely to find places for socializing, shops, banks and the post office hindering. Without educational and work opportunities, basic services and social support, many persons with psychosocial disabilities end up living on the streets, in psychiatric hospitals or in abject poverty, with studies also showing that persons with severe mental health problems were twice as likely to die early as the general population.

National policies and laws specifically related to mental health and psychosocial disabilities have direct and significant impacts on the degree of inclusion and participation of persons with psychosocial disabilities in society. Legislation in a number of countries promotes the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities on an equal basis with others. **For example, among 186 countries, 66 per cent prohibit discrimination on the grounds of psychosocial disability at the time of recruitment for employment (Figure 2).**

**Figure 1: Percentage of countries with legislation allowing persons with psychosocial disabilities to marry, to be recruited for work, to vote, to be elected to public office and to enter into contract, on an equal basis with others, around 2017.**



Source: Nardodkat et al (2016),<sup>3</sup> Bhugra et al (2016),<sup>4</sup> Bhugra et al (2016a),<sup>5</sup> Bhugra et al (2016b)<sup>6</sup> and UNDESA.<sup>7</sup>

#### Actions to ensure the social, cultural, economic, civil and political inclusions of persons with mental impairments or psychosocial disabilities:

- Review national policies and legislation to eliminate or amend those that discriminate and deny the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities from participating in social, economic and political spheres.
- End coercive practices, including institutionalization and harmful and forced treatment, and establish a full range of services and support to enable persons with psychosocial disabilities to access quality mental health-care services.
- Establish policies and programmes targeted for persons with psychosocial disabilities to support their equal participation in society.
- Empower persons with psychosocial disabilities and support their participation in decision-making processes, to live independently and be included in the community and to exercise their right to liberty and legal capacity on an equal basis with others.

1 Minnesota Population Center, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, various data sets from 2001 to 2012. Data available at <https://international.ipums.org/international/> (accessed in 2017 and 2018).

2 Country estimates calculated or commissioned by UNDESA.

3 Nardodkar, R., S. Pathare, A. Ventriglio, J. Castaldelli-Maia, K.R. Javate, J. Torales and D. Bhugra (2016). Legal protection of the right to work and employment for persons with mental health problems: a review of legislation across the world. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(4), 375-384, pp.381. doi:10.1080/09540261.2016.1210575.

4 Bhugra, D., S. Pathare, R. Nardodkar, C. Gosavi, R. Ng, J. Torales and A. Ventriglio (2016). Legislative provisions related to marriage and divorce of persons with mental health problems: a global review. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(4), 386-392. doi:10.1080/09540261.2016.1210577.

5 Bhugra, D., S. Pathare, R. Joshi, R. Nardodkar, J. Torales, E.L. Tolentino and A. Ventriglio (2016). Right to property, inheritance, and contract and persons with mental illness. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(4), 402-408, pp.404. doi:10.1080/09540261.2016.1210576.

6 Bhugra, D., S. Pathare, C. Gosavi, A. Ventriglio, J. Torales, J. Castaldelli-Maia, E. Tolentino and R. Ng (2016). Mental illness and the right to vote: a review of legislation across the world. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28, 4, pp.396-397.

7 UNDESA analysis based on national legislation at the election access website, managed by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), available at: [www.electionaccess.org/en/resources/countries/](http://www.electionaccess.org/en/resources/countries/) (accessed 19 June 2018).